

## ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS

August 2017

Issue #28

### Message from Mayor Kathy

There have been lots of hot topics to match the hot summer weather! From recreational swimming holes to streetlights the discussions in the public forums as well as around the council table were lively. For a brief moment a group of locals wanted to organize an off road triathlon using our trails for hiking and mountain biking as well as swim in the Ophir reservoir. The discussion was passionate and Council agreed to the single day event for up to 25 participants. In the end the organizers decided to create a Quadrathlon event instead. This event will include a swim in Nancy Greene Lake, a road ride and the trails portion as originally contemplated. An off road Quadrathlon could be a really fun event to entice visitors to our area in the summer. We hope the event is a great success.

### Council News:

Council only had one, very busy, very long meeting in August. Among other things, we approved **several temporary use and development permits** for improvements and expansions to the **Red Mountain parking lot**. Despite the well-used winter shuttle, the ski hill experienced 30 days of significant over flow parking extending down the Old Red Road, compared to nine days in the previous year. The project will be closely monitored by an environmental professional to ensure water quality in the small creek is undisturbed. In the future, these sites are slated for residential development in the resort's master plan. Parking will be a temporary use for a few years until the build-out at the ski hill warrants developing parking across the highway.

We approved several **infill developments** and we are pleased to see some **light industrial development** taking shape out on the old Cascade Highway.

We approved a **duplex on Thompson Ave**. While any change to a neighbourhood is hard for the people already living there, the applicant complied with all of our rules and regulations including our Official Community Plan. Council encourages infill and multifamily development for a number of reasons: We don't have much space to expand within the city boundaries and we recognize the need to diversify our housing stock. Multifamily units are more efficient in terms of space and energy usage. The old Cook Ave school site and the Emcon lot are the best and practically only places within our old township site that are highly suitable for this type of housing. The previous council adopted sensible regulations for multi-family projects that will help these projects fit into traditional single-family areas as best

they can. For instance, a duplex may only take up 5% more of a lot than a single family house and is subject to the same height restrictions. The duplex that was just approved is only 3% bigger and no higher than a single-family home could have been.

On another hot topic: Council got a lot of feedback on our attempt to reduce expenses and create more of a "dark sky" town through our **Streetlight Improvement Project**. Some people do not think it is an improvement at all while others are disappointed that we are not going far enough! Like so many issues around town passions ran high on both sides of the issue. In the end Council decided continue with the policy as initially devised. We will work with individuals to modify the lights where needed, and will take special circumstances into account. We understand that in some areas the lights can be lowered on the stanchions to decrease the range and keep unwanted light out of homes. The LEDs that we use are 3000 Kelvin instead of 4000 (in line with American Medical Association recommendations) so they are less blue/white. Any change will be noticeable just because the new ones are brighter and the old, fading ones were at the end of their life. We will be installing some new lights at corners for safety. We will be removing redundant, midblock lights on the more lightly travelled routes and dead-end streetlights will be removed. The good news is that we will be saving money by converting to LED lights and by removing some of the lights. In the long run this is a huge cost savings as lights need replacement. LED bulbs last up to 15 years vs sodium vapour streetlights which need replacement every 3-5 years.

Currently lights to be removed have been bagged in lower Rossland. The crews will move on to upper Rossland in the near future. Please pay attention to the lights near you. We will consider requests for special circumstances, or claims that we are not following the criteria we have set. We recognize that it's impossible to satisfy everyone, but we strive to serve the public as best we can.

As with anything, change is difficult, especially initially. It's human nature to like the status quo. However, we are trying to modernize our town, be fiscally responsible as well as maintain public safety. World-wide, many cities are reducing or even eliminating street lighting. There are neighbourhoods in Victoria with far more people, more traffic, narrower streets, more nighttime wildlife (deer everywhere), and not a single streetlight. Pedestrians see headlights from far away. Cars see pedestrians from far away. Cars drive slower.

For those concerned about navigating their driveways or walkways without a municipal streetlight the solution is

simple: install a motion detector light on your property. The city is not able to meet everyone's individual needs.

