

ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS November 2015

Issue #9

Note from Mayor Kathy

Winter seems to be a bit slow to arrive this year but there is still lots cooking at City Hall. You may have noticed a buzz of activity downtown lately as trenches were dug and cables were laid: Broadband fibre is here! High-speed internet service is slated to start in January or February. Several Internet Service Providers (ISP) will be offering their services to the downtown businesses. In other great news: The City, in conjunction with Columbia Broadband Corporation, is the recipient of a \$25k grant that will be used to hook up any business who signs up for the high-speed service. This represents a savings of about \$1,500 per business. Stay tuned for details and be sure to jump on this super deal. It will be offered on a "first come, first served and while supplies last" basis.

Hard to believe this Council has been in office for one year already. Time flies when you are having fun! We will be doing a survey in the new year to ask you how you think we are doing. If someone gives you a call please take a few minutes to share your thoughts. It's our goal to serve you the best we can.

Remembrance Day was recognized with both solemn words and lyrical poetry as well as with celebration and song. Many thanks to all the members of the Legion for hosting this traditional, and very special event. It is wonderful to see so many Rosslanders turn out to honor and remember. Perhaps some day peace will come to our world but we are wise to remember the sacrifice and service of all who serve and served in the Canadian Forces. Councillor Morel and I were also pleased to attend the annual Veterans' Dinner at the Legion. Once again the Legion members hosted a wonderful event.

Council News:

The Rossland Skate Park Association (RSA) and the Youth Action Network (YAN) both made excellent presentations to Council and to a packed audience in Council Chambers. The RSA was sharing their new innovative skate park design and asking for the City's support to work collaboratively with them since both the skate park and the Washington Street revitalization projects are slated for 2016. YAN wants a permanent youth space and asked to repurpose the storage shed on the EMCON lot for their use. Council has requested a staff report to address the requests made. A decision will be made at the next council meeting on Dec 14th.

Public input sought and got: 185 people participated in our Thoughtexchange public input process to ask questions and provide feedback on the **water and sewer rate increases** that we will be instituting some time next year. Council listened to the input and is going to be re-working the rate structure. After getting more information from staff on the specific impacts of the structure proposed by the consultants, we determined it just wasn't right for us. Our old town has too many inconsistencies in how our pipes were installed to be able to put so much emphasis on pipe size. We are doing more work and will be coming back to the community with a new, tweaked proposal. It is our intention that fairness, affordability and consumption will feature prominently.

We thank the 20 or so folks who showed up for the power point presentation and question session at the newly renovated Senior's Hall. The results of some of the top questions asked about water and sewer rates on Thoughtexchange were discussed, For the full report: <http://cityofrossland.thoughtexchange.info/water-sewer-rates-q-n-a/>

In order to borrow *up to* \$4million dollars for the **Washington Street project**, the City had to ask the voters if they had any concerns. To require a referendum on the borrowing bylaw 10% of the electorate, or 270 people, would have needed to dissent. We only had 2 people contact the City. We are hopeful that between our \$2.1m grant and our reserves we will not have to borrow the full amount. Council approved the borrowing bylaw for the project. The project is estimated at \$5.8m but until we actually go out to tender and get firm bids, we won't know the true costs or the full amount we need to borrow.

Council approved the plans for Washington Street, but still had a few questions about the proposed street closures at 6th and Turner. City staff are consulting with the engineering firm to get the best result. The cost breakdown for the project looks like this: Underground utility work represents 68%, paving, curbs and gutters will be 26.5% (This includes the bike lanes which are actually less expensive to build than car lanes) Sidewalks will cost 3.5% and landscaping will be 2% of the total. Council feels strongly that this project will significantly improve a major infrastructure artery for both water and sewer, while adding safety and some beauty to this important corridor.

Council approved the formation of an advisory task force to work with staff on the Washington Street project. We recognize the incredible value and expertise in our community and hope to find several volunteers with solid

engineering and project management credentials to help us make this the best project yet for Rossland.

