



## Access Oceanside Association

### Annual Report 2023

2023 was a very busy and productive year for Access Oceanside Association. We both continued routine activities and focused on special initiatives.

#### **On-Going Activities:**

- Contacting City of Parksville regarding access issues, such as the boardwalk repair and the elevator in City Hall
- Letters of Support for worthy projects, such as the QB Waterfront Viewing area
- On-going liaison with UAQB and Brain Body Fitness for All
- Responding to inquiries, such as questions about beach access, accessible accommodation, accessible tourism, and concerns regarding safety and accessibility in the region

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Parksville Accessibility Advisory Committee - AOA managed to secure 3 positions on PAAC, a provincial requirement for all municipalities.
- New Website - Special thanks to Debbie Pauelsen for all her hard work on it. Feedback has been excellent.
- Grant from PQB Community Foundation – Special thanks to Maureen Pilcher who prepared the grant. We got \$500 for promotion of AOA. We plan to spend it on a pull up banner.
- Future Directions - Special thanks to Ralph Tietjen for planning and leading us through the process. We considered our role, given the advent of the PAAC, our membership structure, and our focus – geographically, financially, and in terms of what topics we wish to tackle, given our limited resources.
- Presentation to Mayor and Council – Ralph Tietjen appeared as a delegate, on our behalf, to request beach and water access.
- Transportation Master Plan – Many AOA members attended the first open house for the new Parksville Transportation Master Plan and responded to the survey they sent out. Ralph and Sandra also attended a virtual meeting for Stage 1 of plan development.
- Accessible Accommodation Survey – Special thanks to Maggie and Ralph Tietjen who conducted the surveys. This was finalized in early 2024. The Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association was delighted with the results and plans to post them on their website. We will also post them on our website.

**On-Going Major Initiatives:**

- Beach Access – Both before and since our presentation to Mayor and Council, we have done a lot of investigation on how to make both beach and water access a reality. We have consulted other municipalities on Vancouver Island (Tofino, Nanaimo, Saanich) to learn from their experience. We have garnered allies in the community (BeachFest, PQB Tourism Association, Parksville Curling Club, Beach Club) and City Hall. We know that the City has deferred beach access until 2025, but we are currently seeking funding and still hope to have at least one beach/water chair available for use in summer 2024. Our Liaison from City Council, Amit Gaur, has been a superb resource for this undertaking, linking us with individuals and organizations that can assist with making this a reality.
- Transportation Master Plan – AOA has prepared a written submission for the consultants. Ralph Tietjen will attend the second open house for Stage 2.

As you can see, we may be small, but we are mighty. Given our limited resources, we need to focus on one thing at a time to make progress. However, as you can see, we are making great progress, thanks to the hard work of the entire committee. Thank you to them all.

*Respectfully Submitted by Sandra Hobson, President.*