



# Mayor's Report

September, 2018



In August, 2019, Lake Cowichan will be celebrating its 75th year since inauguration as a municipality. A committee has been formed to organize a big party for the Town to celebrate this special occasion. Paul Jordan and Loretta Puckrin are co-chairing the committee that has already begun making preparations for the event. They will have something for all ages who have lived in this great community. The greater the participation by the public, the greater the collective experience will be. There are so many memories we all have about Lake Cowichan and the best thing about that is memories can be passed down from generation to generation. There will be an opportunity for our community to come together and show our community spirit more than ever to display the pride we have in our Town. If you are interested in helping to plan this memorable celebration, please respond to [lc75th@gmail.com](mailto:lc75th@gmail.com).

*The Cody Classic Ball Tournament has been taking place in the Cowichan Valley for the past twenty years. The tournament's goal each year is to raise money for families having to deal with kids with cancer.* Lake Cowichan residents have given their support to this tournament by either playing, generously donating, or by sacrificing their time to raise funds for this worthy cause. I want to give a shout out to two eleven year old local boys, Liam Fawcett and Reid Nahirnick who have been growing their hair out for two full years for this very noble cause. Not only did they raise significant money to be disbursed as needed (hopefully rarely), but their long locks of hair will be donated and used for wigs for cancer patients. I'm not sure of the final total they raised but the large display cheque they presented was for \$3,696.56. However an additional amount was also raised at the field prior to their haircuts and I was told that the total raised was over \$5,000. Amazing job Reid and Liam! I was inspired seeing the support and cheering by the Lake Cowichan contingent as these thoughtful boys lost their locks. Everyone is very proud of you.

Every now and then someone will turn to social media to show they are disgruntled with a bylaw issue. All our bylaws were created with the good intention of protecting our entire community as a whole. It is imperative that the town be consistent in its enforcement of bylaws and not selectively choose what to enforce. Bylaw enforcement issues are not within the purview of the responsibilities of the Mayor and Councillors. Council creates bylaws and policies and once adopted it is NOT Council's role to enforce or choose how and when to enforce such laws. If members of the community don't like a particular bylaw, there is a process for public consultation and potential change with the greater good of the public always trumping private self-interests. During the bylaw enactment process is when Council has a say with regards to bylaw regulations, definitely not during enforcement proceedings.

Council attended the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) convention in Whistler. Each member of Council had the option to attend the workshops they were most interested in or what they thought might best pertain to our local issues. Some members of Council attended study tours on the first day while I attended the Mayors of BC Caucus.

This year's Caucus was different from those previous as it was solely dedicated to one concerning topic; Opioid Crisis.

## Highlights of Caucus

Lead speaker Minister of Health and Addiction Judy Darcy started off by saying that before this day is done another three or four people in the Province will die because of this overdose crisis. So far there have been over 856,000 visits to overdose sites in BC. She stated that stigma traps people and leads to people using drugs alone. She asked everyone to leave their negative ideas and baggage outside the room and when the meeting is over you can pick it up as you leave. The Minister said it is not easy to be a leader at these times, but it is imperative to use every tool at our disposal to help preventing overdoses and saving lives.

Dr. Mark Tindall the Deputy Health Officer who has over twenty-five years working in harm reduction spoke next. There were 164 deaths in July. Everyone is affected, people can't sleep in East Vancouver because of the constant sound of emergency vehicles. Fentanyl was found in 4 out of 5 overdose cases. Toxic drug supply is a cause of concern. People are dying in isolation, 78% of overdoses resulted with no call for help. BC has the most comprehensive Naloxone program worldwide. Supervised sites are extremely successful in

engaging people across the Province. The Counter Stigma Campaign is in progress. Housing for addicts has not resolved the drug problem, people are in and out of house all day long searching for drugs.

Decriminalization is a solution that is necessary. The Community impact from losing a family member is tragic.

