

Councillor's Report

March 12, 2018

Julia Butler

This past week I was honoured to be the guest speaker at the Rotary breakfast. I was asked to speak with the group about my experience as a mom, juggling the responsibilities of home, work and volunteering in the community. The Rotary is interested in getting more young people involved as volunteers in the community and wanted to know what would help draw them in, as well as what barriers need to be overcome. In keeping with their family-oriented mandate, they have chosen their major project for the year, to support the BMX club with the installation of new starting gates on the track in city park.

I also met this week with Councillor Tripp and a long-time resident, to discuss the updates to the zoning bylaw and OCP. I was interested in her point of view as to how we should best increase our housing stock in the Boundary and to find out what new residents are looking for when buying property in town. Houses in the mid price range are in the highest demand and moving quickly, while smaller places are not. We discussed the concerns she had with the introduction of garden suits into all of the R1 zone. In considering them for rental options, it was a concern that the cost of building them wouldn't be recouped by the rental income, as the price charged for such a small place would be too low to make them financially viable. The tax base also wouldn't increase significantly, while putting increased demand on services and utilities. We were wondering if access to garden suits should only be from the main street, to avoid increased plowing and lighting costs that would be incurred by alleyway access. Garden suits along fence lines could be directly looking into the neighbours' yards and windows, decreasing privacy and creating problems for neighbours. This would have to be considered in every development permit application. "Limiting potable water use for landscaping", should be clarified in the OCP amendment, to identify the freedom allowed for gardeners in garden suits. We all tended to agree that they would not work in the small lot zone (R-2), as 50% lot coverage was not realistic. The OCP and zoning bylaws are both huge documents that staff have been pouring over and familiarizing themselves with over the past year. By the process of giving these bylaws four readings, it has hopefully allowed council the opportunity to do the same. Unfortunately though, as I have become more cognisant of the changes being proposed, I'm just not fully comfortable with them and for these reasons feel that maybe a few amendments should be proposed. Perhaps as Councillor Tripp had suggested, this would all be better understood after the Housing Needs Workshop hosted by The City and Community Futures on March 13th.

On March 4th, I attended the board meeting for the gymnastics club and am happy to see the progress that is being made and the goals that are being set. They now have a Go Fund Me page, have started the grant application process for numerous opportunities, have relators engaged in a property search for an existing building and working on options for a new build as well. The equipment list has been finalized and once funding is in place, the equipment committee will be sourcing gently used equipment as a first option to keep costs down. Fundraising events are being planned, so watch for those events coming soon as well as the fundraising thermometer, which will be set up outside the arena!

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Butler