

ROSSLAND CITY HALL NEWS

Issue 8

July 2010

Greetings from your Mayor and Council

This newsletter will be primarily devoted to progress made towards the implementation of Rossland's Strategic Sustainability Plan (SSP). The SSP, developed through Visions to Action community planning events, was adopted by the previous council. As long as it reflects the community's vision, it is the responsibility of Council to implement it and keep it relevant to the changing times.

The SSP identifies eleven focus areas and contains almost 150 action items to achieve the goals that have been set out between now and the year 2030. The SSP is a long term planning tool; it is a living document that will evolve as circumstances in Rossland change. New goals and actions will be adopted as needed. Council is very pleased to share what the City and various community groups have accomplished so far and to share some of the City's upcoming projects. Everything listed here is related to an action item or goal in the Strategic Sustainability Plan. The Sustainability Commission was established to coordinate the overall process and to make recommendations to council. A significant portion of the funds generated for projects by the Sustainability Commission and the task forces came from grants.

So far, task forces have been established under the umbrella of the Sustainability Commission to advise council on four of the eleven focus areas. More task forces will be created as the capacity to support them within the City develops. To see the entire plan or to read more details about some of what is mentioned here, go to www.rossland.ca (Rossland's newly remodeled website!) or www.visionstoaction.ca.

In addition to the City's efforts, Council supports and encourages independent groups working towards the goals set out in the SSP: The Visions for Small Schools, school PACS, Tourism Rossland, the Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Rossland Range, Kootenay Columbia Trail Society and Rossland REAL Food just to name a few, make significant contributions towards our common goals as laid out by our community's Strategic Sustainability Plan.

Rosslund was selected to join the Columbia Basin Trust's project "Communities Adapting to Climate Change- Phase 2". Through a generous grant from CBT, Rosslund is examining its vulnerabilities to climate change and identifying opportunities and actions for successful adaption. Based on public input, the specific focus of the project is on water, infrastructure, energy and food security. The City is also undertaking a Sustainability Indicators and Monitoring project through funding from CBT. The State of Rosslund report outlining how Rosslund is doing on a number of sustainability indicators will be completed this summer..

TIPS FOR A SUSTAINABLE ROSSLUND

- Consider installing drip irrigation; It uses a lot less water and your garden will flourish.
- Try composting; Reduce waste to the landfill.
- Consider walking or biking to do your errands; Get exercise and cut down on Greenhouse Gas emissions at the same time!

Focus Area 1: Land Management

Rosslund's new zoning bylaw, soon to be presented to Council, will seek public input on cluster development to preserve more green space, in-fill development to reduce sprawl and maintain cost effective infrastructure. In addition, it will seek input to encourage the creation of diverse housing types from single family homes to multifamily residences. Rosslund now allows secondary suites in residences which can be a cost effective housing alternative.

A Request for Proposals on the old EMCON lands was prepared by the City, but unfortunately, at this time, no interesting development ideas have come forward. We will try again.

Rosslund city staff is participating in the Official Community Plan being developed for Area B in the RDKB. This should enable us to work more collaboratively with developers and our neighbors located outside our municipal boundaries.

Focus Area 2: Natural Environment & Resource Lands

With Council support, the new community garden has been enthusiastically developed by Rosslund REAL Food - a group of dedicated volunteers. Work is progressing at the Jubilee Park site and the garden will be thriving this summer. Rosslund REAL food, with sponsorship by the City, recently received a provincial grant to develop a seniors' community garden program.

The community group, Friends of the Rosslund Range, (FORR) is proposing to establish part of the Rosslund Range as a provincially designated Recreation Area. The group is working on a collaborative backcountry management plan for the Old Glory area that, if approved by the Provincial government, will be representative of our diverse interests and benefit all users by offering a coherent plan for the future of the area. FORR held a well attended workshop and has plans for more community input. Topics discussed were the need to balance recreational use with environmental protection, economic benefit, managing the existing cabins, and what rights and responsibilities creating a provincially recognized Recreation Area would involve. It was a lively evening.

A consultant developed a Community Wildfire Plan for Rosslund that has identified potential risks in case of a catastrophic fire. The plan identifies actions Rosslund can take to mitigate risk - such as clearing brush, maintaining hydrants, and adequate water supply.

BearAware, continues to receive municipal support for their efforts to educate citizens how to coexist peacefully with our wild and furry neighbors.

Focus Area 3: Economic Development

Rosslund supports the new regional economic development initiative. A Regional Economic Development Officer position is under consideration. An economic development strategy for the entire region will be developed soon.

Our local Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) has completed a survey of "Nomadic Entrepreneurs" (People who live here but can work anywhere) and is working on a project to attract more permanent residents to town. Included will be a collaborative effort with the City, the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Rosslund to create a package that markets the benefits and amenities of living in Rosslund.

The City has just unveiled its revamped website with much help from members of the EDTF. It provides much more information to our residents. We encourage you to use it. www.rossland.ca

The City supports the Rosslund Farmers' market, encouraging citizens to "buy local" and create a resilient local economy.

