

Councillor's Report

December 11, 2017

Julia Butler

On November 30 the Rec Commission met for our last meeting of the year. Gerry Foster attended to present his idea for a heritage memorial at the arena, in honor of Mickey MacKay. A couple years ago, Gerry did a ton of research and wrote an article for the Bruin's program entitled, "The Wee Scot". As Gerry stated in his proposal,

"It is a piece of history of Grand Forks and the Boundary which many did not know about. In concise terms he was one of the finest hockey players to ever play in BC, let alone Grand Forks and area. He won a Stanley Cup while playing for the Vancouver Millionaires. He went on to play in the NHL for Boston, Chicago and Pittsburgh. Mickey would be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame and BC Hockey Hall of Fame. After his professional hockey career he and his wife (a former Grand Forks Postmaster) settled in Grand Forks. One writer wrote, 'he retired to Grand Forks where his heart had never left.'"

Sadly, Mickey died of a heart attack at a young age, but papers all across the country recognized the fame and talent of our local star. A large headline in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix announced, "Mickey MacKay's Funeral to Take Place Tomorrow." The story opened this way, "The body of Mickey MacKay, idol of Vancouver hockey fans two decades ago and one of the finest centre men the game ever produced, was sent Friday to Grand Forks, B.C."

The Rec Commission has asked staff to investigate grant opportunities for developing a memorial on the green space in front of the arena and possibly naming the laneway between the two buildings in honor of MacKay.

Following the tragic deaths at the Fernie arena this year, our 2018 budget will include funding for a Freon detector at the curling rink, as well as \$30 000 to upgrade the ice plant at the arena. Our facility passed inspection by the safety authority in the spring of this year and upgrades are mainly preventative. A motion was also made to invest \$2500 into upgrading the concession at the arena as well.

Following the results of a needs assessment survey for the aquatic centre, conducted earlier this year, the Rec Commission is responding to the top five indicators from the survey. A sub committee has been struck to consider varying the hours of operation. Because of the desire to see increased temperatures at the pool, we are implementing a "warm weather week" from December 23-30th. During this time, none of the cardio programs are operating in the main pool, therefore a temperature of 30 C, won't pose any health risks associated with overheating.

We are also happy to announce a new member to the Rec Commission. Bob MacLean has joined us as an observer for the past couple of meetings and will officially become a member in the new year.

Thanks also to the Bruins, Telus, Ultimate Hockey, Elks, Interfor and Rotary for sponsoring family oriented events at the pool and arena this month.

The planning committee for our upcoming public forum entitled “Building a Safe and Secure Grand Forks” met this week to finalize many details of the event. It will take place on December 14th from 6-8pm at the Perley Elementary School gymnasium. An invitation letter to our guest speakers was sent out and a poster created for advertising online and in the newspaper. So far, we have confirmation from the RCMP, IHA and Citizens on Patrol that they will be in attendance to explain their roles and the challenges they face. There will also be an opportunity for the public to sign up as volunteers for the new Neighbourhood Watch program and Citizens on Patrol. Council sent a thank you letter to The Minister for Mental Health and Addictions, Judy Darcy, for meeting with council at the UBCM and to invite her to attend our forum in Grand Forks.

On Monday, December 4th, our MLA, Linda Larson came to meet with representatives from the various community groups grappling with the enormous issue of addiction, crime and homelessness. She wanted to know what each group was doing, where their funding came from and gaps that they could identify in services. Sergeant Fenske was also in attendance to give us the facts and challenges facing the RCMP. Each time I hear him speak, I learn a lot about the barriers the police face in getting the criminals off our streets, as well as the compassion that they somehow manage to maintain for the offenders. Most of the repeat offenders that take up a majority of their time are struggling with some form of mental illness or addiction. I hope, as elected officials, we can put together a plan of how to best advocate for the RCMP to higher levels of government, to get them more funding, officers and an easier time prosecuting in the courts.

Finally, I would like to put forward a motion for council, to discuss and designate, delegates for the 2018 conferences. I had sent out an email asking to attend the LGLA conference at the end of January as well as the FCM in June but haven’t heard any discussion about it. By attending the LGLA conference, I am hoping to attain my level 1 certificate in local government leadership. The LGLA website lists the following as reasons for councillors to attend:

“First, you are gaining knowledge, skills and abilities directly related to your role in governance and leadership. Often people are not familiar with the complete mandate and operations of local government prior to being elected. It is a steep learning curve for newly elected officials. Taking courses which lead to certification ensures that you have the information you need to govern confidently. Your community will benefit from your increased understanding of both the “big picture” and the “fine details” of local governance. Second, you are no longer just attending select educational programs at the various events you attend, but are now working towards a certificate that demonstrates your desire to learn. The public expects its elected officials to be the best that they can be. The certificate is proof to all that you are committed to being knowledgeable and competent in the area of governance. Third, your efforts to increase your knowledge, skills and abilities are recognized by your peers.”

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Butler