Council is pleased to announce that we have secured a permanent right of way for the **Rubberhead Trail**. Trails are a huge asset to our community and contribute to Rossland's appeal to new and existing residents. It's wonderful to have this popular route secured for posterity. Many thanks to Redstone Resort for working with our staff and recognizing the value to the community.

Council has adopted the **Strategic Plan** that will guide us for the rest of our term. Read the whole plan here: http://www.rossland.ca/sites/default/files/city-services_corporate-services_2016-2018-corporate-strategic-plan_2015-11-18.pdf The Strategic Plan has now been turned over to staff to create the Management Plan which will lay out all the details for implementation.

Council adopted a "SCEEP" for Rossland. This is a Strategic Community Energy and Emissions Plan. The first project is to devise a corporate energy plan for the city to reduce our green house gas emissions and energy consumption.

Business walk: In conjunction with the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, and with help from the Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation, Council undertook an outreach program to connect with our local business people. We broke into teams of two; one council member and one person from the Ministry, the Trail Chamber or the Lower Columbia Initiatives Corp (Our local economic development office) and chatted with a number of local businesses. The information will be compiled and used to create an overview of the business climate in Rossland, Trail and Fruitvale. It was a really enjoyable and educational experience.

Other Council approvals: We provided a letter of support to the Rossland Tennis Society so they can begin fundraising in earnest for money to refurbish our heritage courts in 2017. Watch for some creative fundraising ideas from this group. We approved a letter of support for the Lower Columbia Affordable Housing Society's efforts to establish affordable housing in Rossland. 235 households in town spend more than 30% of their income on either rent or mortgage payments. That is unaffordable! Council granted a one-year extension to Red Mountain to allow temporary buildings for the day care and ski patrol locations. Red will address permanent facilities next year.

Food for thought: At future meetings Council will, or might, consider: changes to our Tax Exemption Revitalization bylaw, changes to our business licenses, updating our Design Guidelines, review of our fees and charges for recreation, comparing how other communities handle permissive tax exemptions and what types of organizations receive them, banning smoking in parks where children play. These are just a few of the interesting topics we might be talking about in the future. We'd love to have you join the conversation.

Did you know?

Rekindle the Spirit of Christmas is being organized by Tourism Rossland this year. Don't miss all the holiday cheer downtown on Dec 5th. Join the fun with the traditional Reindeer Prance with Santa for kids of all ages, photos with Santa at the library, yummy items to eat on the street, new art gallery openings, carolers strolling and, of course, the Christmas tree lighting ceremony at 4:30pm in Harry Lefevre Square. All the festivities will be covered by GOAT FM radio.

The Rossland Museum & Discovery Centre is having a Silent Art Auction! It's not too late to bid on some wonderful art! This event runs through November 30th, to raise funds for the Museum Renewal Project. <http://www.rosslandmuseum.ca/2015art-auction/>

Rossland's Sustainability Commission Launches New Podcast! It's a bird. It's a plane. It's a.....
Sustainability Action Hero! For decades we have been bombarded with the bad news stories about our ailing environment. That's all about to change. On December 1st, the Rossland Sustainability Commission is set to launch a new podcast series called *Sustainability Action Heroes* highlighting the everyday folks making Rossland and the world a better place. Go to the Rossland Sustainability Commission's Facebook page to hear episode 1 featuring Rachael Roussin on why rebuilding Rossland's wetlands creates new wildlife habitat, and saves taxpayers' money.

<https://www.facebook.com/RosslandSustainability/>

Be in touch! City Hall 362-7396

Reach Council through www.rossland.ca

Newsletters could be electronic but we need more people to sign up to receive them that way. Please go to www.rossland.ca. 'E-Mail Updates'

Next Council meeting: Monday December 14th at 6pm. Come join us! You can come to the public input session at the start of our meetings and talk to us briefly or for a longer presentation, sign up with Cynthia to come as a delegation.

