

Councillor's Report for February 26, 2018  
Beverley Tripp

Family Day

As I sit down to write this report, it is Family Day across the country, and celebrations like the one Grand Forks had last week-end are in full swing. By all accounts, Family Day celebrations here were a big success for most everyone. There were the traditional events for both big and little kids, like the Fun Mudder/obstacle course, the fire truck ride and the ATV ride around the park – and let's not forget all the free food. Everyone who turned out either to take part, or to volunteer time to make the week-end long event a success had a great time. Everyone except many downtown businesses.

Next year, the date of Family Day in BC will be moved to align with the other provinces. That is because some thinkers assessed the situation and realized that there is far more to be gained by aligning the BC date with the rest of the country than to hold it on a different date. Good for all of us in terms of aligning our business needs! And this brings me to the point of this section of my report. I believe we should put some thought into how we can improve our own Family Day celebrations for the sake of those downtown businesses who incur little to no benefits but suffer greatly from the street closure in front them.

A particular business owner on Market Street brought this to my attention. I was told that the loss of revenue for businesses due to the street being blocked off is about ten thousand dollars! There are businesses that literally cannot afford to stay open during the Saturday street closure because they lose most of their walk-in business. One reason for this is that many of our residents are seniors (and yes, they are part of families too), but they need parking access to frequent these businesses.

I would like to see some thought given towards the concept of a different, and better area for Family Day events that would not necessitate the closure of Market Street, or other main downtown core streets. For example, could the two streets around City Hall and the Post Office be closed, or could the festivities be held in the City Park, or around Gyro Park? What about the far end of Market Street near the river where businesses are not open on Saturdays?

These are only suggestions, but I believe we need to start somewhere to address the very real concerns of businesses that are not in favour of the downtown street closure(s) that so severely affect them. I would like to suggest that the Downtown Business Association do a study of this issue on behalf of their members, which I understand is every business in the downtown catchment area, and that Councillor Hammett report back to council with the findings.

Zoning and Sustainable Community Plan Bylaws

I had really been hoping to engage with the statistical information from the 2016 Census which was to be discussed at a Boundary Housing Needs Workshop prior to these bylaws being voted on by council. I felt that the stats would support and provide information pertinent to the OCP and Zoning Bylaw regarding how garden suites and tiny homes relate to the housing needs and challenges we are experiencing in Grand Forks. I understand that the workshop has been postponed until mid-March, which unfortunately will be too late for the vote on the bylaw

amendments. These bylaws were brought before Council at the last Regular Meeting but were not voted on due to a technicality in the presentation of the resolutions. They are expected to be on this Regular Meeting agenda.

While I am absolutely in favour of affordable and alternative housing options, I am concerned about a number of issues surrounding garden suites and tiny homes. Some of my concerns have to do with fire safety and accessibility (was the Fire Department consulted?), laneway access issues (do laneway suites hinder or help suspicious activities?), water issues, land values, and the residential zones where garden suites would best be located. The OCP suggests in section 4.3.19 to: “enable increased residential density *across all residential land uses* (ital mine) through incremental development of small dwellings, suites, micro-apartments and tiny houses.” Rather than blanket zoning, wouldn’t it be in the city’s best interests to first identify a smaller “pilot” area to see how these homes change the fabric of the neighborhood, and what other unforeseen impacts they may have? Also, section 10.10.1, Building and Structure Guidelines contains a clause referring to “limiting the use of potable water for landscape irrigation.” Virtually all homes are currently metered and water rates have been set for water usage. Should there be any further restrictions put on water usage by residents when they are paying for what they use?

There is a saying that one should know why a fence was put up before taking it down, and I have concerns that as they stand, these changes to our OCP and Zoning bylaws could have deleterious effects on our community in the long run. That is why I will not be voting in favour of the OCP and Zoning Repeal and Replace bylaws.

#### Opioid Crisis

I also recently met with Lisa Cartwright who is heading up the Opioid Crisis Project in this community. She is currently gathering information from invested stakeholders and those interested in this issue. We spoke about the great gap in treatment and recovery services for people in the addictive cycle, and the government’s need to provide resources to that end. Lisa’s role as the “repository of information” cannot be underestimated and I would encourage anyone who has anything to add to this conversation to get hold of her at [lisa\\_cartwright@hotmail.com](mailto:lisa_cartwright@hotmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

Beverley Tripp