



## *Year in Review - 2016*

### *Mayor's Report*

Another productive year for the Town comes to a close while the goals and objectives of Council remain the same as in previous years. Council makes decisions that have the sole intent of enhancing our community and helping it become a safer and more desirable place to live. The goal as stated in the Town's mission statement "is to create a vibrant, healthy, sustainable community that exists in harmony with the natural environment, enjoys a balanced economy, supports all generations and provides the opportunities to satisfy diverse social needs". In support of these goals and objectives, the following activities have occurred in 2016:

- The Town was able to access a \$5 million Federal Gas Tax Grant from the Federal Government and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, to complete the mandated water treatment upgrades for the Town's drinking water supply. Prime Minister Trudeau said during his speech at the most recent FCM conference in Winnipeg stated "Infrastructure is about growing community, a dollar spent on infrastructure is a dollar spent in community". The total cost of this new system is estimated at \$6.3 million and the Town is thankful for this assistance from the Federal Government.
- Construction has started on the Centennial Park ball diamonds and soccer field by Western Watershed Designs Inc. for a tender price of \$1,152,900 (including all taxes). The grant funding from the Federal Government in the amount of \$500,000 was announced last year and was the stimulus behind this sports field project. The completion of these upgrades will allow minor ball teams to resume playing baseball in Lake Cowichan which due to drainage issues they have been unable to do. The new soccer field is a welcome addition to Centennial Park.
- Recently it was announced that Lake Cowichan was also successful in obtaining grant funding under the new Clean Water and Wastewater Fund for water main upgrades in the amount of \$1,129,093. The Federal government is providing 50% of this funding (\$680,177), the Province 33% (\$448,916) and the Town will fund the remaining 17% (\$231,261). Areas identified in the application for upgrades are Wilson Road (\$103,350), Park Road (\$213,684), and Greendale Road (\$699,875), as well as the water lines that cross the river at the Greendale trestle (\$149,276) and the Footbridge between Ohtaki Park and Riverside Park (\$70,500). As in other towns and cities across Canada, our infrastructure is aging and requires costly repairs and major upgrades. Replacement of these identified water mains are long past due and the grant funding will allow the Town to undertake these improvements at a subsidized cost to the taxpayers.
- Once again, the delegation from our sister city of Ohtaki, Japan visited Lake Cowichan. Many new friendships were formed between the 13 students and 7 adults from Ohtaki who stayed with their respective homestay families. The exchange program has been ongoing for the past

twenty-nine years. Children of early exchange students are now being hosted by the same families their parents' stayed with and the friendship continue! While the visit was short, they experienced many of the highlights tourist enjoy around the Cowichan Valley. Our guests were very complimentary of Lake Cowichan and Vancouver Island and have returned home with a better understanding of Canadian culture and living. Thank you to everyone who helped with this program and a special thank you to those who opened their homes to our guests and made the delegation feel so welcome.

- The Town's website: [www.lakecowichan.ca](http://www.lakecowichan.ca) has a new and improved look thanks to Ryan Maizis, who, as part of his webmaster practicum, updated the Town's website to work over multiple platforms and provide a user-friendly experience.
- This spring, the "Still Standing" CBC show about small Canadian towns finding ways to re-invent themselves was filmed in Lake Cowichan with host Jonny Harris. It will feature Lake Cowichan as one of 13 small towns to be featured during season 3. While CBC producers were looking for possible locations, they were contacted by Cathy Robertson of Community Futures Cowichan who recommended that they research our community and its history. A huge thank you to Cathy for suggesting the Town of Lake Cowichan. This popular national show will provide our community immense exposure and a lot of entertainment. Earlier in the year, Dashcam was also filmed in Lake Cowichan.

As I list the highlights above, I realize that many improvements and investments have been made in Lake Cowichan and there are too many to list. The Town projects, including the new sign at the entrance to Town, have been complemented by the investment made by the business community including Sunfest, Riverside Pub, the Co-op Gas station which together have made Lake Cowichan a better place to live.

Of course, I would like to thank the countless volunteers and organized groups and societies in Lake Cowichan such as the Chamber of Commerce, the LEAD group, the Seniors Care group, the Advisory Planning Committee, the Lake Days Committee for their hard work towards the common good of our community.

We on Town Council are always willing to listen and learn. I am proud of the commitment we have all made for the good of our community. Although we face great challenges ahead of us the next two years, I look forward to working stronger together to achieve some of our goals for the betterment of our community.



Ross Forrest, Mayor