

Nanaimo News Bulletin

Author suggests improvements to help rejuvenate Nanaimo



By Nanaimo News Bulletin

Published: **November 09, 2016 04:00 PM**

Updated: **November 09, 2016 01:251 PM**

Nanaimo should consider hosting a high-tech summit, constructing a respectable sports and entertainment facility, and planting thousands of trees in the downtown core in an effort to rejuvenate itself.

Those were some ideas that international author Gordon Hume suggested Nanaimo consider during a presentation hosted by the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce last week at the Shaw Auditorium.

Hume's presentation touched on a number of areas on which Nanaimo could improve, but the focus was mainly the city's need to re-energize its downtown core to attract tech companies and young people.

"You have to be a fully connected city, socially, technologically and physically. If you aren't connected as a city, then you aren't going to attract as many young people, those smart young people who are going to create jobs and companies and futures around the world," Hume said.

Although he highlighted some positives, such as the Harbourfront Walkway, he didn't shy away from criticism, calling the city's downtown "really boring."

"You have so many good things but you need some more," he said. "I was walking back to the hotel and the streets were not full. I have to tell you of downtown Nanaimo – you need to get some energy."

Hume, a former city councillor in London, Ont., explained that Nanaimo must develop strong infrastructure of all types and revitalize its downtown core in order to capture young talent. He said there are too many graduating students from Vancouver Island University leaving Nanaimo for another city to find work.

"To keep those bright young grads that are being produced out of VIU, Nanaimo has to offer great job possibilities, great infrastructure, great quality of life," he said.

Hume also noted recent events at city hall and Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation and stressed the importance of strong civic leadership as well as stability.

"Municipalities are the first responders of government. Their decisions increasingly influence the economy, the public realm of that municipality and how those blend together," he said. "That's why the economic development situation and the reports about the lack of stability at your city council are troubling to many people."

He said civic leaders need to have the courage to push their community forward and should not be afraid to make bold decisions, adding that they should also be able to come up with "game changing" ideas.

"This is a time for great leadership," Hume said.

Find this article at:

<http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/399679501.html>