



# Mayor's Report

August, 2016



If not now, then when? Is a question that usually comes up when the Town is making a decision on undertaking a capital project? Why now? An example of when this occurred was with our street revitalization, which by the way was moved forward to so it could be aligned with the paving of South Shore Road at the time. The construction of the round-a-bout as part of that project made good common sense what with the Province as a major financial contributor and ICBC providing financial assistance too. I can't imagine the traffic problems we would have been encountering with today's increased traffic if the intersection at North Shore and Cowichan Lake Roads had remained as it was with just the stop signs. There was a reason for the timing of the road project and we have good reason for undertaking the other projects as well. Today the same questions keep arising regarding our current capital projects such as the Town Hall renovation, the Centennial Park upgrades, and a new Sand Filtration Water Treatment Facility that are being considered. Why? Now that is a fair question for the public to ask.

## First, Town Hall renovations - Why now?

Let me begin by saying the Town was incorporated in 1944 and has never had a building built or acquired that had the capability to meet the proper requirements for a municipal office. Privacy is one component that our existing structure fails to provide. Another constant we hear from our public at our meetings is they can't hear or understand what is being said by members of council. Our current council chambers, what once was our old fire hall meeting room, is not conducive to good acoustics for the public. Office space is not adequate for our number of employees. Our building inspector and by-law officer are segregated by being located in another building. These are some of the many deficiencies that will be rectified by the planned renovations. Councils over time have been earmarking money annually for a new Town Hall. With the growth our community is now experiencing the time to construct our Town Hall is now so it can meet all of the needed requirements for now and the future and be a Municipal Hall that everyone can be proud of. If not now, then when?

## Centennial Park Upgrades - Why now?

Centennial Park was built in the 1950's and has been a tremendous facility for thousands of ball players over the years. Our Minor Baseball Association hosted many provincial tournaments during the heyday of baseball in our community. With the deteriorating of the field caused by drainage problems the usage of the field has dwindled as conditions worsened. Council made a decision long ago that when financial assistance was made available those improvements at Centennial Park would transpire. The \$500,000 grant from the Federal Government was the stimulus for us to proceed with Phase One of the fields' upgrades. Two new ball fields and a soccer pitch will be constructed at Centennial Park and work has already begun with the clearing of the site. New pickle ball courts will be built adjacent to the Centennial Park at the entrance off South Shore Road.

## Water Treatment Upgrades - Why now?

The \$5 Million grant from the federal government for a new Sand Filtration Water System makes the why now question easy to answer. We have worked at acquiring financial assistance since we were mandated in 2008 for secondary water treatment. Since the announcement from our Federal Government and UBCM of their financial contribution, work has begun with the award of the engineering of this massive project. Once again it is imperative that with the positive growth we are experiencing we provide the absolute best quality water possible for all of our users. This is an enormous project that will take some time to complete and will also be infusing many dollars into our community's economy.

Sunfest 2016 at the new Laketown Ranch not only provided four days of outstanding entertainment, it also provided our community much optimism for the future. Considering the innumerable influx of visitors and where and how they would fill their time over the four days of the festival, the impact felt in our community was undoubtedly far more positive than anticipated. A top concern was major traffic congestions which were not realized; traffic moved remarkably well over the course of the weekend. The noise impact was also much less than what concerned residents had claimed would negatively impact their lives for a few days. There were reports of some noise but no more than a typical weekend evening sitting with your doors and windows open when the weather is good. Financially, not all businesses did as well as what they might have anticipated, however MOST of our businesses had record sales during the weekend. Record sales to me are a clear indicator of a positive impact for our local economy. With total event attendance in the neighbourhood of sixty thousand people over the four days of the festival all of the many volunteers did a remarkable job of organizing the masses. Not everything ran perfect, it never does, but it was as close as perfect as we could ever have expected. In Town the main objective was to minimize the inconvenience to visitors and locals alike and that objective was accomplished and then some. Our many volunteers did an outstanding job to ensure things went smoothly. Well done for the first event at Laketown Ranch and with the lessons taught we look forward to even more improved and fantastic Sunfest weekends.

The Cowichan Lake Lady of the Lake Program has done a terrific job of preparing Royalty and candidates for their future. This is very evident with the success of many of our local girls during B.C. Ambassador Week. Emily Pastor just recently became the most recent graduate of this program to be crowned as a B.C. Ambassador. Congratulations Emily as it takes a huge amount of time and work to attain such a prestigious position. Our community is very proud of you for your great accomplishment in becoming B.C. Ambassador. Thank you Mary Batyi for having fulfilled your role as B.C. Ambassador and representing your community so well this past year with so much pride.

I would like to congratulate the Baseball Midget Mustangs for winning the 18U AAA Championship. Many of us in our community are very proud of and happy for the four local players and their great contributions to this major achievement. Cole Anderson, Tanner Cummings, Kale Eddy and Nolan Fothergill should be extremely proud of the success of their team and their growth as baseball players. Way to play guys!

Ross Forrest, Mayor