

ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS

April 2017

Issue #24

Message from Mayor Kathy

Rossland was very pleased to host the annual convention for the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments April 26-28. Elected representatives and staff from all around the southern interior gathered in Rossland to discuss resolutions to be put forward to the Union of BC Municipalities annual meeting in September as well as to share information, experiences and best practices. The organizing committee brought together an interesting list of speakers. The conference theme was "Becoming Smarter, Leaner Communities." Local resident, Ann Damude did a stellar job as our conference organizer and we are sure that the attendees left with an excellent impression of our little town AND they are now all familiar with Olaus Jeldness too.

Every year there are various complaints and compliments about how Rossland handles snow removal. I am pleased to say we got a lot of compliments this year. I know, April is a bit out of season to talk about the issue but I wanted to share some information from Public Works that we haven't been able to fit in previous newsletters.

It's been suggested that removing the snow in the spring is a waste of time but there are valid reasons for this job. In some areas it helps to maintain a good relationship with those who allow snow storage on their private property. We also get calls in the spring about the sand in the snow piles. Sand needs to be removed so it doesn't fall onto the roads and clog the catch basins. Sand filled catch basins can cause huge problems in the pipes requiring more frequent removal by the vacuor truck. We remove snow around catch basins to improve runoff. It's easier to deal with it proactively. By planning ahead the City is able to save time and money.

Public Works receives complaints regarding snow piles impeding visibility and sight lines. We have a duty to remove snow around street signs to increase visibility. These complaints start after a few big snowfalls and continue all winter long. We send out dump trucks and a loader to remove snow from corners so it is safer at intersections for drivers and pedestrians.

After many snowfalls, the boulevards start filling up with snow so high that when the blower blows the snow onto the boulevard, the snow goes over the pile and onto private property. Sometimes it piles against houses and garages. Public works removes the snow from boulevards to avoid this issue and so there will be more space to blow snow during the next storm. Citizens also

request that we remove large piles built up on the sides of their driveways as it impedes visibility when they are entering the roadway.

Public Works would love to leave the snow to melt in place but it won't be gone until late spring. The City will run out of places to store snow and the roads would not be safe. The City has a responsibility to residents to respond to their complaints and make the City streets safer. In many areas in our old town it is not easy to find suitable locations to store snow so it has to be gradually addressed all winter long.

It's important to note that we have crews working regular shifts all week. So removing snow, putting up or taking down Christmas decorations, cleaning the roads etc are not tasks being done on overtime, even if its work done on the weekend. We try to be as efficient with our time and tax dollars as possible.

Council News:

This month Council took the first of several legislative steps to pass our financial plan and taxation bylaws. Municipal taxes will rise by 4.75% water and sewer taxes will also increase by 4.5% Taxes we collect for the Hospital board and the Regional District will remain about the same due to the reserves on hand. Details are on our website. www.rossland.ca

For the current year, the assessed value of an average house in Rossland has increased from \$264,780 to \$278,019. The total tax impact for 2017 will be approximately \$215 more than in 2016 or \$18 dollars per month. There will be a public financial plan presentation on May 4th at 6pm. Please come. The financial plan will be adopted by mid-May.

At the April 10th meeting Council heard from three delegations: The first from a citizen interested in bringing more Pickleball courts to Rossland. The 2nd from our local regional economic development group, the Lower Columbia initiatives Corporation (LCIC) discussing some very exciting projects being pursued in our region and the 3rd from the Chief Administrative Officer for the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) about that organization's budget for the upcoming year.

Council approved a \$1,000 contribution to the RDKB for a regional Canada 150 Celebration to take place this year. Watch for details.

Council directed city staff to put into action the recommendations from the Short Term Rental Task Force. The intent is to make a level playing field for all types of accommodations in town. There will be some sensible restrictions on the number of short-term rentals allowed in the traditional town site. Operators will be

required to have proper zoning and a business license. To make these changes, it will require revisions to our business license bylaw (which is already under review for other reasons) as well as changes to our zoning bylaw and our Official Community Plan. The intent is to have all new legislation and rules in place by the fall.

At our April 24th meeting our municipal auditors reported that the City's 2016 finances were accurately reported and are now ready to submit to the Province. The Family Action Network also made a presentation detailing the importance of checking early and often on the developmental progress of all very young children. FAN does great work in our local communities!

The specifics are on our website but Council also reviewed and approved a number of policies. One concerns pesticide and herbicide use. It is the policy of the City that harsh chemical herbicides and pesticides not be used anywhere in the City except to combat invasive plants: Those identified by the Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society (CKISS) that require treatment by certified weed control contractors. By the way, dandelions are *not* invasive weeds and are very helpful for bees. This has been our policy on city owned lands and parks but we want to extend it to the whole community. There are effective alternatives.

The 1st Quarter review of the management plan was presented. Council was pleased with the progress being made on the goals that had been set out and greatly appreciate the timely updates from our staff.

Did you know?

ONLINE Services update: The City is upgrading the security and capability of our online financial services and will include payment options for Utilities, Property Tax, and Pet Licences through the online services portal.

Online Property Tax and Utility Billing services are temporarily unavailable. We appreciate your patience during this transition

Once the site is active, please register with your PIN Access code, even if you previously were registered on the old online site. Your PIN # is located on your utility bill and property tax notice, or you can contact the finance department for this number. Further instructions on how to register will be made available on our website.

Remember Our Burning Bylaw! Fire is the greatest threat in Rossland. For public safety, to protect our air quality and to be considerate of all residents, we have a burning bylaw in place. Yard waste, construction materials, plastics, garbage etc. may not be burned at any time. Recreational fires must be under 90cm diameter. Some burning may be allowed but permits and

other restrictions apply. To check out the details: http://www.rossland.ca/sites/default/files/city-hall_bylaws_burning-bylaw-2383_2010-06-02.pdf

The Food Task Force of the Sustainability Commission is hosting 'Filling our Plates, Feeding our Future' with Abra Brynne, a nationally respected agriculture and food systems advocate. Join us on Thursday May 11th at the Old Firehall in Rossland. Soup & Sourdough dinner at 6 pm (\$10). Free talk at 7 pm.

Earth Day- Many thanks to the Sustainability Commission, other volunteers and all community groups who participated in the events. Nearly 500 seedlings were sold, more than 30 people participated in the Chicken and Compost Crawl, lots more visited the library and enjoyed the other earth day events.

MyHealthPortal Coming to Kootenay Communities
MyHealthPortal provides patients 24-hour access to your health information via your smart phone, tablet or computer through a secure portal from the Interior Health website. Features include the ability to view your Interior Health lab and diagnostic results, certain upcoming appointments, recent hospital visit history, and the ability to update your contact info.

To sign up, you must present legal photo identification and your Care Card or B.C. Services Card in order to verify identity to the project team. You will be given a login username and password that you will be able to use on your own device—home computer, tablet or smart phone. Then go to the MyHealthPortal page on Interior Health's web site at www.interiorhealth.ca/MyHealthPortal to login.

A team will be in Trail at the Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital May 16 – 19 Tuesday to Friday, and May 23 – 25 Tuesday to Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For those unable to attend in person during this enrolment period, remote enrolment will also be available in Trail after May 16th.

Spring is here! Which can mean our trails are precarious. Please remember to pick up after your dog and keep your pooch on a leash downtown. Also, we are hearing some horror stories of dogs attacking bikers. You are liable for the actions of your pet. Thank you.

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

Next Council meeting: Monday May 8th 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.