



Mayor's Report

January, 2018



2018 promises to be another exciting year for our community. We will continue place emphasis on the replacement of our aging infrastructure while also looking at additional infrastructure improvements that will increase our capacity to provide more dependable and reliable services to our residents. In conjunction with the upgrading of the Greendale Road water main system we have also replaced service connections to the property lines to pre-empt potential structural failures. This project is scheduled for completion in the middle of February of this year. Construction is well underway on the completion of our new state of the art Sand Filtration Water Distribution Plant. Not only will this treatment plant distribute an improved quality of water that meets today's required health standards for all our users of the water system, but this will also certainly alleviate the frustrations we all have endured due to the boil water advisories.

An Invitation to Quote has been issued for our next phase of construction at Centennial Park. The Town is requesting quotes for the following:

- Construction of three concrete pads for portable bleacher seating;
- The supply and installation of perimeter fencing for the new athletic fields;
- Construction of two ball field backstops complete with dugouts and wing fences; and
- Supply of portable outfield fencing.

The fencing will be adjustable to accommodate various ages of youth softball and baseball, as well as adult slo-pitch games. When this phase is completed Centennial Park users will begin playing on two new ball fields for the start of ball season and not having to wait for weeks or sometimes months of dry weather for before the fields dry up sufficiently to play on. For too many recent years, the use of Centennial Park was limited and restricted simply because of poor drainage. It is gratifying to know that we will once again have an exceptional place for kids and adults to play ball and recreate outdoors.

Structural changes aren't the only way to improve our community. People's mindsets also have to adapt in order to accept change. "Engaged citizens help build strong communities". It is exciting that we are seeing a positive shift with regards to public engagement and with it fresh ideas for the positive growth of our community. Above all, welcoming everyone's participation in our community can only make us stronger. We have seen very positive evidence of these new contributors in recent months. One example of this was the good turnout of Lake Cowichan citizens at the presentation in the Cowichan Performing Arts Theatre by world-renowned urban planner, Gil Penalosa. This was a segment of the CVRD Place-Making Series. Some of our citizens who attended this presentation were so inspired that it prompted them to organize a local meeting the next evening to discuss our community's potential. It was really encouraging to see these enthusiastic people (a few long-time residents and some newer residents, some meeting each other for the first time) engaging one another on ways of improving our community and its lifestyle. Gil Penalosa's message to communities is to benchmark with the best and that is certainly a goal worth striving for.

If we adhere to the principle of creating a sustainable community; more importantly a sustainable economy will follow. Towns that can't or refuse to adapt generally shrivel and die.

If a town is dominated by a negative mindset and cynicism, it makes positive change that much more difficult or even impossible. It takes strong support from a core of influential people to help leaders continue with necessary changes to succeed. It's important that when we witness unnecessary negativity and cynicism, even on social media, we should speak up to put an end to this practice as it leads to bullying and worse. It is disconcerting to see that some people get pleasure out of using their keyboards to initiate the negativity that often has the potential to harm the victims. Good people in society stand up to bullies in person, so why do we tolerate the ganging up and the public bullying of others on Facebook? We have to give people hope and inspiration instead of ridiculing and disparaging them, if we are to collectively progress as a community. We have to help give everyone a chance for success. We must take a stand against any negativity that is meant to offend our neighbors and fellow residents.

This is not a time to be spectators, participate! Participate in a manner to help with the solutions. We are now seeing more people than ever stepping up to help with required solutions. Another great example of local engagement is evident through the recently formed committees by the Advisory Planning Commission to assist it with updating our Official Community Plan. Working groups have been formed with them focusing on the following three principles:

- Built Environment
- Social Environment
- Natural Environment

The APC was looking for community-minded volunteers for these three groups and ended up with 24 volunteers putting their names forward. This is an exceptional number of people who have come forward to assist their community in a worthwhile project. Indeed a tremendous response from very diverse individuals who represent all spectrums of our community. The generous donation of your time and ideas are very much appreciated as we work to revising our Official Community Plan on the slogan of "Creating Our Future".

All Municipalities focus on attraction and retention to strengthen the fiber of their respective communities. In 1946 Lake Cowichan was successful in attracting Oscar and Lucille Palsson to teach school in Lake Cowichan and they became embedded in our community. While Oscar has long been deceased, Lucile

remained in their home on Gordon Road independently until her passing, three weeks short of her 100th birthday on January 26, 2018. The more than seventy years of her contribution and presence undoubtedly has made our community a far better place. She never had a bad word about anybody, and in return you would never find anyone who had a bad word to say about her. She was most respected by everyone. Whoever decided to name Palsson School after the Palssons certainly hit a home run.

The Cowichan Valley stepped up big time and did a fabulous job hosting the Rogers Hometown Hockey event. This festival brought out thousands of people to celebrate hockey and some of its history relating to the Cowichan Valley. All of the organizers, volunteers, and generous sponsors provided a wonderful experience for people of all demographics. Hosts Ron Maclean and Tara Sloan were very complimentary of how well they were treated throughout the Cowichan region. More specifically from the Cowichan Lake area I would like to thank Linda Blatchford, Katherine Worsley and Jodi Hieta for organizing our community's involvement with "Painting the Town Red" and the local events pertaining to Rogers Hometown Hockey. The national coverage certainly generated a great deal of pride for the entire Cowichan Valley Region. Well done!

It was very fortunate that the Lake Cowichan Minor Hockey Associations 46th Annual Jamboree coincided with the Rogers Hometown Hockey weekend. This is always a special day for our association and this year there was an extra boost from some of our local Hockey heroes. Former local hockey stars Brad Palmer, Brian Lundberg and Steve Lingren volunteered to serve as inspirational coaches for the ever popular skills competition during the Jamboree. Congratulations to the Lake Cowichan Minor Hockey Association for continually providing a great environment for all Minor Hockey boys and girls and keeping this Jamboree tradition going. Also most deserving of recognition are the coaches, referees, timekeepers (in our case, Tim Gowanlock), families and fans whose generous support allows these kids the opportunity to play organized hockey.

It's time to start talking up the BC Summer Games that will be hosted by the Cowichan Valley this coming July. Because of the magnitude of this event three thousand volunteers will be required to satisfy the needs of the games and successfully promote our region to the rest of the province. 2,808 athletes will be participating along with 543 coaches and 372 officials. Volunteers will be needed all throughout the region as the games will encompass the Valley from Ladysmith in the North, Maple Bay to the East, Mill Bay and Shawnigan Lake to the South, Lake Cowichan to the West, along with Duncan and North Cowichan in between. In addition, Nanaimo Aquatic Centre is required to meet the overflow demand. Lake Cowichan will be hosting Canoe/Kayak and Canoe/ Kayak-Para events at Lakeview Park and Cowichan River. The opening ceremony will take place at Laketown Ranch with potentially up-to 10,000 people attending. If you can spare some time to help by volunteering please register by accessing BCGAMES.ORG

Isolation shortens lives so get out and participate in your community events and volunteer if you can.



Ross Forrest, Mayor