

## ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS February 2018

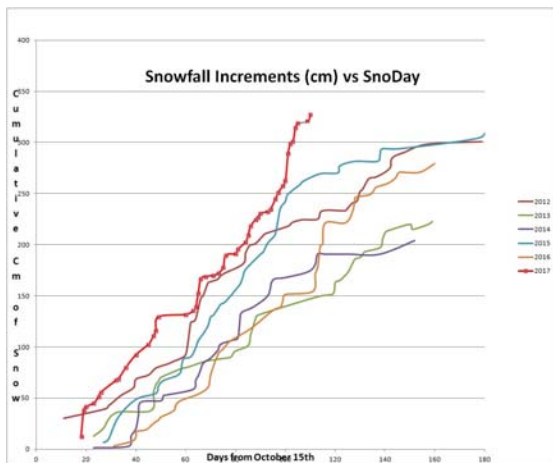
Issue #33

### Message from Mayor Kathy:

Rossland celebrated yet another outstanding Winter Carnival at the end of January. Many thanks to the multitude of volunteers and organizers. Much fun was had at all of the events. The downtown businesses were hopping and our locals and visitors had a super time. Council's Pipe Dream sled had the dubious honor of coming in dead last of those that finished, earning the "Most Honest Award."

Around Carnival weekend we were also challenged by a tremendous amount of snow. I wanted to share some important information about your city's operations. With the heavy snowfall this winter we have heard a large number of complaints and comments about snow clearing. Residents need to understand that the City has limited resources and a lot of responsibilities. We also have policies and plans in place and competent staff with years of experience.

Local snow fall has been tracked in a graph prepared by Bill Micklethwaite. As you can see by the red line the snow this year was relentless, the crews never had time to catch up.



Rossland Operations staff consists of 1 working foreman and 14 full time employees; 12 are trained in snow clearing. We have 2 sandtrucks, 2 snowblowers, two graders, 1 loader, 1 sidewalk sander and 3 contract skidsteers working when we have more than 15 cm of snow accumulation. During a big storm event, staff and equipment work up to 20 hours per day. We have the same number of employees and pieces of equipment that we had before the City expanded to service Red Mtn and Redstone. We're doing more with the same resources because we are cognizant of concerns about rising taxes. It's a delicate balance.

Responsibilities under Operations include roads, parks, building maintenance, downtown amenities, trails, lighting, signage, water treatment, water distribution, sewer collection, storm and equipment maintenance. I want to go into detail about winter road work but remember, all these other responsibilities are ongoing.

The City owns and operates the following buildings: City Hall, Miners' Hall, Rossland Arena, the pool, the water treatment plant and the pump house at Red Mountain, the public works yard and buildings on the site. The City also owns and maintains additional facilities that are operated by others including the Public Library, Rossland Museum, Youth Action Network building, Seniors' Hall and Golden Bear Daycare.

All snow clearing is done as per our snow clearing policy <http://www.rossland.ca/operations/roads> Snow removal includes: plowing and sanding of streets, downtown snow clearing, cul-de-sacs, parking lots, alleys and lanes, snow blowing and hauling of excessive accumulations of 10 to 15 cm in the downtown core, clearing and hauling of snow obstructing intersection visibility and also clearing areas to prevent large quantities of sand ending up in our drainage system. Winter sand preparation and storage is done in the fall. There are over 62 km of roadways to maintain within our city limits. The City is in a constant battle with homeowners who park vehicles on the road or push the snow from their driveways back into the street which causes a hazard to other drivers. Please park on your own property. It's your responsibility to shovel a space for your vehicle.

I want to make sure everyone understands, to state the obvious: We dealt with a large amount of snow this year. Our crews and equipment were operating long, long hours during the heavy snowfalls. They start 5:00 am and work late into the night, but none of them complained. The number of times the roads were plowed and the sidewalks cleared was double over what it was last year. This represented 274 hours of overtime for our crew and more than double the fuel expenses for our equipment. We have an amazing crew at public works- most are locals and they are proud of the job they do for the community they love. I know most Rosslanders understand what it means to live in snow country and appreciate the work that we do. However, there some people who can't resist telling us how to do our job. For those that did so: Think for a moment how you'd feel if some of our staff or council came to your place of work and told you how to do your work? How would you feel if their comments were combined with obscenities? Or perhaps these people started yelling at your front desk staff who have absolutely no influence on snow clearing or policy? What happened to civil discourse?

If you live in snow country it's your responsibility to have good tires on your car, maybe even studded snow tires if you don't have an all-wheel drive vehicle. It's unrealistic to expect the City to prepare your driving surface to match your individual vehicle's capabilities. It's like expecting the sidewalks to be kept suitable for people in tennis shoes in the winter. Having a suitable vehicle is the same thing.

I have had many messages of support and gratitude for the job our staff do keeping the streets clear of snow. But I also get my share of complaints and comments, though I don't hear nearly all of them. In local government we often say, "ah well, dealing with the public can be rough and you have to take rude comments. It's just part of the job". But really it isn't. There is no excuse for some of the nasty behaviour our workers have been subjected

to. It's often the way something is said, not the actual content of the message. \_\_\_\_\_

We are doing the best we can with what we have. Some of the comments and suggestions we have heard would require us to buy more trucks and equipment and hire more people. It's all about level of service. If you want more then you have to be willing to pay for it through higher taxes. Our taxes come from residential taxpayers. We don't have any large industrial taxpayer to contribute. We try to balance what we provide with what we can afford.

