



Mayor's Report

June, 2017



The Town of Lake Cowichan held its annual general meeting on Tuesday, June 20, 2017 where its Annual Report for 2016 was presented. This document which describes all aspects of the Town's operations can be found on the Town's website. Without me going into the specifics, more detailed information is available in that report. The report covers such things as: Our Corporate Objectives; Departments and Highlights; Director of Finance Report; Independent Auditors Report; and the Audited Financial Statement for 2016 which detail the following for the Town:

- Financial Position;
- Operations and Accumulated Surplus;
- Cash Flows;
- Changes in Net Financial Assets; and
- Notes to the Financial Statements which includes the Listing of Permissive Property Tax

Exemptions, Development Cost Charges, Water Consumption Data, Tipping Costs, Payment of Goods and Services, Revenues and Expenses by Percentage, Tax Revenue Taxation Revenue by Property Class and Home Owner Grant Claims. All of this information is detailed in the report and is available for public perusal. These are public documents that the general public should have a better understanding of.

The Annual Report also contains some interesting tidbits of information for 2016. Some examples include: the Town has 75 campsites at Lakeview of which 33 are powered sites; and a total water consumption of 725,269 cubic meters can also be reported. There has been a 8.5% increase in the population of Lake Cowichan since the last census of 2011; Lake Cowichan School was ranked as the top public school by the Fraser Institute; \$5,000,000 is the largest single grant awarded to the Town to date; BC Assessment Value of properties in Lake Cowichan totaled \$371,964,851; 53 Building permits were issued; and Fire Department call outs totaled 150.

Please log onto our website and make yourself more familiar with all aspects of the Town including our financial position. Council is always trying to make sure that the best interests of the residents are taken into consideration in our decision-making process with the present and future needs always in mind as we focus on our ultimate goal of improving the Town. It is a very humbling position that we each hold as elected officials and every decision that we make is for the good of the Town and its residents, both young and old. We all make, and listen to recommendations together as we prioritize our plans. This particular council puts an awful lot of consideration into our residents' concerns, but in the end it always comes down to what is best for our community as a whole. We are always doing our best to improve the Town, that's our responsibility, that's our job. As we continue to grow, public expectations also become higher. Council's expectations also increase. Unfortunately it also becomes more difficult to meet those raised expectations and which makes discipline essential. Examples are: everyone wishes for his or her specific street to be repaved, or having new sidewalks installed, or having a better neighbourhood park, which is understandable. We wish we could undertake them all in their entirety. However, that is not realistically possible and that is where we have to plan our priorities with the goal of eventually completing them all. Many considerations such as underground infrastructure (water, sewer, and storm) works, traffic flow, and certainly cost, are all in play when prioritizing our projects. Please understand that we have the Town's best interest front and centre at all times. If we didn't respect our position and put the Town first, councillors' own neighbourhoods would have been prioritized. Some people occasionally feel that they have been overlooked when our decisions are rendered. Individuals and personalities and personal interests never enter into our strategic planning discussions. Residents have a right to be disappointed when their wants have not been considered, but disappointment is where it should end and they should appreciate that our decisions are not driven by personal agendas. We will always attempt to have the good of the entirety of our community prioritized over individual interests. Council uses the best information available and makes our decisions accordingly, and just like all of you, we also have to live with our decisions. Let's all continue to respectfully work together for the betterment of our community as that is how success is achieved.

Lake Days' once again was a tremendous opportunity for our citizens to celebrate our community. Seeing the laughter and happiness experienced by the growing number children during both the parade and at Saywell Park truly hammers home what this festival means to all of us. Thank you so much to the Kinsmen, Kinettes, and all of the organizing committee and volunteers whose endless hours of work made this a great experience for everyone. Congratulations to Desiree Karlson, Brooklyn Kruk and Randi Robertson for being selected as our Lady of the Lake Royalty for 2017-18. All of the contestants should be congratulated for their growth and poise which were accomplished over the past three months. It is unfortunate everyone cannot win but the judges did an admirable job in selecting three very deserving girls to represent our community during their term as Ambassadors.

We have an open invitation to our entire community to come out to Laketown Ranch August 1, 2017 and view the premier screening of the Still Standing episode featuring Lake Cowichan. If the show is half as entertaining as the comedy show they taped at the end of their week in Town last year, it promises to be an extremely fun event. Jonny Harris has a tremendous ability of recognizing the history of small towns across Canada through humour. Let's laugh and enjoy together as a community and appreciate that the rest of our country will be learning something about Lake Cowichan.

We are certainly disappointed with the resignations of Ross Fitzgerald and Katie Burridge from our Advisory Planning Committee. The work of these two individuals along with the other members of the APC has been instrumental in many of the positive changes we have seen in our community. We wish Katie and Ross, and their respective families all the best as they move to their new homes.

Congratulations to the LCS Graduating Class of 2017. I had the privilege on June 24, 2017 to represent the Town of Lake Cowichan in honouring the graduating class of 2017. The Graduation Ceremony was filled with joy as family and friends watched the grads proudly say goodbye to this stage of their lives and move towards their future aspirations and goals. These grads have demonstrated a strong value of respect for their community and in my remarks I recognized them not only for their academic achievements but also complimented them for their good citizenship. Where other municipalities have to deal with juvenile mischief, continuous unsightly graffiti and a genuine lack of respect demonstrated towards others, here at Lake Cowichan we don't deal with those problems and we are so thankful for that. These grads have demonstrated a strong value of respect for their community, and for that I applaud all the parents, grandparents, teachers and staff out there for raising such caring and respectful kids because thanks to them and especially to all of our LCS students our community is made a more desirable one. I concluded by wishing the graduating students the best of luck in their future endeavours and asked of them: Dream big! And live your life bigger!



Ross Forrest, Mayor