Councillor Colleen Ross
Report for October 16th, 2017

PART A- UBCM 2017 Vancouver BC

Legalized Cannabis in BC : Discussed the research that has been done to date by the expert panel appointed by the federal government with some representatives on the panel. Some of the recommendations were disputed, including no co-location with alcohol and tobacco; allowing 4 plants/person to be grown that are not higher than 1 metre as a health cannabis plant grows higher than 1 metre; do not expect an increase in use once legalized, as cannabis is already widely used in BC; no warehouse type facilities should be built on ALR land

Key principles moving forward:

- must be fair
- must be safe
- eliminate any possible illegal activities in growing or distribution
- must be consistent
- must protect youth and children

See the panels report here: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/marijuana-cannabis/task-force-marijuana-legalization-regulation/framework-legalization-regulation-cannabis-in-canada.html

Provincial Regulation of Non-Medical Cannabis: Regulation will take effect no later than July 2018 according to the commitment by the federal government.

Plenary discussion on possible options for BC. It was a somewhat disappointing session as most of the discussion was based on a model that supported large LP's, with little thought or discussion of the Craft Cannabis industry, and the dispensaries that are already working well throughout BC and in other provinces. The model of industrial commercial production was a focus with concern raised about quality, chemical residue, and the historic value of growers in BC who created the existing cultural paradigm that has made BC cannabis a standard that is both reputable and established.
Comment period ends November 1. Please visit — https://engage.gov.bc.ca/BCcannabisregulation/

Medium Sized Communities: examples of innovation

Dawson Creek- initiated "Kindness Meters" along TCT and key locations throughout the city. Funds go to charity.

Kimberly- Sun Mine Solar Project: We visited with project while at AKBLG, so it was not the first time I heard about this initiative. It has worked well for Kimberly and they are currently collecting enough energy to power 275 homes, simply because they only built the project at 1MW's. Power is sold to BC Hydro and generates enough revenue to pay for itself. It is a good way to repurpose brownfield sites. The real benefit is that it has "changed people's concept of the town from resource based to one that is more progressive."
Revenue from Sun Mine has serviced $2 million in debt, and added to the reserve fund. It has also brought a lot of positive attention to the town and demand for consultation for other towns to do similar projects.

Issues—They would like to expand but need equity partners or to sell. This is not part of the mandate outlined in the community charter guidelines.
To Do: Contact Eco-Smart to explore funding opportunities for GF.

Salmon Arm- Tech Cluster is a partnership approach to developing innovation in the community. It keeps youth in the community, and attracts them to come back after gaining post-secondary education.
"People move to communities for the lifestyle and will figure out how to make a living so they can stay here."
Is GF a community doing enough to attract young people because of the lifestyle? What are we doing right? What can we be better at? How do we facilitate making our community more "liveable" so that people want to stay, invest and create here.

Provincial Cabinet Town Halls—Jobs, Resources and Green Communities:
Honourable Lana Pophan, Minister of Ag- key initiatives are:
1. Grow BC— renew the program and bring in new entrants
2. Feed BC— create platform that encourages institutional purchasing; better labeling and advertising
3. Buy BC— invest in marketing programs

Rural BC is floundering. Agriculture and food has the power to unlock prosperity in rural communities. Councils have the ability to showcase local food, not only restaurants but growers.

Hon. Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum—opportunities are increasingly controversial; we can capitalize on opportunities; how do we get product to market/protect the environment — finding the balance in the new economy

Hon. Doug Donaldson, Minister of FLNRO and RD— fire impacts on rural BC over the past 3 years have had a huge impact on forest industry. There is a push to harvest effected fibre.

Hon. George Hyman MOE and Climate Change— provincial gov't is revitalizing environmental standards across all sectors and renewing climate leadership team.

Note: Mining, forestry and agriculture is currently self regulated without the measures in place to enforce existing standards or laws.

Forestry 101: Principles and Opportunities for Strengthening Community Interaction: A follow up from last years UBCM pre-conference roundtable that recognized growing concern that the forest industry and practices are impacting rural communities in ways not seen in previous history. Climate change and lower standards due to self regulation requires a completely new forest practices framework and more meaningful and transparent consultation with rural communities.
Round table discussion did not allow for complete transparency is concerns due to industry presence and the manner in which the discussions were facilitated. I spoke privately to representatives from the Forest Practices Board who are aware of the forest practices issues in the Boundary and showed me aerial photos of the logging that is happening throughout the region. They encouraged me to write a letter so that a more thorough enquiry can begin. The Kettle River Grizzly study that has been released was not discussed, although the staff from FPB where central to getting that report done.
To do: write letter to FPB about logging practices in the boundary and ask for ACC to be reassessed and immediate investigation into deforestation and FSR construction in the region.

Other meetings:
Urban/Agriculture Interface: hosted by Urban Matters and Region of Spallumcheen - Discussion on Urban/Agriculture interface and the issues that create divides. Primary focus was on nutrient loading on local aquifers, and handling of nutrients around residential areas that are encroaching on farm land. All of the issues would be addressed with a fully enforced Nutrient Management Plan similar to the one that exists in Ontario.

Innovating with Communities— Urban Matters: creating new ways to "develop" communities beyond the resource sector.

Ministers Meetings:
Honourable Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions— discussed current issues directly related to addictions and mental health in Grand Forks, including homelessness, crime and the need to street level service and support in rural BC. Minister Darcy said that there would be a new focus on the growing crisis in rural communities.
Follow up: write a letter of thanks for meeting with us, and ask for specific assistance with getting training for staff of outreach organizations that already exist, and have professionally trained individuals work in GF to assist with immediate needs. Have funding in place for a year round shelter and transition housing.

Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing— expressed the need to deal with affordable housing crisis in rural BC and ensure that funds and initiatives are made available to Grand Forks. 2500 affordable housing units are to be built in BC over the next 2 years.
To do: Apply for affordable housing units for Grand Forks. New grant opportunities are being developed specifically for "small communities".http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/finance/grants.htm
Follow up: Write letter of thanks for the meeting and ask for support moving forward to construct a first phase of affordable housing in GF.

FLNRO— met with staff to discuss Gilpin Grasslands. There is no funding or structure in place to protect Nature Trust land. A fully implemented and enforced Nutrient Management Plan would address most of the issues experienced in the Gilpin Grasslands area.
Follow up. Write letter to Hon. George Heyman who I did meet and discussed the NMP with him. Minister Heyman is not familiar with the NMP, but expressed interest in it as it solves many of the problems around protecting sensitive areas, waterways, wetlands, watersheds and runoff. The Honourable Andrew Weaver has expressed an interest in addressing water issues in the province, hence must be cc'd on the letter.

PART B— other meetings

RDKB: participated in the September 21 meeting on behalf of Mayor Konrad. The meeting went very quickly as an in camera was to follow. Minutes to all meetings are provided in agendas.

Kootenay Boundary Agriculture and Food Security Project: Thursday October 5th— update meeting with presentation of key themes and draft report. See RDKB website for draft report and summary of survey results.