The harm of light pollution has been well documented. It has been shown to cause health problems such as depression, insomnia and other sleep disorders, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. It causes ecological problems for birds and insects. It throws off the natural growing cycle for plants. It wastes energy. In addition to blocking the view of the night sky it actually reduces nighttime vision. Our eyes adjust to darkness quite well if given the chance. To learn more, check out <http://www.darksky.org>.

In our continuing efforts to modernize the corporation we reviewed some **new bylaws and policies to address bylaw enforcement** to give our new bylaw officer some clarity and direction for enforcement.

We discussed our **Short Term Rental regulations**. We welcome more options for visitors to Rossland, but want a level playing field with licensed accommodators, and don't want to squeeze out all the long-term rental space. If you have been or are contemplating operating a short-term rental of any sort please contact City Hall to learn about the new rules that will be adopted in the upcoming months. Operating a short-term rental will involve zoning, getting a business license, parking requirements, and a fee to Tourism Rossland similar to what licensed accommodators pay. Short term Rentals will only be allowed on a property where there is a permanent resident residing, and only one per block will be permitted. Properties that are already zoned for short-term rentals must have a valid business license or lose the zoning. After a 6 month grace period, fines will be levied for non-compliance. Thanks for your cooperation.

Council decided to continue booking **SD20 recreation facilities** for community initiated activities. Groups wanting to use the gym at RSS may still contact the City to book. However, it is important that the coordinators for these activities continue to take responsibility to collect waivers and fees. Our recreation department spent about 50 hours per season on this service. These activities are outside the City's recreation programs.

Council gave a Temporary Use Permit to **Rossland Search and Rescue** to store their equipment in a Seacan on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SAR is hoping to have a new home soon but for now they need a place to store their gear.

Council decided not to establish a **Recreational Site Task Force** to explore the creation a recreational swimming spot at one of our reservoirs. While it is recognized there is significant interest in this concept, even if the idea was feasible, adding the expense of another recreation facility to our financial responsibilities

would be fiscally irresponsible. Creating a new facility, even one as rustic as swimming in a reservoir, requires careful consideration of a variety of factors, each with some expense: parking, sanitation, security, liability, capital infrastructure for docks, access to the water, safety of the dam etc. In addition, while Ophir is not currently used as a source of drinking water, it is critical to have it for both domestic and fire protection uses.

Council wants to thank the **Arena Task Force** for taking the initiative to submit a proposal to the Heinz Kraft Community Play competition. If successful, the \$250k prize would be used for renovations and a dry floor to make the arena more usable in the non-ice season. There is no financial contribution from the City required but staff time would be needed if we win. This group is working well together and their efforts are appreciated.

Council had a good discussion and heard from many citizens on **whether or not to keep the covered stairway** at that connects Spokane St to lower Rossland. Council decided to leave the stairway in place for now. The new sidewalk on Leroi will provide an attractive alternative that we hope sees a lot of use.

**The LeRoi/Spokane Street infrastructure improvement project** is proceeding on time and on budget. Many thanks to all of the Leroi residents who have so graciously put up with the construction and to all the lower Rossland residents who have dealt with the detour. Your continued patience is appreciated, as is your adherence to traffic safety.

60% of home inspections have been completed for our **Inflow and Infiltration Investigation program** Inspector Rick can be reached at 807-700-3025

### ***Did you know?***

Great news everyone! **Visa and MasterCard Credit Card payments are now accepted online** through the City's website! The link is available on the City's homepage under **Online Services**. Simply click on "**Pay by Credit Card**" and you will go to the secure payment site. Then just follow the onscreen instructions, all you need to know is your account number (and credit card details). The charge will be 1.75% which goes directly to the service provider. The fee is indicated very clearly in the process and also on the confirmation email that is sent. Right now we are set up for paying Property Tax, Utilities, and Pet Licences. Business Licence functionality will be set up in the last quarter of 2017 so we will be ready for 2018 Business Licence payments.

**Be in touch!** City Hall 362-7396. Contact Council through [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca) **Next Council meeting: TUESDAY September 5th, at 6pm** Come join us! All are welcome! Public input starts at 6pm.

