

# Let the Sparks Fly!

Igniting connections between the past and future of Powell River's economy

Jim Agius, owner of Agius Builders Ltd. recently spoke with the Groundswell leadership to further the community conversation about the future of Powell River's economy, environment and social well-being.

**What makes our community/economy unique?**

**Jim** • Lifestyle. We have what I call "the five-minute lifestyle." We have everything we need or want within five minutes: the ocean and mountains – fishing, hiking, lawyers, doctors, airport, groceries, bankers. Powell River has all this to offer with no congestion, no panic. At the same time, we have access to the wider world.

**What could be done to make it even better?**

**Jim** • Thinking outside of the box. Developing our waterfront is positive; however, we could promote tourism and enjoy the town more if we focused on creating "Downtown Marine Avenue." The jobs will come if we think outside of the box and become the place people want to check out.

**What factors were critical to your success?**

**Jim** • My personal education and work experience. In high school I worked in the Beach Gardens kitchen. Cooking teaches you prep, process, organization. That experience led to a construction job, which turned into an apprenticeship, and then to teaching in the first construction program at Malaspina College. The knowledge I gained through teaching was fantastic for business.

The key to success is portraying humility and diplomacy with confidence in your ability. It's about having the background knowledge you need to be confident. And trust. Trust, genuineness, and humility are critical; they attract people. You have to know yourself, take care of yourself, put yourself first sometimes. If you aren't smiling, then your family and friends aren't smiling.

**What are your thoughts about economic sustainability?**



## AUDIO WALK PROJECT

**What:** Recording soundscapes that share our region's history.

**When:** January 16. Contact Megan Dulcie Dill at [megandulcie@shaw.ca](mailto:megandulcie@shaw.ca) for more information.

**Jim** • It's a complex issue. We are "green builders;" we can use advanced sustainable materials and methods. But people aren't choosing that, the demand isn't there. We have a long way to go to become an economy where sustainability is a given.

I remember visiting my grandparents in Malta and learning about how they lived, especially after WWII. There was no waste, they were forced to be sustainable. We live in the convenience culture. How do we get back?

Locally, we can do more to address sustainability. California just banned plastic bags; why aren't we? I'm interested in how the new city council will address sustainability. We have a good balance with a committed mayor, interested in job creation, and a council that is listening. A great mix to move forward with economic sustainability!

## CONFERENCE PLANNING

**What:** Groundswell conference planning

**When:** January 19, 2:30 pm

**Where:** VIU

**What's your advice for young entrepreneurs?**

**Jim** • Ask questions; go to established businesses and ask for help when you need it. Start small and don't get caught up in the profits. Pay yourself adequately but focus on building the business. Do your research. Use the resources we have: Community Futures, Career Link, Economic Development – they are a wealth of knowledge and support. Finally, have confidence in yourself, in your great idea.

**What about Powell River makes you proud?**

**Jim** • The people. Many of us are second or third generation immigrants; we have rich cultural heritages. We have beautiful views and amazing musical events. But it comes down to the people. I would do anything for my family, friends, for my peers; and know that the same would bounce right back to me. [PRL](#)



# GROUNDSWELL:



inspiring creativity, ideas, and relationships  
that advance the wellbeing of our community

Get involved in the Groundswell community audio walk project, recording soundscapes that share our region's history. Contact [megandulcie@shaw.ca](mailto:megandulcie@shaw.ca) for more information.

Next Groundswell  
Conference Planning  
meeting is Jan. 19,  
2:30 pm, VIU.  
Join us!