

## ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS January 2017

Issue #21

### Message from Mayor Kathy

Happy New Year!! Here it is almost time for our famous Winter Carnival. Many thanks to all the volunteers who put in countless hours to make this event the success it has been for 119 years. Councillors Greene, Cosbey, Morel and myself are looking forward to the bobsled race in our much-improved sled, "Council's Pipe Dream 2."

The most exciting news: Our Washington Street project is substantially complete and it looks gorgeous! In our final report we were so pleased to learn that the project was more than **\$700k under budget** (*final cost of the project was \$6,390,972*) with an original budget of \$7,097,348. This was due in part to the excellent preliminary exploratory work done to determine rock on the site as well as some improved pricing on materials. . Additionally, our staff, project engineer (ISL) and the selected contractor (Copcan) did an excellent job with both overall project delivery and thorough and accurate reporting.

Some finishing landscaping will be done in the spring. Council greatly appreciates all the positive comments we've heard from residents on the new "look". We are even more thrilled with the improvements to the underground services that can't be seen! This project is a big investment in our future. The pipes will last for decades and help us cut leakage and the risk of catastrophic breakage that could impact the whole town. Many thanks to everyone affiliated with the project, not the least of which were the Provincial and Federal governments who awarded us \$2.5m in grants.

### Council News:

One of Council's priorities in 2017 is to see some positive action on the **EMCON lot**. Years ago we approved the development of the skate park. In 2016 we dedicated a building on the site to our Youth Action Network so youth can have a place to gather for events, programs and projects. Now we want to see some new life on the rest of the site. Council had a productive discussion about creating affordable housing, innovative meeting space, a full service health-needs complex and/or office space as well as maintaining a public gathering area. We are now looking for a consultant to provide us with some market analysis on the feasibility of these ideas for the site. It's all very exciting so stay tuned for details.

Council has approved participation in a new **intercommunity business license pilot program** commencing in 2017. Now Rossland-based businesses

that hold a Rossland business licence but also work in the communities of Castlegar, Nelson, Creston and/or Kaslo can pay \$85 to get an intercommunity licence that enables them to work in these other communities without having to obtain a licence in each of those other jurisdictions. This is a business friendly initiative that we hope other local communities will adopt.

Council awarded the contract for Phase One of the **Museum Renovation Project** to NDB Contracting from Castlegar. The museum has raised the funds necessary to proceed with the project. Many thanks to the hard working volunteers who moved archives, furniture, displays and all manner of stuff out of the space to be renovated. Once complete, the museum will be much more versatile; it will be able to host traveling exhibitions, hold community events, have more functional archives and be a much more inviting place to visit.

The **Miners Hall Attic Renovation** has begun! Thanks to some successful grants, all funding is in place and DJM Contracting is at work turning the undeveloped attic into a community gathering space. Renovations are expected to be complete by the end of May in time for the Gold Fever Follies to be back in the hall. Many thanks to Teck Trail Operations for their contribution of \$20,000 towards the Attic Reno.

Council has approved **multi-year contracts for a number of community groups** to help them stabilize their funding and enable them to confidently leverage funds from other sources. Each group will still be required to provide an annual report detailing their accomplishments and how they spent the money. They will also still be required to submit a budget and work plans for the upcoming year in order to get funds.

Council has approved two requests by the **Rossland Arts Council**. RCAC will lease a new sculpture, titled "Girls Can Do Anything" for the corner of Washington and Columbia. RCAC raises all the funds required for their projects. The City will donate some labour to install the new art. The other request was for a playful, "random acts of culture" project which will be a surprise to pedestrians as they walk in the rain downtown. (No more will be said or the surprise will be ruined!)

Council approved a staff recommendation to join the **Rossland Trail Chamber of Commerce**. Approval was also given to the **Rossland Youth Service Group's** request to hold a winter overnight in Harry Lefevre square to raise money for the "Getting to Home" program run by the Career Development Services. We applaud the work of these socially conscious youth.

