

ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS

August 2015

Issue #7

Note from Mayor Kathy

My heart goes out to those communities across the province that have suffered from wildfires this season. It's important to know that Rossland has emergency procedures in place if we are ever struck by a major disaster. Our Emergency Operations Centre would be established at the arena. We would immediately notify the provincial emergency management team for support. If conditions warranted, Evacuation Alerts would be issued. If conditions deteriorated, Evacuation Notices would be issued through the media, our website, and door-to-door notification by the RCMP and other emergency workers. It's important to know that no community is alone in case of emergency.

Rossland has taken advantage of every grant offered to reduce wildfire fuel around the perimeter of our town. Doing this preventive work has been our policy for the last number of years and it should pay off if a fire ever threatens us.

Council News:

Drought Conditions: Our reservoirs have dropped well below full capacity due to the unusually dry season and remarkably low creek levels. We are very concerned. Due to the amount of ash from wildfires our water filters are struggling to function. Effective immediately, we have increased our water restriction level to **Stage 4**.

Stage 4 Water Restrictions:

- a) Watering of lawn areas is prohibited.
- b) Garden watering only permitted by hand-held hose with a spring-loaded shut off device or by means of hand-held containers.
- c) No water shall be used for swimming pools, wading pools, garden ponds, or decorative fountains unless they are self-circulating.
- d) Use of hose to wash sidewalks, driveways, buildings or to water boulevards is prohibited.
- e) Home washing of vehicles is prohibited.

Business walk- in conjunction with the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, and with help from the Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation, Council is undertaking an outreach program to connect with our local business people. We want to hear their important priorities and how the City can help insure that Rossland remains a resilient community. Mayor and Councillors will be visiting businesses Oct 20th between 10am and 1pm. Watch for more information.

Cost savings in action! It was brought to Council's attention that the City has historically been plowing parts of town that are essentially private driveways. Effective with the first snowfall, this freebie will no longer exist. All effected homeowners will be offered the opportunity to pay for the service from the City, handle snow removal from their property themselves or hire a private contractor. This is estimated to save the City thousands of dollars and is more equitable to all taxpayers.

Tourism Rossland presented an informative report on their **Resort Development Strategy** currently being developed as required by the Province. We will continue to use the funding from the Province to support the shuttles, signage and other tourism projects.

Public input sought: We are looking for your ideas as Council creates its next strategic plan. We will be building on the projects and goals stated in our initial strategic plan. We will provide information about what we have done so far, and get your input on the City's future direction. Date: September 17th. Drop in to the Miners' Hall from 4pm- 8:30pm. Presentation at 7pm with beverages for sale, and pizza snacks for free!

Financial Planning- Council will start our financial planning process in October instead of January this year. While the annual budget won't be finalized until March as we won't have the final requisition amount from the Regional District until then, an early start will give staff and our community partners some assurance of the 2016 budget. It just makes sense!

Council has received a mostly positive response to our **new, reduced speed limits**. We are happy to see our streets become safer. Please pay attention and create a habit of mellow driving. With the enthusiastic support of the RCMP & ICBC, our new policy reduces the speed limit from 40km to 30km on most of our city streets. The safety of our kids, pedestrians and pets is paramount.

Permissive Tax Exemptions: Council approves property tax exemptions each year for various nonprofit organizations. The total annual exemption is around \$23k. This is a common way for municipalities to express tangible support for the good work done by these community organizations. The City has required the applications to be submitted annually. However, the Province allows for the exemptions to be given for multiple years. Council decided to reduce the burden on both the applicants and our staff by extending the exemptions for 3 years and making the process more of a staff function. Council will only review new or changed applications. Applicants will only be required to apply every 3 years. Efficiency and savings in action!

Amendments to the Financial Plan- As the year progresses, some new projects arise that need to be addressed. To properly account for all funds, the financial plan must be amended. The August 17th agenda package, available at www.rossland.ca, shows the specific expenditures that were approved.

New Reports- Council is now getting monthly project reports from Public Works detailing what has been accomplished. We are also receiving quarterly Financial Plan updates to enable us to compare actual spending to the budgeted amounts and ask questions. This keeps Council current on the operations and spending of our city. Staff is doing an excellent job keeping us informed.

Getting to Home- On Sept 18th your mayor and members of Council will be sleeping under the Victoria St. bridge in Trail. We are participating in a fundraising program to help move local homeless into permanent housing. The project has helped over 280 people so far with housing and other essential services. Contact your favorite member of council if you want to make a pledge.

Other Council approvals: We approved a new grant application for \$300k for the Miners Hall project. We authorized further engineering and design work to move our Washington Street project to the tender phase. We approved a grant application for a hazard risk assessment of our facilities. We're changing the zoning from commercial to multifamily residential on a 1st Ave lot to create more downtown housing. We put a city lot on Queen Street in Lower Rossland up for sale. All projects will increase the vibrancy of our great town.

Food for thought: At future meetings Council will, or might, consider: changes to our Tax Exemption Revitalization bylaw, changes to our business licenses, updating Design Guidelines, reducing our lighting costs while increasing our enjoyment of the beautiful night sky, review of our fees and charges for recreation, banning smoking in parks where children play, banning the cosmetic use of pesticides and herbicides, and permanently closing Nickleplate Park to traffic among other interesting topics.

Community Q & A

Q: What is the best way to offer a suggestion or make a complaint about city operations?

A: Please contact City Hall directly. It is not appropriate to accost one of our employees on the job and suggestions can best be acted on if submitted in writing.

Q: Can you install a speed limit sign in my neighborhood?

A: At this point the City doesn't have a budget for more signs but submit your request for future consideration.

Q: Are you changing the name of Pioneer Park to Esling Park? Why?

A: Council has been requested by the Heritage Commission to change the name back to Esling Park, the historically accurate name and to honor one of our founding fathers. The park will still have signage that shares the broader history of our community, shows photos of historic Rossland and a trails map. Decision on the name change will be made at our Sept. 14th meeting.

Did you know?

Don't be the cause of a bear's death! Please remove edible items from your property: fruit on trees or the ground, dog food, birdseed, garbage etc. The hot weather has reduced the forage this year. Bears are being seen in town and becoming both accustomed to settled areas and aggressive. If they find food in town, they will stay until the snow flies. Many will be destroyed before then. In 2015 seven bears have been killed in Rossland. Bears cannot be relocated once they are town bears- they will just find another community to raid. They will be shot. You can help prevent this tragedy.

Thinking of building? The "Smaller, Greener House Design Workshop" Oct 9-12 is open for registration. This 4-day session will provide a strong start to house design. Five Kootenay professionals will guide participants through tons of information and choices that face owner-builders striving to reduce their environmental impact, utility bills, and live in a healthy house. Sponsored by the Sustainability Commission. www.Monasheeinstitute.org

Huck 'n Berry Jam is coming right up! It's sure to be another excellent event. Don't miss it: Aug 29 at the Centennial Bike Skills Park. Fun events for all ages.

Skatepark Fundraiser! 3 bands, refreshments, fun! Nickleplate Park Aug 29. Tickets at Revival Boutique. Many thanks to volunteer organizer Richie Samuelson.

Rossland Recreation's Fall brochure is available online now at www.rossland.ca. Check out all the fun and fabulous offerings for all ages.

Be in touch! City Hall 362-7396

Reach Council through www.rossland.ca

Newsletters could be electronic! Please go to www.rossland.ca. 'E-Mail Updates'

Next Council meeting: September 14th at 6pm. Come join us!