

Mayor's Report – November 5, 2024

On October 16, CAO Statt and I met with our counterparts in Peachland – CAO Joe Creron and Mayor Patrick Van Minsel – to discuss several issues of common concern. We agreed to collaborate in our efforts to get BC Hydro to connect to the Summerland electrical system in order to provide a redundant power source for both our communities. We also agreed to work together to press the provincial government for highway improvements and alternative routing options in light of the Highway 97 rock slide that continues to impact travel between Summerland and Peachland.

On October 17, Councillor Van Alphen and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where directors agreed to supply curbside carts to homes in the rural areas as they join Summerland, Penticton and Oliver in the transition to automated garbage, recycling and yard waste collection, starting in July.

The Board also approved the installation of surveillance cameras at the Campbell Mountain landfill, Okanagan Falls landfill, Oliver landfill, and the Keremeos transfer station. All these sites have had break-ins recently, showing that the problem of theft and vandalism at landfills is widespread and not limited to Summerland.

The RDOS Board discussed introducing Saturday and evening service to the Route 70 bus service to Kelowna but decided to postpone a decision to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for future expansion until BC Transit provides costings.

At the end of the meeting, the Board gave Councillor Van Alphen a heartfelt send off as it was his last board meeting as an RDOS director. We didn't quite break out singing 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow', but almost... On behalf of Council, I would like to extend my gratitude to Councillor Van Alphen for his service at the Regional District over the past two years. And I know we can be confident that Summerland will continue to have effective representation at the regional level as Councillor Barkwill takes over the second Summerland seat on the RDOS board starting this week.

The Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign begins each year on the last Friday of October, which this year fell on the 25th. By tradition, the Governor-General receives the first poppy for Canada, and in towns across the country, the mayor receives the first poppy for their community. It was an honour to once again receive this year's poppy from Doug MacKay of the Summerland Legion. The November 11th Remembrance Day ceremony will be held as usual at Memorial Park and as mayor, it will be an honour to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of the District and the people of Summerland.

Finally, Council was in budget deliberations on October 30 and 31 for the 2025 financial plans for the water, sewer and electrical utilities. CAO Statt will speak to the proposed utility rate increase in his report as well as timing of the online open house, but I'd just like to say it's a Council priority to invest in core infrastructure and modest rate increases are needed not only to keep up with increasing operational and capital costs but also to build up the reserves we need for future infrastructure renewal.

- Mayor Doug Holmes