

## MAYOR'S REPORT - MARCH, 2021



The Town of Lake Cowichan is starting to grow again. Over the past couple of years we have started to experience a dramatic growth in development within the Town.

When I was elected to Council in 1998, a wise person told me that development in the Cowichan Lake Area would come and that local government best be prepared with an up-to-date Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

Well, here we are, and I believe in many ways we are well prepared to manage this sharp growth spurt. Four years ago the new Official Community Plan was adopted which has been an invaluable tool to guide development in its form and function. The Official Community Plan and its associated Bylaws give our planning staff and the approving officer the handbook to achieve responsible, growth that suits our communities best interest while trying to work "respectfully" with our natural environment. Done properly, this will lead to a healthy sustainable community.

One of the challenges we have faced recently is the lack of oversight when it comes to development near the river and the many creeks and streams in the Town. The rules and regulations regarding development near watercourses are very in depth and specific and administered by the provincial and federal government. The issue is the lack of oversight from these government bodies and a lack of respect on the part of developers when working in these sensitive areas. Therefore, infractions in this area are often discovered when the work is partially completed, thus resulting in stop work orders and costly corrective measures. In the end most developers are willing to comply, but had things been done respectfully and correctly in the first place, increased costs and work stoppages could easily be avoided.

Local Governments need the provincial and federal governments to step up and create a better business model for protecting the environment and give local government the resources and the abilities to do the oversight if they cannot manage the work necessary to protect our freshwater ecosystems.

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“Building Community Together”