

ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS

August 2020

Issue #59

Message from Mayor Kathy:

The pandemic has changed many things- we are all living in the evolving “new normal”. The City of Rossland continues to follow the guidance of our Provincial Health Officer as well as the guidance and regulations promulgated by the Provincial and Federal governments.

It’s important to remember that we each have a responsibility in how we come through these trying times. Small behavioral changes can make a huge difference. People need to not only think about their own safety but that of others. I think Canadians are uniquely suited to be successful in this regard. We hear stories about large gatherings of people resulting in outbreaks of the disease. This is so unnecessary! If we can just follow the rules, we can all get through this together.

Physical distancing, hand sanitization and wearing a mask in public spaces will remain essential at least until a vaccine, or other therapeutics are available. In other jurisdictions mask wearing has become mandatory. BC is not there yet, and hopefully if we continue to manage the pandemic sensibly, it won’t be necessary. Please continue to do your part.

Council News

The August 10th meeting was busy! Here a few highlights: To review the minutes for the whole agenda go to our website. The **Recreation Task Force**, which has worked diligently for over a year on three assigned tasks, presented their final report. It was a summary of the Trail Resident Program. They acknowledged that solving the challenge would take a significant amount of taxpayer dollars and presented various options for Council to consider. The other reports they had completed during the year were about the arena and the pool. Council greatly appreciates all the dedication and hard work of this group of volunteers.

Council was asked to provide direction to staff on **opening the arena**. Due to the ongoing pandemic, according to the Provincial health guidelines, figure skating and curling can currently take place, but hockey games are currently not allowed (skills and drills only). If we move into the next phase of the VIA Sport ‘Return to Play’ plan, some hockey will be permitted but with several restrictions. These changes/restrictions may reduce the available ice time for our facility. Council decided to open the arena on schedule in October but limit the hours of operation. The good news is that the current chiller/condenser work being done in the arena is progressing well and under budget. An additional energy-saving grant from Fortis BC was also obtained for this project in the amount of \$60,000, further reducing our capital outlay.

Council approved an application for a **cannabis store** in town to be located in the old LeRoi Mall building. After two surveys of the public, the general consensus was that the community was comfortable with two shops. There were strong arguments on both sides because while this is a legal product, it remains a controlled substance. Municipal governments are given a lot of latitude allow or deny cannabis shops.

Council was pleased to approve Rotary’s project to improve the **Rossland Arena washrooms**. By working with the Rossland Arena Society, Rotary will make a substantial contribution to improving the facility. The Society is working on plans to upgrade the lounge area too. It’s great to see this dedicated group of volunteers accomplishing their goals. Many thanks to the volunteers. Remember: bottles returned at RSS raise funds.

Council reluctantly turned down a request to beautify the **concrete wall on Columbia**. The idea was suggested by an 11-year-old student, intent on beautifying her hometown. Unfortunately, while the Ministry of Transportation was open to the idea, the ongoing costs of maintaining a painted wall abutting the busy roadway was not in our budget.

Council approved a **zoning amendment** in Redstone to allow a short-term rental in a new home and declined a proposed amendment that would allow a duplex in a section of Redstone zoned for single family housing. During the review of the Official Community Plan the community will consider how we want Rossland to develop as housing preferences and demographics have evolved. Council approved earlier opening hours at the **Flying Steamshovel**, so they may now offer a brunch service.

The winning bid for **improvements at our water treatment plant** was awarded to Industra Construction Corp. The City applied for and received funding under the Canada-BC Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) which included the following work: soda ash system for pH and alkalinity adjustment, replace chlorine gas with ready-made liquid sodium hypochlorite injection system, install turbidity meters, equip filters manual telescopic valves with motorized actuators, install a permanent standby generator, and upgrade the SCADA system to include all new equipment. The budgeted amount for the project is \$2,565,000. The City portion, included in the 2020 Budget is \$650,000 with the grant covering the remaining \$1,915,000. The project is expected to be on time and within or under budget.

The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary had solicited input for their proposed **organic waste diversion program** that should be launched in the next couple of years. In addition to responding to the survey questions, Council requested that human and wildlife conflicts be carefully considered and avoided and that input from wildlife groups be seriously considered.

