

Councillor Tripp's Report for May 7th, 2018

Humboldt Memorial

On Thursday, April 12th, I attended the community Vigil/Memorial service for the victims of the Humboldt Broncos hockey team, held at the Jack Goddard Memorial Arena. The well-attended service was coordinated and hosted by Gerry Foster. Several members of the community contributed thoughts and memories of their interactions with the Humboldt players through their involvement with our own Border Bruins, while Scripture readings and prayers were brought by local pastors, John Siemens and Ben Jepsen. I was personally touched and reminded that small town communities are enriched immensely by local sports teams, and especially junior hockey, which is a nationally celebrated pastime and integral part of the fabric of this community.

Kettle River Watershed Authority Annual Stakeholder Meeting

On Monday, April 23rd, I attended the Kettle River Watershed Authority Annual Stakeholder Meeting held at the Grand Forks Seniors Center in the park. The first part of the meeting involved a field tour showcasing some work that the group have undertaken to restore and repair endangered riparian areas along the Kettle River. The first stop was behind the Doukhobor Cemetery and flour mill; another two stops included some private land in the Johnson Flats area, and along a part of Kettle River Drive south of 68th Avenue. We learned that when flooding occurs over vegetated areas, that action cleans the river and recharges the aquifer. The goal is to manage human and animal encroachment on these sensitive ecosystems, and not the other way around.

Along with other presenters (Jessica Mace, Roly Russell, Jenny Colshill), the new manager of RDKB Emergency Services, Chris Marsh, gave an overview of upcoming EOC plans for the Boundary with respect to the upcoming river freshet. He was hopeful that even while the snowpack for the region is the highest yet recorded for this time of year, through the first part of May, the weather forecast looks measured and this year they are prepared with an EOC command center already in operation. He stressed the need for residents to be proactive and responsible for their own properties, and to take advantage of the sandbag resources that are already available.

AKBLG Convention

I attended the 2018 AKBLG Convention in Fernie, BC from April 17th to 20th. To their immense credit, Mayor Mary Giuliano and her council pressed through and hosted a top rate convention, despite the tragic accident last fall that took the lives of three workers at their memorial arena due to an ammonia leak. The event was attended by around 100 delegates, as well as sponsors who came from around the province to support and promote their services to municipalities. For starters, on Wednesday morning about 40 delegates hopped on a chartered bus and headed for the Tech Elkview mine located just outside of Sparwood. The impressive mine has been in operation at various digging sites on the 60 square kms of their property for over 100 years. This region produces the most metallurgical coal in the world, except for Australia, and they are a major employer for the area, providing about 1,000 jobs for locals.

That afternoon the convention kicked off at the community center with the theme of "Emergency Preparedness in Local Governments: Response, Recovery and Reflection." Considering the flood and fire disasters of 2016, this was a timely subject, and sessions and speakers addressing issues germane to the

topic were interesting and well informed. Plenary sessions over the next couple of days featured panelists from the service sector, such as Mike LoVecchio, Canadian Pacific Director Government Affairs. He spoke to the issue of crisis management and the importance of the activation of a well-planned "Community Emergency Plan." Ryan Kuhn, Emergency Coordinator for Interior Health East & West Kootenays described what IH does during an emergency. For example, they identify and work with vulnerable individuals to evacuate them in a timely manner, and they work to redirect critical health care resources to where they are most needed. Matthew Colling, Sr. Manager for the BC & Yukon Canadian Red Cross, spoke about how their organization works with the EOC in a disaster, providing trained volunteers to help set up and host evacuees at emergency centers, supply meals and personal care items, and a host of other supports that become necessary during a disaster event. He spoke to the necessity of communities having a practical disaster preparedness plan, including contracts in place with key organizations such as Red Cross, Salvation Army, and others, to deal with community resilience in the face of an emergency. Other presenters shared information that had been gleaned from the Fort McMurray fire, and other fires in BC last year. One key factor in fire management and suppression is to reduce fire hazards that are around homes and buildings, and to keep them free from combustibles as much as possible. A comment that really made sense to me was made about buildings being required to have sprinkler heads mounted on roofs, just as certain buildings are required to have them inside. It will remain to be seen if this makes it into the BC Building Code.

During another plenary session on the "Possibilities of Tech and Innovation," Christina Moore, Communications Manager for the District of Squamish shared about her community's Emergency Communication Notification System, which produces a "Squamish Alert" information text or phone call for members who have signed up to receive those notifications. Open data policies and programs were also discussed as foundational to the success of these kinds of systems. Making municipal data available to the public through an online app resource can enhance economic development, and engage the community in city issues like infrastructure, social services, recreation, utilities, flood plain mapping, etc. This was a very interesting concept to hear about, and one our community could potentially embark on with positive results, I believe.

I also attended an informative break-out session one afternoon on Cannabis Regulation in BC, where Lisa Anderson, Executive Director of the Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Secretariat spoke about the work her committee has been doing in preparation for the federal legalization of cannabis this fall. She advised that the provincial context for roll-out prioritizes health and safety, reducing crime and the illegal market, protecting children and youth, cannabis impairment, and support of economic development. She said that there are seven key policies to build the regulatory framework around: 1) the minimum age of 19 being aligned with liquor consumption; 2) a 30 gram limit for personal consumption; 3) cannot be open in cars, 4) consumption allowed in some public places (like tobacco); 5) landlords can prohibit it; 6) impaired driving issues; 7) four plants for personal growing that cannot be seen from the street. The distribution model they are looking at will be the same as the Liquor Distribution Branch. Additional considerations she named were the ALR for growing; economic development, workplace impairment, housing considerations, and school-based education. She made it clear that municipalities do have the right to go above and beyond provincially mandated guidelines for such things as retail locations and designated smoking areas. At our last Regular Meeting when the Zoning Bylaw was given first and second reading, I suggested that, like the City of Calgary, we could ban smoking cannabis on public property, including parks, streets, and sidewalks, and require all business

license applications for cannabis retail and production to be brought before council for approval. I will be requesting that the Zoning Bylaw be amended to include this change, and further, that we receive a new Smoking Bylaw by the expected legalization date of Sept. 1st.

We also heard from UBCM President, Wendy Booth, who shared that the new provincial government is open to hearing from local governments, and that this is an opportune time to bring issues that rural communities face to the table to be heard. Specifically, she said that local governments are key players in ALR lands, and the cannabis production is not the best use of ALR land. She also pointed out that cannabis legislation must not increase property taxes.

Another highlight of the convention was the Resolutions business section. There were 17 resolutions presented for the voting delegates to debate this year; we had three on the table: 1) request for increased court access; 2) amend criminal justice branch charge assessment guidelines, and 3) request for additional crown counsel lawyers. I am pleased to report that all three of the resolutions that I put forward were endorsed by the membership and will now make their way to the UBCM this fall. Further, at least one of the resolutions made it into the top seven ranked for importance, which speaks to the AKBLG memberships' acknowledgement that these resolutions are a significant attempt to address public safety issues and keep BC's rural communities safe.

There is much more that I could write about the convention, but for the sake of keeping this report "brief," I will end off here. If you have any questions about the convention, I would be pleased to speak with you personally.

Back at home, it looks like work is continuing on 22nd Street as digging proceeds towards the hospital. I have been approached about this by a resident of the community and would request an update from staff as to the status of this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverley Tripp