

ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS

March 2016

Issue #12

Note from Mayor Kathy

Finally, Rossland has broadband in our downtown core! On March 23rd the Columbia Basin Broadband Corp hosted a demonstration of the new service at our library. Interested businesses can get free installation (\$1500 value!) if they sign up for service before April 8th. www.cbt.org/Initiatives/Broadband/?Rossland_Broadband

There are so many great things going on in our community. Here's just a few that I attended recently:

- Book launch for Comics for Change- It's a wonderful book that illustrates social and health issues for youth. Thanks to the Youth Action Network for their creativity and thanks to the McCreary Institute for funding the project.
- I spoke at a lovely luncheon with the businesswomen's group in Trail. Thanks to Mary Austin of Austin Engineering for the invitation.
- Councillor Kruysee and I participated in the Swimathon for Greater Trail Hospice. Thanks to those who donated to this worthy cause.
- With a number of councillors, I attended Selkirk College students' project presentations – all were focused on environmental planning projects in Rossland. Thanks to Instructor Peter Holton for selecting our community this year.
- Met with our MP Richard Canning to talk about the need for more stable and reliable funding for municipalities. Our infrastructure obligations are huge, but primarily we can only rely on property tax revenue. This is unsustainable.
- Attended an entertaining talk at the museum; thanks to Al Fisher, Shirley Vance and Richie Mann for sharing their early memories of skiing.
- Attended TED talks at the library and got to see the benefits of our new broadband in action.

What a terrific ski season we've had this year! Red Mountain put on some super events that brought lots of visitors to our town. Races in March for both older athletes and the under 14s were very successful. The Beer Goggles event was another hit and our own local Rossland Brewery won the Fan Favorite gold medal (again).

Many thanks to our fast acting public works crew for fixing the major water line break on Spokane St. The water was gushing, the sewer line was cracked and the ancient valve had to be replaced too. Another shocking example of how important it is to upgrade and maintain

our infrastructure. The crew did it as quickly as possible with minimal disruption

Allison McCarthy will be covering our **finance** clerk position while Kim Mercer steps up to handle duties during a maternity leave. Welcome to Allison and congratulations to Kim for taking on her new responsibilities.

Wetland update: Please allow the new plants to get established in the wetland at Jubilee Park. Temporary fencing has been installed with signage asking people to stay out of the area. Permanent fencing and signage will be installed by the fall. It will be a great space for kids and adults but needs time for the plants to develop. Patience, please. This very heavy spring freshet will bring a lot of water into the area that will be directed into a storm drain. This is historically a very, very wet area.

Fact or fiction? There has been a rumour that Council is closing the arena and the curling rink. The facts are: *YES- Just as we do every year from mid-March to the fall but NO, not permanently.* Council must make responsible decisions. This requires accurate information. With big financial challenges ahead of us we need to look at everything in our budget very carefully. Council has asked staff to prepare business plans for **all** of our major facilities. We will be looking for efficiencies and new ideas to generate revenue wherever we can. We will be consulting with the public to get your thoughts, ideas and what is important to you too. If you have questions, please contact council directly.

Council News:

Please attend our **public information and consultation session for the 2016-2020 Financial Plan, April 13th 7pm at the Prestige** to be informed about how we propose to spend your hard earned tax dollars. We will be looking for some robust community engagement, not just for 2016 but Council also needs your help in determining our long-term priorities. Our Capital plan alone requires approximately \$25m over next 5 years but we only collect \$4m each year in property tax to cover all our operating and capital expenses.

We are pleased to announce the formation of the **Fire Service Task Force**. Thanks to all who volunteered. The members selected are, Bill Profili, Larry Simms, Gerry Woodhouse, Vincent Whiteside and Fletcher Quince. Our fire service is terrific but very expensive. One reason we pay so much is because our contribution is based on property assessment. We will be exploring more equitable solutions. This year Rossland will contribute \$529k to the regional service. Average: \$314

per home vs. \$178 in Warfield. The goal of the task force is to look for best practices elsewhere, find efficiencies and cost savings and make suggestions.