Next was Minister of Community Affairs and Housing Salena Robinson. There are 189 Local Governments in BC. With that, Mayors get to hear from every realm of their community and are the important link to all levels of society. We need to work together to find solutions. The housing problem is something that no one level can solve alone. As partners, every decision has a larger impact. Quote from the Minister, "Mayors are always on call and when sh\*\* happens it's our responsibility to step up". Political courage is to do the right thing, take on the challenges that come with the Service as Mayors.

Final speaker was Dr. Don Macferson. The rubber hits the road at the Municipal level. We don't have a bigger addiction problem, we have a larger overdose problem. Bad policies and punitive criminal approaches to drugs have not been effective. The model of criminalizing is not working. The iron Law of Prohibition- the harder the enforcement, the harder the drugs.

Small Town forum topics included Kaslo City Hall renovations and the taxation impacts of brownfield sites.

Words into Action - Implementing Codes of Conduct

Key points from forum on Code of Conduct. These should be signed publicly at the swearing in ceremony. Should be imbedded into oath of office. Make your Code of Conduct document to reflect your Council. Have a mechanism in place to debate the issue, not debate each other. Put your code of conduct in place before things go wrong. Keep document alive and continue to revisit it. Post code of conduct in Council Chambers so everyone is familiar with it.

Never let Council do its own investigations, pay for outside assistance. Escalation must be prevented, stop problems early. Staff must be defended from aggressive Councillors and the public or it will cost tax payers a lot of money.

Keynote speaker Arlene Dickinson of Dragons Den spoke on:

Communications has allowed major businesses to locate in smaller centers. Feeling and environment in community is what will attract them. People want to be able to grow their families in real communities. Our job is to create policies that attract entrepreneurs to come and raise their families. Principal persuasion, not manipulation persuasion. You can always do more. Conviction in doing the right thing. Arlene says it's not local governments' job to create businesses, it's our job to create a community and then businesses will come. When Council continually sets the stage you lose your Chamber of Commerce's and others by taking their role away. Chambers want to remain relevant. Celebrate the businesses we have. People do and should care about where they live. Young people are looking for experiences.

Addresses at the UBCM were made by Premier Hogan, Andrew Weaver Leader of the Green Party and Andrew Wilkinson of the Official Opposition.

Speaker Salena Robinson Minister of Community Affairs and Housing

Talking points included: Housing Hub; Partnership with United Church for housing program; First Nations Housing; Child Care Program; and Community recreation and culture fund- accepted populations under 5,000 will be 100% funded

Growing Prosperity Cabinet Town Hall Panel consisted of

Minister of Agriculture Lana Popam, Minister of Forest, Lands and Natural Resources Doug Donaldson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy George Heyman. Notes from this panel included: Designing a process that keeps us out of litigation; and Build First Nation Partnership right at the beginning of process.

Better bang for your buck with bylaw forum: Minor offences result in ineffective sentencing from courts; and use the enforcement tools we already have or it becomes costly.

Regulating and Enforcing Short-Term Rentals:

Common issues included noise, parking and garbage issues. Tofino has been regulating short-term rentals since 2005 and have 231 homes in compliance with STR. Their business license fee for short term rentals was doubled to \$750 to cover additional enforcement requirements. Homes should be for people to live in, short term use is secondary. Council Initiative was established with the aim of retaining Long-term rental

housing for residents. A regulatory framework for short term rentals (STR's), including business regulations and enforcement strategy was established. Power point presentations for Victoria and Richmond were made for comparative purposes.

We as a Council had a scheduled meeting with the Claire Travena, Minister of Transportation.

We also introduced two resolutions at the UBCM conference. The Alternate Tax Sale Redemption Date resolution b104 was not endorsed. The Disposition of Derelict School Buildings resolution b154 was endorsed.

Just a reminder that the UBCM section of this report is just notes of what was presented at convention.

Since this is my last report prior to the Municipal Election October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 I just want to applaud all the candidates who have put their names forward for the upcoming election. There is no greater reward than serving your community and you should all be commended for your commitment to democracy.



Ross Forrest, Mayor