

# Sidney berated over Sanscha

**By Bill Smith**

Times-Colonist staff

Sidney council is failing the community by a lack of involvement regarding the future of Sanscha Hall and surrounding property, says former councillor Jim Lang.

He expressed anger in an interview that both Sidney and North Saanich councils are not devoting the time or attention they should to the activities of the Memorial Park Society.

He also wants an independent citizen group formed to advise and update council on the society's activities.

"There have been numerous suggestions about what should be done with the Sanscha property, but they're going nowhere."

Any council member appointed to the MPS board could have diffi-

culty expressing the wishes of the town due to the complexity of the memorial trust, he said.

Although the Memorial Park lands are jointly owned by residents of Sidney and North Saanich, a paid membership is required to vote for a representative board, he explained.

"As a result, membership remains relatively small and consequently much of the work devoted to the future of the property has been undertaken by a handful of people."

"I want our elected officials to show leadership," Lang said. "Let's have them show initiative and give input into this vital issue."

Lang said previous council members who have been appointed to the MPS board have "obviously not passed along information to keep council abreast of the situation."

Although half of the property belong to North Saanich, that council does not appear too interested in its future use, said Lang.

Lang said it is inevitable the property, at the corner of Beacon Avenue and the Pat Bay Highway, will be developed — possibly as a residential-commercial complex.

"It's a valuable piece of property... too valuable to be allowed to sit in its present state," Lang said.

"[Sidney] Mayor [Marie] Rosko is letting the society lead the way. That is wrong. Councils of the two municipalities should be demonstrating leadership qualities."

Lang said the society's decision to approach council asking for permission to create a temporary recreation vehicle park on Sanscha grounds during the Commonwealth Games is an example of council's lack of leadership.