Tenders- Washington Street upgrade tender has been released. Many thanks to the work of Darrin Albo, and ISL engineering with contributions from our Task Force. The Miners Hall tender has also been released. We are very excited about both of these projects. Fingers crossed that the bids will be affordable.

Community support grants- For 2016 Council will allocate \$287.5k for community support. This is lower than the requested amount but we are facing serious financial needs and have to be careful with taxpayer dollars. Decisions about individual allocations have not yet been made..

Council supported the **Rossland Skate Park and the Youth Action Network's** joint grant application to the Columbia Basin Trust so they can get enough money to refurbish the building on the EMCON lot and build the skate park. RSA has done a terrific job of raising substantial funds for the park. The city has allocated land but no taxpayer money to the project.

Council is pleased to announce that Tara Howse has volunteered to be the **new chair of the Sustainability Commission**. Thanks to past chair, Alex Loeb.

FYI- Our **Annual Water Report** has been received by Council and is posted on our website. Check out this excellent report by Public Works.

Council has approved an **LED light program** in the Pinewood neighborhood that will create big savings. We will be collecting feedback from residents and, if all goes well, roll out to all of town over the next 3 years. In addition to savings we will gain better light control. Once we see the range of the lights, we will know how to address redundant lights in other areas.

We heard presentations from both **youth and adult soccer** organizers. The number of Rossland youth participating is impressive: 241. Our area is challenged by the natural spring under Jubilee Park as well as our longer winter season.

Council is considering approval of a **new guesthouse** in upper Rossland. Public hearing will be held April 11th.

Recreation: Council has set aside money to help offset the additional costs for Rosslanders to use the Aquatic Centre in Trail. These funds pay the difference between what a Trail resident pays and what a Rossland resident pays. We are not paying the full amount.

New Easy Peezy site is open: One City Hall restroom has been transformed into a family friendly facility. Another Easy Peezy site is located in Laundry Dog. This is a wonderful initiative lead by the Family Action Network (FAN). A diaper changing station and step stool is now provided for the convenience of our youngest residents and visitors.

Washington Street update As a result of our test closing of some side streets on Washington we have decided to leave Turner open as one-way access to Washington. 4th and 6th will be closed permanently to public traffic. Thanks to all who provided feedback.

Did you know?

Doggie parking spots, now available! Behind Tails (thanks!) As of April 4th please park your pooch below Ferraros, behind the BC Liquor store, east side of city hall, west side of cold beer and wine store, alley west of the PO, or east of the library. These spots are provided for your convenience while you run short errands. Dogs are not allowed to be tied or left unattended in other spots. Please share this information with all dog owners.

Miners Hall Matching Fundraising Campaign! A huge thanks to RCAC and all who rose to the **Attic Renovation Matching Challenge**. and contributed \$25,879 before the March 17th deadline. Combined with the matching dollars provided by a group of generous local donors, **\$52,879** was raised for the renovation.

Be Nice to Our Mother month! Watch for upcoming community celebrations of **Earth Day** during the month of April! 'Like' the Rossland Sustainability Commission's Facebook page for info on Earth Day events such as the Chicken Crawl (April 23) and Green Drinks (April 20).

Can you build a net-zero home in Rossland? Jeff Herr talks about his experience with building energy efficient homes in Rossland on Episode 2 of the Sustainability Action Hero podcasts:
<http://visionstoaction.ca/sustainability-action-hero-podcasts>

Museum & Discovery Centre: Volunteers needed to help inventory and move the archives in preparation for the renovation. Call Libby Martin 362-9472

Rossland Mountain Market needs board members & volunteers to help with the summer farmers' market. Interested? Contact Kathleen k6legs@yahoo.ca

Be in touch! city Hall 362-7396
Reach Council through www.rossland.ca

Next council meeting: April 11th, at 6pm