Council was pleased to see that several recent building projects in town achieved energy efficiency ratings to reach **BC's new Step Code 2** and received rebates of over a \$1,200 each which was funded by the City's Climate Action Reserve Fund, a fund established to support climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Council reviewed the usual assortment of **informative staff reports** including activities at public works, water production, bylaw officer activity, building inspection and permits. We were happy to see building activity picking up again after a brief lull. We also **reviewed and approved a number of policies** primarily dealing with public works operations. Council approved a standardized lease with the **Rossland Seniors** for use of the Senior Centre on 1st Ave.

The Province has requested proposals for the \$1.5B stimulus fund that has been established. In addition to sending our own letter, Council endorsed a proposal to the Provincial government from the Resort Community Collective (RCC) to allocate substantial recovery funds for communities with a population under 25k, that rely in part on tourism. Rossland is one of the 14 Resort Municipality Initiative communities that make up the RCC. This proposal, if approved, would help many small BC communities.

The City of Rossland has received an answer to our request for a response to a **petition for a referendum** on the proposed affordable housing/city hall project in development for the old EMCON lot on 3rd Ave. The request for a referendum, along with a petition was sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, by a Facebook group called the Rossland Taxpayers Federation.

According to the letter from the Ministry, "Municipalities have the authority under Section 83 of the *Community Charter* to seek community opinion on any question that council believes affects the municipality. Council can do this by any means it believes to be appropriate such as putting a community opinion question on the ballot during a general local election or public opinion polls. Council is not bound to act on the outcome of a community opinion process; however, that feedback can be used to guide council's decision-making or actions in a given matter. "

This is the response the city expected. The Provincial government is not inclined to intervene in local matters as Local Governments enjoy a fair amount of autonomy for the decisions they make. In addition to this rationale, Council feels that the City has sufficiently consulted and informed the public on this proposed project. We have provided a lot of information on the benefits to the community regarding future completion of the project.

The Minister's letter goes on to say, "There are only limited circumstances under the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* in which municipalities are required to obtain elector approval either through the alternative approval process or through an assent vote – for example, undertaking long-term borrowing. The issues (Rossland) have presented in your letter, such as access to reserves and development permitting, are decisions of council and do not require elector approval".

The project is undergoing final reviews and is currently anticipated to go to tender in January 2021, with a completion date of October 2022. For updates please visit www.rossland.ca

Did you know?

The **Trail and District Chamber of Commerce** is sponsoring a Business Walk. Members of Council and the economic development agencies will be visiting Rossland businesses on September 2nd between 10am and 2pm with a short questionnaire. Responses will be kept confidential but it's a great way to check in with all of our local businesses. The Chamber tracks all the government programs that are available to support all of our local businesses. www.trailchamber.bc.ca

The Rossland Library is open 11 – 4pm, Tues- Fri for browsing and borrowing. Don't know what to read? Call, email or fill in the online form and a librarian will curate a bag of books for you!

Rossland Museum and Discovery Centre news:

August 19th – Night at the Museum 6-8pm - pre-register: <http://ow.ly/tDeI50AZRIS>

August 22nd – Ask a Geologist with Jock Slater 1-3pm

Camp Black Bear Remaining Weeks:

Aug 17-21 - Where the Wild Things Are; Aug 24-28 - Mad Scientists; Aug 31-Sept 4 - Bike Skills & Engineering

More info: rosslandmuseum.ca

The City adopted a new **Heritage Management Plan** that considers heritage conservation as one of the guiding principles in our community's development. A new collaborative **Heritage Management Committee** involving the Rossland Council for Arts and Culture, Tourism Rossland, the Rossland Museum & Discovery Centre and the Heritage Commission has formed to implement some of the visions from the plan. This group is excited to work together to leverage and celebrate Rossland's unique cultural and built heritage. To get involved or if you have a project/program that has a heritage component, contact Kristen: development.services@rossland.ca

Be in Touch! City Hall: 362-7396. Sign up for city updates at www.rossland.ca. **Next Regular Council meeting: Monday Sept 14th at 6 p.m.** at the Miners Hall. This will be our only meeting in September. Public Input, for short topics of 2 minutes or less starts at 6 p.m. For longer topics contact City Hall to come as a delegation.