



Mayor's Report

October, 2017



The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) conference attended by Council was highly productive. In addition to the regular scheduled events of the convention, Council scheduled meetings with four of our new Government Ministers (Minister of Health Adrian Dix Health, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Judy Darcy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development Doug Donaldson, and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Claire Trevena). These meetings were tremendously beneficial as we were able to touch on many important issues affecting our community and these meetings also provided us with an opportunity to build a favorable relationship with our new Provincial Government. We also had scheduled meetings with representatives of BC Hydro and Airbnb to gather information on issues that can and will affect our Town going forward. The Conference provided Plenary Sessions, Study Sessions, Provincial Policy Sessions, daily early morning Clinics (I attended the ones on Uncivil Civic Engagement, Responsible Conduct Working Group, Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation in BC), as well we heard Addresses from Andrew Weaver Leader of the Green Party, Rich Coleman Interim Leader of the Liberals, the Keynote speaker Journalist Terry Milewski, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selena Robinson, and of course from John Horgan Premier of British Columbia. We also attended Provincial Town Hall Sessions, Small Towns Session, Annual Meetings and Principal Policy Sessions dealing with Resolutions. Evenings were filled with various networking receptions and our team spent one evening learning a little more about Airbnb where the guest speaker for Airbnb was actor Danny Glover. All in all, UBCM was hugely beneficial for the continued education of all of council as we continue to learn best practices for making the most responsible and sensible decisions for our Town as we move forward.

Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce for hosting its annual Business Showcase October 7. It was a great opportunity for council to engage with our citizens and talk about many of the key initiatives we are currently undertaking. We appreciate everyone who took the time to personally communicate with us and gather the facts and learn a bit more about the plans and direction we are moving towards regarding key infrastructure projects.

During Small Business Week the Town and Chamber of Commerce teamed up to present a meeting relating to business and economic development. There was a definite tone of optimism as the many guest speakers spoke enthusiastically about our communities future. As we continue to trend with positive growth our desirability and opportunities are also trending in a favorable direction. Partnerships were a strong component to our recent successes and the many available partnerships will be instrumental as we all work together to strengthen our business sector.

At a special meeting October 2, 2017 Council awarded the Greendale Water Main bid award to Hazelwood Construction Inc. for a cost of \$685,245.57. It was important to have the special meeting rather than wait for the Regular Council Meeting of October 24th so work could commence as soon as possible to meet the February 16, 2018 deadline specified for the completion of this project under the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund program.

The first phase of Centennial Park is nearing completion. With the playing surface now complete, the next steps will include the installation of fencing and dugouts. It has always been our intent to get the fields to a state where they can begin playing ball again, first and foremost. Similar to how all the different wants for Centennial Park have been phased, costing for some of these wants and needs have also been staged. And yes the fencing and dugouts are a need, not a want, so council is budgeting to have them included in the 2018 budget with the installation to be completed before ball season. These items were not included in the first phase as the additional cost would have had to have been included in the 2017 budget, even though the need was not required until 2018.

The Cowichan Lake Recreation Commission is searching for a volunteer to help display our local sports history. There are a couple of beautiful display cabinets in the ice arena that could use a volunteer curator to organize memorabilia and photographs to show the arena's visitors how important sport was and is to our community. If anyone thinks they might have an interest in learning more about sports history in the Cowichan Lake area and presenting it to the public through the display cases, please contact the arena office at 250-749-6742.

Volunteers are so valuable to our community and they truly enrich us in so many different ways. I want to thank a new group of volunteers who have organized themselves into a group that is now available to pick up "sharps" in our Town. Needles that are recklessly disposed of create a terrible risk to unsuspecting people who might come across them. If you find needles please do not touch them. You can call 250-732-4100 and someone will attend and dispose of these sharps safely. Please educate yourself, your children and all others on the dangers of disposed needles and the importance of having them disposed of safely. I admire this new group of volunteers who have recognized the grave risk "sharps" pose and have taken on the responsibility to protect us all from harming ourselves. Thank you!!

I would also like to congratulate the Hospital Auxiliary on its 50th anniversary. This amazing group of lady volunteers has provided so much good on behalf of our community for the past fifty years. Volunteers like these don't do it for recognition but there is little doubt that they deserve to be recognized and appreciated for their tremendous service. Thank you for what is truly a great accomplishment.

An information meeting regarding the Cowichan water use plan was held Monday October 23 at the Youbou Hall. A critical point is approaching where hard decisions will need to be made in drier years between river flows, lake levels and potentially building new options for storage. Compass Resource Management has been hired to work with the public to determine the best solution to manage this growing concern. Please check out the webpage cowichanwup.ca and engage yourself in this plan that is so vital to all of us.

Ross Forrest, Mayor