

## The price of progress

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Some people are saying that Oliver Town council had already made up its mind on the Centennial RV Park rezoning before the public hearing began on May 23.

If that was the case, this leaves people wondering why a public hearing was held, other than to follow protocol.

One wonders if the majority of speakers had voiced their opposition, would that have changed the outcome?



The fact is many people expressed their support for a new hotel on the RV site, proving that the opponents weren't the only voice in the community.

But it was strange that most of the people who attended the meeting left before hearing what council members ultimately decided afterwards. Were they not interested in the outcome? Did they feel it was a foregone conclusion?

Oliver needs a hotel. Period. No ifs, ands or buts. Even most of the rezoning opponents agree.

But losing such beautiful green space to another concrete building (and parking lot) is hard to swallow and sticks in many a craw.

Joni Mitchell said it well in Big Yellow Taxi.

The trees. The trees. We hope they can leave some behind for people to enjoy. It's ironic that council has previously expressed great concern when people cut down trees in Oliver and don't replace them.

If this hotel development comes to fruition, hikers on the trail will see concrete on one side and a river on the other. Like Watermark Beach Resort in Osoyoos, you'll be able to watch people on their balconies, maybe even catch an episode of Dancing with the Stars on TV.

Someone recently joked that the developer won't need to build a swimming pool because Mother Nature will provide one every spring, free of charge.

Another question people are asking is what happens if the developer changes his mind and doesn't build on that site?

In the end, Oliver will finally be able to say it has a hotel to stop wealthy tourists from heading to Osoyoos for accommodation.

In a year's time, will former town manager Tom Szalay continue to say that our downtown "sucks?"

This hotel could be the start of a new economic era for Oliver. And nobody can accuse the Town anymore of not being developer-friendly.

It's definitely an opportunity that's hard to pass up. It's just too bad that our green space has to suffer for it.