Focus Area 4: Recreation and Leisure

Tourism Rosslund, a non-profit society, supported by the City as well as local tourism providers, hotels and small accommodators, continues to do excellent work, getting Rosslund on the radar as a great place to visit at any time of year.

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Rossland is working with our regional partners to create a community arts council to promote our arts and culture.

With help from Tourism Rossland, new welcome signs at the entry to town and directional signs have been created for Rossland. The signs were installed at the end of June.

Focus Area 5: Housing and Affordability

The Housing and Affordability Task Force (HATF) has hosted several workshops concerning the full spectrum of housing needs in our area- from single family homes, to resort options and seniors' housing. The task force has collaborated with other groups and is working on a joint grant application for an affordable housing needs assessment for the Greater Trail Area.

Council's 2010 plans include the creation of a long term infrastructure and tax plan. Infrastructure needs will be monitored and updated as needed depending on social and economic circumstances. This plan will enable council to continue to examine the revised Development Cost Charges (DCC) bylaw that has been developed but not adopted, primarily due to the current economic circumstances. The need to ensure that development pays for itself must be balanced by realistic expectations of growth and accurate projections of our infrastructure needs in the future.

Focus Area 6: Transportation

In an effort to encourage more pedestrian activity, Council adopted an Active Transportation Plan to develop more urban trails. A trail from the Centennial trailhead to downtown was built. \$40k has been budgeted for additional urban trails.

Rossland met with Provincial transportation officials to discuss improving our public transit and discussions are ongoing.

Focus Area 7: Care and Learning

The City of Rossland has proposed partnering with SD20 and Visions for Small Schools to explore a "Neighborhoods of Learning" concept for our community. If we receive the provincial grant to develop this plan, it could provide security for our schools as well as provide life long learning opportunities for all Rosslanders. It would enable us to maximize the utility of school buildings by sharing space with other community groups. This is a very exciting and innovative idea. Many thanks to all the community groups and individuals who have joined in this effort.

Focus Area 8: Sense of Community

The City's Streetscape Committee works hard to insure that Rossland looks attractive to visitors and locals. New bike racks in town encourage non-motorized transportation.

The City's Heritage Commission is actively pursuing ideas to promote Rossland's history. The group has hosted heritage workshops and has helped to create an attractive brochure for a heritage walking tour in town. In addition, the Heritage Commission is developing a Heritage Registry for significant buildings and sites within our community.

Focus Area 9: Energy and Air Quality

Provincial legislation requires an amendment to our Official Community Plan (OCP) that sets a target to reduce Rossland's community Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG). Our goal is a 33% reduction based on our 2007 GHG emissions level by 2020. The City will support projects that aim for carbon neutrality and demonstrate new energy efficient technologies. The City's municipal operations are required to be carbon neutral by 2012. This is a small step in the right direction but we will need the combined efforts of all our citizens to meet our goals.

Our local Energy Task Force (ETF) is looking at ways for Rosslanders to save energy and meet our greenhouse gas reduction target. The ETF also conducted a survey of energy use within our community. Watch for the results on the website soon.

Rossland is participating in the provincial Woodstove Exchange Program and has agreed to "top up" the \$250 grant by an additional \$100. See our website for details or www.rdkb.com.

John Vere, the regional coordinator for home energy and heating information, offered a wealth of information at a recent workshop in Rossland on the Woodstove Exchange Program, smart burning and other home energy options. If you missed it, go to www.cactusmusic.ca to learn about the homeowner grant programs still offered.

Council passed an anti-idling bylaw to reduce GHGs and maintain air quality in town. An outdoor burning bylaw exists and Council is considering an indoor burning bylaw to reduce emissions.

Focus Area 10: Water & Solid Waste Management

The Watershed Task Force (WSTF) has partnered with Columbia Basin Trust and Streamkeepers to offer several excellent workshops for kids- For example, the colorful fish on the fence at Maclean and a field trip to Topping Creek to learn about our community watershed, help children to understand the importance of maintaining habitat for other species.

Monitoring for the major creeks that supply water to Rossland will be underway this summer and is essential for us to gather information about our water quality and supply. A comprehensive Watershed Management plan is slated to be complete by the end of 2010. This plan will incorporate responsible water stewardship that considers the needs of the community as well as the on-going health of the streams themselves.

To encourage conservation and reduce the need for future infrastructure expansion, Council approved a bylaw that requires water meters in all residences and commercial buildings by 2011.

Focus Area 11: Governance

Council revised its Procedure Bylaw to include a public input session so citizens can express their concerns more easily.

Rossland Council was willing to explore one regional local government but there was insufficient interest from some of the surrounding communities to move forward. Rossland supported the study on the amalgamation of Beaver Valley communities by encouraging the examination of three options: a regional based service delivery model, a single local government for the region and an amalgamated Beaver Valley local government.

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