

MORE TIME AND INPUT NEEDED

No decision on Goward House

by Bob Broadland

Saanich council held a special meeting, on July 14 to try to determine the best use for the municipally-owned heritage property called Woodlands, at 2495 Arbutus Road.

Four separate proposals were presented to the meeting, and a fifth

came out of a response from one of the councillors.

Two of the proposals involved occupation of the goward House, which is located on Woodlands, by single families.

The first would be under a lease, with major restoration to be done by the municipality, and the subsequent care and mai-

ntenance of the home and grounds to be the responsibility of the tenant.

The tenant also offered to co-ordinate the restoration.

The second proposal envisioned outright purchase of the home and two un-subdividable acres of the existing six-acre property.

The cost of authentic restoration would be borne by the purchaser, and the remaining four acres would be available for future park purposes.

The third, from the Bishop Cridge Centre, saw a combination of day care and counselling facilities within the present home.

The centre's proposed construction would be undertaken in conjunction with the Capital Regional District under a 60-year lease of a 15-unit detached housing project

for seniors, families and handicapped people, all within a park-like setting.

The overall proposal would be self-funding, enabling the restoration and use of Goward House.

The fourth proposal was for an arts and crafts centre, at which artists and crafts people could be watched at work.

Restoration of the Goward House would be undertaken by the municipality in conjunction with funding programs from various levels of government and other agencies.

The fifth came out of Alderman Murray Coell's assessment of the various proposals and comments from others at the meeting.

He felt that as the property is owned by the municipality, the opportunity is available to use the heritage home and grounds as a future site for a heritage museum and archives.

It was variously stressed during the meeting that the original motivation of artist Owen Goward when selling to the municipality in 1973 was that the approximate six-acre property be retained as much as possible in its natural state.

It was decided that the five present proposals would be refined in keeping with the meeting.

It was decided also that further proposals will be sought through re-advertising.

In the meantime, staff will investigate projected restoration costs, and explore the availability of grants for designated heritage homes.

Mayor Howard Sturrock observed that while he was pleased with the objectivity of the present proposals, he had hoped for wider interest from the community on the use of this significant heritage property.