Council was pleased to get an update from our staff on **IT improvement initiatives**. The changes that are being implemented will help make the City more efficient and be able to provide services more cost effectively. The report indicates that the transition to broadband and hosting some of our records and processes in the cloud is progressing in a timely fashion. This includes an upgrade to the City's **ONLINE SERVICES**. To access your Utility or Property Tax account, you will need to Register for a new Login ID. This change will happen in early February. When you go to the usual webpage for online services you will be redirected to a new link.

Council directed staff to amend the recreation subsidy policy. Now we will only provide reimbursement to youth sports teams up to 25% of the extra fees charged by Trail. The funds are limited so there is no guarantee that all who apply will be successful. The existing policy had limited support in our public engagement sessions. We have tried hard to limit tax increases and cut \$250k from our budget. We know that this will be a disappointment to some people but many others do not want taxpayer money spent on this policy.

### Utility Billing Changes:

There have been some questions about changes to our **Utility billing process**. The Paper Billing Fee of \$3 will be applied to the quarterly Utility Billings (*Not property tax notices*) starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017. To avoid this fee and sign up to receive your bill by email, please send an email to [finance@rossland.ca](mailto:finance@rossland.ca) including your account number and street address. *Please note that the City is not imposing the fee to raise revenue, but is a way for the City to become more efficient with staff time and resources.* 1600 utility bills go out every quarter and while 400 bills can be sent in seconds at minimal cost, the other 1,200 take hours of staff time every quarter in paper handling, almost \$4,000 in yearly postage, as well as paper and copier costs.

For those folks without a computer, an email account can be set up using the Library's services. This is also another great way to promote our Library.

You have also received a Utility bill for December to get the City's utility billing on track with a calendar quarterly billing which coincides with most common taxation year ends.

People were advised that they now have 60 days rather than 30 days to pay, so the timeline becomes more flexible and less punitive.

Finance is also acknowledging public demand to simplify the Utility bills. You may notice some changes in the next quarter that will improve readability.

### Did you know?

#### Celebrate Winter Carnival at the Library:

Open: Friday 10 am until after the parade. Saturday: 10 - 5pm. Lots of fun for all ages! Activities: 11:30- 3:30pm: chili and second hand book sale (or until we run out of homemade chili and bread). 1pm Historic films and hot chocolate (wifi and public washrooms available).

The most exciting news is that the library will start new, expanded hours. Beginning January 31<sup>st</sup> visit the library Tues-Thurs: 10am - 8pm and Fri-Sat: 10am - 5pm

#### Attention Rossland and Area Seniors

Let's talk about seniors' activities and supports! What do you have now? What is missing: Social gatherings? Advocacy? Health? Sports? Education? Transportation? We want to hear from you! Age Friendly Lower Columbia (AFLC) is a project of our seven local governments and CBT. The goal is to work with seniors (55 years and over) to create communities where all seniors have access to desired activities and supports. By collecting information from local seniors we hope to create programs "for seniors, with seniors".

Please join us for discussion and refreshments: Feb. 8, 2017 1:00 p.m. at the Rossland Seniors Hall. 1916 First Ave. All are welcome- bring your friends!

Age Friendly Lower Columbia: Fruitvale, Montrose, Rossland, Trail, Warfield, Area A & Area B (AFLC BC)  
Sandi McCreight, Coordinator Phone: 250.365.7678  
Email: [agefriendlylowercolumbia@gmail.com](mailto:agefriendlylowercolumbia@gmail.com)

**Residential home builders** are invited to an EnergyStar for New Homes workshop on Wed March 8 at the Prestige organized by the Sustainability Commission and the Community Energy Association. Learn about EnergyStar rating for new homes and BC's Energy Step Code. Earn CPD credits. More info?

<http://communityenergy.bc.ca/energy-star-for-new-homes-builder-workshop/>

**Be in touch! City Hall** 362-7396. Contact Council through [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca) **Next Council meeting: Monday February 6th 14th 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.