



Mayor's Report

May, 2017



Congratulations must be offered to our new MLA, Sonia Furstenuau of the B.C. Greens for being elected on May 9th, 2017 to represent our Cowichan Valley riding. Sonia is all about community and will do a great job representing all of our communities (individually and collectively) in the B.C. Legislature. All seven of the candidates who put their names forward to represent us gave our voters strong/ diverse choices. The time and commitment put in by these candidates is very much appreciated and all of you should be commended for campaigning superbly.

Our community vision as stated in the Town of Lake Cowichan Official Community Plan is: *Our vision is to create a vibrant, healthy, sustainable community that exists in harmony with the natural environment, enjoys a balanced economy, supports all generations and provides the opportunities to satisfy diverse social needs.* While we still have much to do to achieve our goal, we are certainly seeing positive improvements and progress and are confident we are following the right path to attain the vision, I earlier referred to. Our objective is to make the necessary changes to correct any imperfections.

Recent real estate sales in our buoyant market have resulted in new home sales and new homeowners which for the most part, means new citizens becoming part of our community. As disappointing as it is to see some people who have been long-established in our community leave, it is indeed exciting to see new residents and the enthusiasm some of these newcomers are bringing to our community. Our demographics are slowly moving back to the "working age" demographic which is allowing for the first time in years a diversification in our population demographics as some of our new residents are younger families with children. It does not make for a healthy environment to be predominantly populated with one age class. A healthy, strong community has to be properly diversified ranging from infants to elders. We are now seeing that diversification beginning to reappear in our community. It really is encouraging to hear some of the new residents speak of how they have been welcomed upon their arrival here. Every citizen plays an important role as we attempt to strengthen our social fabric and community identity. We have an enormous core of wonderful people and it is good to see their infectious, positive attitude spreading to others who also desire a community they can be proud of. I encourage all of our citizens, new or established, to become involved in recreational activities, social clubs, arts and culture, or whatever particular interest you might have, and enjoy. We are a much stronger community when we share our time, skills and information with our peers as we learn and grow together.

The week of May 28th to June 3rd is Tourism Week in Canada and it aligns tourism organizations, businesses and other partners from across the country around a common vision: a tourism sector recognized for its contribution to the local social fabric. Tourism plays a tremendous role in our local economy and it is important that we strengthen this sector so our economy can move forward. Laketown Ranch has helped us immensely with their music festivals, as was evidenced by the Laketown Rock Festival this past May long weekend. With thousands of festival goers coming to our community, it provides a strong and much-needed economic stimulus to our service industry. We continue to see growth and more service jobs available as this demand for entertainment increases. Any event that entices visitors to our community is a benefit to our business sector.

A big thank you must be extended to the organizers of both the recent Heritage Days and the upcoming Lake Days celebrations. Volunteering your time towards these great events so everyone may enjoy events in Lake Cowichan is appreciated very much. I cannot stress enough how much our community is strengthened because of your dedication. On the Saturday of Lake Days' event, June 10th, 2017 at 4:00 pm, the 2017 Induction ceremony for the Heritage Sports Wall will take place at the Sports Arena. This year's Inductees will be Tanya Clarke-Young for Free-Style Skiing, and a group of young ladies: Linda Jakubowski (Atchison), Jolene Livingston (Cook), Shannon McKinlay (Knott), Justine Miles, Christine Nash, & Kirsten Harkins (Nimmo) for Figure Skating. This event is open to the public as we honour these ladies and we encourage the public to attend and show support for their great accomplishments.

A year ago the producers of the CBC show "Still Standing" spent a week in Lake Cowichan shooting an episode for its third season. It was a fun time having the CBC crew in town and especially the wind-up comedy show featuring Jonny Harris. The third season of "Still Standing" begins on June 27th, 2017 and the episode devoted to Lake Cowichan will air on August 1st, 2017. Through the encouragement and assistance of the "Still Standing" marketing team the Town will be hosting a fun-filled public event to showcase the screening of the show featuring our Town. We are still working on the logistics of where the event will be hosted. The intent is to provide a fun-filled family event that will unite our community and exude our pride in being part of it. Please watch for details of this August 1 showcase event.

Water main upgrades have begun at Park Road and Wilson Avenue as we continue with our infrastructure improvements. This work is absolutely necessary and we ask that respect and consideration be given to the workers involved in this project. Delays and inconveniences are unavoidable as everyone is working towards improving our aging infrastructure deficiencies. Following this work there will be water main upgrades at Greendale Road, Greendale trestle and the footbridge between the Ohtaki and Duck Pond parks. Please slow down and pay attention when navigating through these worksites.

We expect that work will commence once again on the Centennial Ball Fields now that the conditions are drier.

Please enjoy a safe and enjoyable summer.

Ross Forrest, Mayor