

Two issues have dominated Council's attention since the last regular meeting: Freshet 2020 and the MOTO encampment. Nonetheless, regular work with the GFSSAG and Recreation Commission also took some time.

Freshet 2020

At the last regular meeting of May 25th Council was feeling optimistic that the rivers had crested and that the worst of the freshet was passed. On May 28th there was a special workshop to update Council on the operational plans for the DMAF project. Then on May 29th Council was informed via Zoom that there was a potentially catastrophic storm moving into the Southern Interior on Saturday night, May 30th. The storm could hold more than 40 mm of rain for the entire Kettle River watershed. This could mean a sudden rise in the river levels over the 2018 flood! The flood response plan was implemented with tiger dams surrounding the downtown core, and a berm to protect industry on 68th. Sandbags and sand were delivered to locations in the city and region. Additional materials and personnel were on hand if more work was necessary. Grand Forks did get over 30 mm of rain but fortunately the rest of the watershed didn't. Volunteers, emergency personnel and city staff were able to prevent most damage. Thank-you everyone! Nonetheless, some areas of the Boundary were impacted this year by erosion and overland flooding, which should be taken into account as the DMAF project is implemented over the next several years.

Moto

At the in-camera meeting of May 25th Council made some key decisions about the future of the homeless encampment at Moto. Unfortunately, there was a delay in consulting with other service agencies and in making those decisions public while the city dealt with the local emergency. Now with those decisions coming out of camera the community should know that Council has authorized staff to limit unauthorized camping at the site and that works will be installed to prevent vehicular access to the site. The city will also clear away wrecks and derelict RV's. Staff will also work with social agencies and other organizations on identifying solutions for people encamped in the area with limited housing opportunities.

GFSSAG

The next meeting of this advisory group has been postponed to June 24 in order to accommodate BFSS strategic planning. For this meeting Mr. Drexler and I have distributed the resolution of Council asking service providers if they are prepared to extend COVID-19 pandemic support to the 'vulnerable populations' should the pandemic continue. I am optimistic that most agencies and NPO's will continue to provide their care and professional support for as long as necessary. Nevertheless, with ASK Wellness planning to leave at the end of June, all agencies are going to have to pitch in to close any shortfalls.

Recreational Facilities

On June 11 Paul Keyes updated the Recreation Commission on the phased reopening of the recreational facilities managed by the RD. Unfortunately, the Aquatic Center, the Arena, and the Fitness room are going to remain closed for the time being. Guidelines provided by the provincial government and the different sporting agencies such as the Lifesaving Society are being studied for implementation. Social distancing and the prohibition of 'high risk' participants will cause a significant shortfall in revenues which will make even partial reopening's difficult. Meanwhile the city ball fields, campground, and playgrounds will reopen provided the public follows public health requirements for social distancing and sanitation.