

Councillor's Report for January 15, 2018  
Beverley Tripp

Boundary Housing Needs Workshop

As I mentioned in my report before Christmas, I will be attending this workshop hosted by SPARC BC and Community Futures on January 30th. Housing statistics taken from the 2016 Census have been made available prior to the event, and they are quite interesting. For example, over the past decade, the net population increase in Grand Forks has been 13, and two in five households are headed by seniors. Seniors comprise a full third of our population, compared with a provincial average of just 18.3%, which points to the fact that our beautiful area continues to be a preferred retirement location. One important statistic reveals that there are 60 individual senior renter households in the city, which makes up 75% of renters. Other important statistics reveal housing affordability pressures as related to income levels. This data will be quite valuable in its application to the OCP Bylaw Amendment and the Zoning Bylaw Repeal and Replace, coming up for Third Reading at our first meeting in February.

Building a Safe and Secure Grand Forks Community Meeting

It's been a month since this meeting was held at the D. A. Perley Elementary gym, but it's community impact is still worth noting. About 150 area residents came out to hear from the City, RCMP, Interior Health, and others, who reported on initiatives that are taking place in the city to address increased crime and homelessness in our region. Representatives from several of the community agencies, including BETHS, Whispers of Hope and the Boundary Womens' Coalition were also on hand to respond to questions from the audience.

I want to thank those who supported my efforts to bring this initiative forward, especially Councillors Butler and Ross, and have received many comments from members of the community who are grateful that the event took place. I sincerely believe that honest and open discussion and collaboration with all involved agencies will continue to be the way to move forward with this issue.

Draft Resolutions for the AKBLG

It is no secret that the criminal justice system in our province is perceived to be in shambles. This year, Grand Forks has been dealing with increased incidences of crime, homelessness and mental health incidences that have affected the safety and security of our community. And that has been a big concern to us on council, so I approached RCMP Detachment Commander Sgt. James Fenske to get him thinking about how our council might support policing efforts in our community with some asks that we could take to the province.

After the community meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>, further communication with Sgt. Fenske resulted in my drafting three resolutions that have identified some of the most pressing needs for our city. They also have potential for significant betterment of the judicial system for cities province-wide. I am bringing the following three draft resolutions forward for discussion and approval by council, in preparation for sending to the AKBLG prior to their resolutions submission deadline of February 24, 2018. If passed at the regional level, they will then move on to the UBCM this fall.

1. Increased Access to Court Services in Rural Communities:

**Whereas** the Provincial Government is committed to improving access to justice and the courts, and appoint and pay judges for the courts, and

**Whereas** rural communities typically make do with a part-time circuit judge once a month, while hundreds of millions of dollars has been allocated to improving court access in urban centers,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Provincial Government mandate increased access to the courts in rural BC by providing a bi-monthly circuit court judge so that routine court matters may be dealt with in a more expedient manner.

2. Request for Additional Crown Lawyers:

**Whereas** property crime rates have increased throughout the province, and the more borderline criminal cases are not going to trial because crown counsel resources are stretched too thin, and

**Whereas** it is the Crown Counsel who lays charges and prosecutes in criminal matters,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Assistant Deputy Attorney General (ADAG) increase the number of Crown Counsel lawyers to adequate levels to keep better pace with the growing criminal caseload.

3. Request to Drop the “Substantial Likelihood of Conviction” Standard to a “Reasonable Likelihood of Conviction” Standard:

**Whereas** The criminal justice system is a foundation of Canadian society that plays an important part in maintaining a just, peaceful and safe society, and

**Whereas** in BC, police do not have authority to lay charges as in other provinces, and unlike other provinces, the BC Crown Counsel requires a “*substantial likelihood of conviction*” criteria for laying charges,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Assistant Deputy Attorney General drop the burden of proof criteria for Crown Counsel in the laying of criminal charges from a “*substantial likelihood of conviction*,” to a “*reasonable likelihood of conviction*.”

Respectfully submitted,

Beverley Tripp