

ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS

March 2017

Issue #23

Message from Mayor Kathy

Lots of terrific news this month! It is my great pleasure to announce that Rossland was successful in getting grant support from the Provincial and Federal governments for two large projects: We got \$3.6 million dollars towards our Spokane Street project. The total project is anticipated to cost \$4.4million. The underground infrastructure on Spokane continues to break; both the water and sewer lines are decrepit and have failed multiple times. Without grant support this project will have to be phased over several years, which is neither cost effective nor efficient. Now we will be able to repair Spokane from 2nd to Columbia, First from Spokane to Washington and LeRoi to Davis St. in 2017.

We also received \$415k towards a \$500k project to create a strategy to deal with inflow and infiltration into our sewer system. This is very important because with our partners, Trail and Warfield, we pay for wastewater treatment based on the flow contributed into the system by each partner. Right now, many of our old pipes allow massive seepage into the sanitary sewer. We don't want to pay to have groundwater and storm water treated!

I want to thank our talented and dedicated staff for submitting such thorough and compelling grant applications. These funds are always over subscribed and many worthy projects were not funded. We are so thrilled to have been successful in this round.

Other great news that benefits Rossland: The Regional District received a grant for \$1.3 million to complete the Liquid Waste Management Plan, Stage 3. This is the detailed planning and engineering phase of the project to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant that we share with our partners Trail and Warfield. This saves us our share of the project or approximately \$260k.

I'm very pleased to report that the Columbia Basin Trust has agreed to let us use an additional \$97k to finish the Miners Hall project. We had received significant grant support for the refurbishment of our iconic community hall, but there were additional items that had been cut from the budget. CBT came to our aid, and once again proved themselves to be an excellent community partner. Now both the front plaza and final improvements on the 4th floor of the Miners Hall will be complete. The hall is scheduled to open the end of May.

Rossland was selected, along with Edmonton, to work on an international project sponsored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and funded by Global Affairs. Representatives from Rossland will travel to

Vietnam with participants from Edmonton and representatives of FCM to work with two Vietnamese communities on regional collaboration and economic development issues. We intend to use Thoughtexchange to foster engagement among municipal leaders in the area. The program will last four years and will not cost Rossland taxpayers any money.

Council News:

Council greatly appreciates all the citizen volunteers who put their names forward for the **Arena Task Force**. It was hard to narrow down the group but we are confident that we selected a good cross section of people to represent the various arena users. The Task Force will examine how we can make the facility more sustainable in the long term. Watch this newsletter for updates.

Despite interest expressed at the meeting Council convened with **local business folks**, there were very few volunteers to join a more official group to work on issues of importance to the business community. At this time Council will let this idea rest and if the business community wants to self-organize a business group, we will consider supporting those efforts.

Street Light Policy: Council adopted the following new policy: It is the policy of Council to provide streetlight illumination on city streets where necessary and with technology that illuminates only on the street surface to provide way-finding for night time travel, and reduce adverse impacts such as light trespass, obtrusive light, night time sky glow, electricity usage and operations/maintenance costs.

Rossland's street illumination is provided by some 500 streetlights with a mix of wattages, ranging from 70 watts to 400 watts; the majority being 100 watt and 150 watt bulbs. There is little consistency with the patterns in which the city's street blocks are lit (or not lit) at night. The City features some blocks with up to 5 streetlights and other blocks with none at all. Budget and environmental considerations have since prompted more scrutiny on the number, location, cost and effectiveness of Rossland's street illumination. Rossland's Official Community Plan has a policy to support an acceptable reduction and/or replacement of the City's streetlights.

Here are the goals of the policy:

1. To remove excess lighting on low pedestrian roadways, dead end streets, alleys and rural roads.
2. To ensure adequate lighting in intersections, blind corners, heavy pedestrian areas (sidewalks, schools, parks), high density housing areas.
3. To replace all of the non LED streetlights with 3000K LED lights. We learned a great deal from our successful pilot program in Pinewood.

4. To ensure a 15 working day response time to lighting complaints. We aim to provide good service to all.

Some lights will be removed while in other places lights will be installed. A map will be available online and at City Hall with detailed locations. As always, your input is appreciated.

Did you know?

Comparative Municipal Tax Study: Local resident Janice Nightingale made an interesting presentation to Council and to the Rotary Club recently. By doing an in-depth analysis of tons and tons of publicly available records she came up with some informative facts:

If Rossland is compared to other communities who offer similar levels of service and facilities that we do, and that relies on a predominately residential tax base, like we do, our annual taxes and charges are lower than most.

When compared to towns nearby, many who either don't offer the same facilities and services or have large industrial taxpayers to help defray the costs, our annual taxes and charges are higher than most.

One reason our taxes appear to have increased significantly over the last decade is because when we withdrew from the regional recreation service our municipal taxes increased while our requisition from the regional district decreased significantly.

Overall, in the last decade total taxes and charges billed by BC municipalities increased by 51%. Rossland's only increased by 28%.

What we collect for fees and charges (things like water, sewer, parcel taxes, garbage fees, connection fees, recreation program fees etc) have declined by 13% while provincially those charges have increased by 83%.

Rossland has experienced greater growth compared to many nearby and similar communities with 19% more residential homes (298), 18% more permanent residential households (191), and 4.9% population growth (174). The City of Rossland also converted 70% of a previous flat rate parcel tax to a variable rate tax, so that costs were redistributed more fairly amongst homeowners.

This analysis puts Rossland and taxes in a new, more positive light. Many thanks to Janice for doing this mountain of work at no charge to the City. More volunteerism to be celebrated!

Congratulations! The Legion got a \$20k New Horizons grant for upgrades. A new stove and improvements to main hall will be undertaken this year.

The Columbia Basin Trust's annual Community Initiatives Program grant allocation meeting will be on April 4th at 5pm, City Hall. The meeting is open to the public. This year the requests totaled over \$132k but we only have \$56k to distribute. There are so many worthy projects in our community and so many terrific volunteers.

Celebrate Earth Day! Check out the species at risk Mini Museums on display at the Library April 11-15th. Or bring the kids to the Library for seed planting on April 20 at 3pm. And on the morning of Saturday April 22nd, put on your walking shoes and do the Chicken & Compost Crawl or drop by the North Jubilee Wetlands for a tour. Finish your afternoon by visiting the Rossland Mountain Market between 11-3 at Queen Street Need more Info? <http://www.visionstoaction.ca/earth-day>

Does your home have passive, thermal or photovoltaic solar features? Join us as a host home for the Sustainability Solar Energy Crawl coming soon. Contact Ann at info@visionstoaction.ca

What if working together for the good of all was the most common business model? Join the Sustainability Commission and our local Credit Unions for the film **The New Economy** on March 30 at the Old Firehall in Rossland. Doors at 6:30 pm. Entry by donation to the Food Bank.

The City of Rossland turned 120 years old officially on March 2, 2017. This year we will celebrate our birthday along with Canada's 150th celebration of federation on July 1st. Happy Birthday to us!

The Library has new expanded hours!
Tues-Thurs: 10am - 8pm and Fri-Sat: 10am - 5pm

Spring is here! Which can mean our trails are precarious. Please remember to pick up after your dog, keep your pooch on a leash and use the dog tie-up stations downtown. Thank you.

Be in touch! City Hall 362-7396. Contact Council through www.rossland.ca

Next Council meeting: Monday April 10th at 6pm. Come join us! All are welcome! Public input starts at 6pm- Briefly share your thoughts and concerns. For longer topics, get on the agenda as a delegation. Contact City Hall to learn how.