



Mayor's Report

September, 2017



With the last census indicating an 8.5% increase in our population, we have experienced a big spike in the number of building permits issued by the Town for 2017. The increase in building starts has certainly stimulated our local economy with particular regard to the construction industry, which does help overcome our total dependence on tourism alone.

Construction has increased to the point that it is becoming difficult to find a builder who is not too busy to commit to build or renovate in an "I need it done now" time frame. People now have to wait longer to fulfill their building needs with respect to their individual projects. This is also having a similar impact on larger construction companies whose excessive workloads are also affecting the infrastructure projects the Town have earmarked to be undertaken. The Greendale Road Water Main upgrade is a good example of this. During the past summer contractors were not keen to bid on our Greendale Road Water Main upgrade because they were too busy elsewhere for them to guarantee meeting the time frame imposed for the project. The project has now been re-tendered with a closing date of October 2, 2017.

Tenders will soon be going out for additional water main upgrades; this includes the Ohtaki-Duckpond footbridge and the Greendale Trestle. Both of these projects involve relocating the water mains out of the river and elevating them onto the bridge.

It will take an estimated one year to complete our new water treatment plant project. Prior to the clearing and removal of trees, a fire plan proposal had to be approved. Underground piping will be done first, before the cement slab is poured and the plant building completed. The installation of the equipment in the treatment plant will occur last. This is the largest project the town has embarked on and when completed, it will certainly reach our goal of meeting the standards imposed by Island Health for the quality of the drinking water for our community.

The CLEC water system upgrade is now in the design stage before we can tender the project. Given the positive economic benefits that the facility provides our community we will work to make further improvements to the water drawn for the education center.

Improvements will likely take place to our boat ramp the first week of October when the lake water level is at its lowest. A Section 11 notification under the new Water Sustainability Act had to be issued prior to commencement of this project. We certainly recognize the high demand for this amenity and the need for a safe launching ramp.

Each year Council selects a day in September to hold a barbeque luncheon for the Town employees to show our appreciation for the work they do to better our community. It is not always easy for public employees to meet the expectations and demands of the general public. The quick response to call-outs at all hours of the night for emergencies such as power outages that affect our pump and lift stations, snow removal and many other circumstances helps prevent interruptions in our daily routines. Customer service is good, our water quality is safe and healthy, our garbage is consistently picked up from our curbside on time, the public washrooms are serviced and kept clean, our boulevards and parks look beautiful, and all of our administrative and legal obligations are fulfilled. These are some of the plethora of jobs our employees attend to and for this we thank them. We are proud of the work and sacrifices every employee makes to ensure the expectations of the public they serve are met. We recognize there is always room for improvement and we are grateful that you also recognize that our goal is to make our Town a little better each and every day. It is said that success rarely comes without a few bumps along the way and all of our employees work consistently to smooth out those bumps.

Council meetings are always open to the public and we appreciate those few who do attend and try to stay engaged with what transpires around council decisions. We recognize that most people would rather not attend these meetings but if you are truly concerned it would be most beneficial if you read the minutes from the respective council meetings available on our website if you want facts that can be substantiated. An awful lot is lost if reliance is simply based on loose gossip or hearsay. Council has a strong commitment for dealing with the facts which everyone should be committed to. We have to continue to focus on the bright future of Lake Cowichan. Having the support and trust of our citizens is something we must continue to earn so we can make decisions that truly make us a better and forward looking community.

Council has purchased a booth at the Business Showcase on October 7th, 2017 and we welcome you to come out and take the opportunity to engage us in conversation regarding our community. We will have draft drawings of many of the infrastructure projects that we are undertaking both current and of those planned for the near future. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you at this showcase event.

Ross Forrest, Mayor