Along with our staff, I greatly appreciate all the positive comments from people who understand the challenges the City faces, especially after a huge storm event.

### **Council News:**

Council heard a very informative presentation from the Red Mtn Racers about the **Sport Chek National Technical Championships** and the **Canadian National Ski Cross Championships**, for 10 days in March. This is a historic event as it falls exactly 50 years after the first World Cup Race ever held in North America where our own Nancy Greene and France's Jean Claude Killey raced to victory. The event was held in Rossland in 1968 and attended by 7000 people. This is also the 120th anniversary of the first National Championships which were *also* held in Rossland. The energy and dedication of volunteers continues to astound me. There will be plenty of opportunities to volunteer for the big ski races in March so step right up! To get involved contact Christine, [candison@redmountainracers.com](mailto:candison@redmountainracers.com).

We also heard an indepth presentation from the **Rossland Museum & Discovery Centre** detailing all the terrific programs and improvements to the museum. The Renewal Project refers primarily to the physical structure of the building but it's very clear from the presentation that there's lots of new energy and enthusiasm from the board. Go visit! Congrats for the \$10k grant from the BC Rural Dividend Fund to help them to move forward with Phase 2 of the Renewal project. This will kick off planning for the Mining Experience and the Atrium project. Both will be terrific additions and attractions to the museum.

**Council adopted our 2018 Strategic Plan.** While the plan covers projects that we hope will continue past this term, we have plenty to work on in this last year. See the details here: [http://www.rossland.ca/sites/default/files/agenda\\_planning-and-development\\_february-15-strategic-plan-2016-2018-final\\_2018-02-15.pdf](http://www.rossland.ca/sites/default/files/agenda_planning-and-development_february-15-strategic-plan-2016-2018-final_2018-02-15.pdf)

**Council reviewed and approved several policies** including the Financial Assistance for Use of Facilities, Parks and Pools. This refers to taxpayer money we set aside to help our residents use the facilities owned and operated by Trail. Youth sport teams may apply to the \$10k fund to receive assistance. Support is limited to 25% of the difference between what Trail charges Trail residents (and others) versus what Rosslanders must pay. Ideally this would be a means tested program so that we are only helping those who really need the financial aid but that is just not feasible with our small staff.

**Council reviewed and adopted several bylaws**, including Recreation Fees and Charges, our intention is to bring our fees

in to alignment with what neighbouring communities charge for similar facilities. The West Kootenay Inter-Community business licence is quite popular and has now been expanded to include Salmo. If your business is operating in several Kootenay communities this could be a cost-effective option for you. Ask at City Hall or check our website. We also gave direction to staff on sensible regulations for the management of fireworks in our fire prone area. Most regulation is handled through the Wildfire Act but we want to require permits for large fireworks shows. Any time there is a Category 2 Fire Ban, fireworks of any sort are prohibited. Due to the high risk of fire in the Kootenays, we wanted to look at this issue.

Council is considering a bylaw to prohibit smoking or vaping anything in public spaces; the real focus is on areas where youth congregate. We would like to hear from the public on this topic. With new legislation about marijuana coming soon we wanted to get ahead of any potential issues this will create.

Some homeowners requested **new zoning** to comply with our rules for establishing a **short term rental accommodation** in their home. If you are interested, be sure to contact City Hall as approvals are limited to just one per block.

Council has set **public hearings on March 12<sup>th</sup> for two new proposals at Red Mtn**. One for a hostel at the base area and one for a 10 cabin tourist accommodation and clubhouse development near Paradise Lodge. These are exciting ideas to offer more accommodation at the resort. Come to the public hearing or email us to give us your views.

### **Did you know?**

**Congratulations to the Rossland Legion!** They got a New Horizons grant for \$22k for renovations to their facility.

The City is pleased to announce that we have received \$25,000 from Columbia Basin Trust's Community Development Program for Phase 2 of the renovation of the new Rossland **Youth Action Network Space** for the north bay, multi-purpose room. With the south bay renovation nearing completion these funds are essential to get the reno finished this spring. The Youth Action Network staff, local trades and volunteers are working diligently to get the building open for programming. Tentative opening date: March 5th. An official grand opening is being planned for April 28th. For questions, or to volunteer, contact [yancoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:yancoordinator@gmail.com)

**Heritage Week** throughout BC is celebrated from February 19th to 26th. You are encouraged to look at our heritage buildings and see if you can identify the 29 buildings on our Official Community Heritage Register. Check out our website, [heritagerossland.ca](http://heritagerossland.ca) for the full details.

**The City has received an Age Friendly grant for \$25k** to create and improve senior services in Rossland. With Trall and Montrose we will be working with the Whistler Centre for Sustainability to continue the work started with the help of a CBT grant in 2017.

**Be in touch!** City Hall 362-7396. Contact Council through [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca) Next Council meeting: **Monday February 26th, at 6pm**. Come join us! All are welcome!