



Highlands News

July/August 2007

The Official Newsletter of the District of Highlands Council
RURAL LIFE NATURAL BEAUTY STRONG COMMUNITY

A message from Mayor Mark Cardinal

The District of Highlands applied to the Capital Regional District for an amendment to extend the CRD Urban Containment Boundary to enable the CRD to provide water and sewer servicing to 267 Hectares (660 acres) of land in the south Highlands adjacent to the border with Langford. The District of Highlands undertook this initiative to diversify its tax base by facilitating tourism accommodation and commercial land uses, in addition to providing piped water to a few residential areas in the Hanington and River Road areas.

The CRD approved First and Second reading of the amending bylaw and will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, September 13, 2007, starting at 6:30 at the Ambrosia Event Centre located at 638 Fisgard Street.

Following the public hearing, the amendment bylaw and the submissions received through the hearing process will be formally transmitted to regional municipalities for approval.

If you wish to attend the Public Hearing, please indicate to the CRD in advance if you would like to present information. Speakers are usually allotted a maximum of 5 minutes. The CRD requests a written copy of your presentation at the public hearing (one copy is fine).

Or you may send a written submission to CRD Regional Planning, 625 Fisgard Street
P.O. Box 1000, Victoria, BC V8W 2S6; Attn: Tracy K. Corbett, Senior Manager
Marked "Re: RGS Public Hearing Submission." Written submissions must be received no later than 4:00 PM September 13, 2007.

Outstanding Property Tax Notices

This is a reminder that as of **4:00pm September 4, 2007 an additional 5% penalty will be added to 2007 outstanding taxes.** Outstanding arrears and delinquent taxes will continue to accrue daily interest at a rate set by the province. If you have any questions regarding your taxes, please contact our office at 474-1773. **Late Payments must be made at the Municipal Office located at 1980 Millstream Rd. We accept cash or cheque only.**

Highlands News available on email

If you would like an electronic copy of the *Highlands News*, Official Newsletter of the District of Highlands Council, please email June Cameron at the Municipal Hall at JCameron@highlands.ca.

Contacts

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District of Highlands Awarded Substantial Provincial Grant

The District of Highlands was awarded a substantial **\$233,000 provincial grant** to fund our Comprehensive Groundwater Study (CGS) through the Gas Tax Innovations Fund. The scope of work and cost estimate for the CGS was written by Golder & Associates, a local firm that the Highlands Groundwater Task Force group had selected as the suggested candidate to undertake the study. The grant application was made using Golder's scope of work. Council had already set aside \$70,000 in the 2007 budget to begin the first phase of the CGS. However when grant opportunities arose this past Spring through the Provincial Infrastructure Grant program, the Task Force recommended to Council that we apply for the grant and not award the project until the results of the grant application were known. This grant award not only funds Phase 1 of our CGS but all the way through to the last phases, with the exception of a drilling program at the latter stages of the project. Council can

now look to other constructive uses for the original \$70,000 set aside in our fiscal budget. The Groundwater Task Force group has suggested to Council that staff and the Task Force be allowed to apply for other grant opportunities over the next year with the intention of getting grant funding for the drilling component of the study. If we are successful in finding grant money for the drilling component the District will have a substantial planning tool in the results of the study to help our future Council and staff guide land use planning in the District. The CGS will also serve as a benchmark for other small communities in the province who may want a similar planning tool for their region. It is important to remember that the results of the Comprehensive Groundwater Study will not be the one and only tool for proper land use planning in our District, but it will be an important one.

American Bullfrog Status and Funding



American bullfrogs are an invasive species known to inhabit wetlands and lakes in the CRD. Monitoring programs have been in place in the Highlands to undertake proactive containment

of bullfrogs in areas such as Fork Lake, Eagles Lake and First Lake, to name a few. Successful culling of bullfrogs has been undertaken since the year 2000. The province is not currently involved with any longer term bullfrog control strategies.

In the past the District of Highlands has contributed \$5,000 toward a regional bullfrog program, including a \$2,500 donation through the Highlands Stewardship Foundation.

At a Council meeting on August 13th, Eric Bonham, Chair of the Highlands Stewardship Foundation, appealed to Council to donate up to \$5,000 toward enabling critical field work to continue through the summer of 2007. Council elected to discuss this appeal

at our next council meeting in September when we would have a better idea of our budget status.

District of Highlands 2007 West Nile Virus Risk Reduction Prevention Initiative

The District has received some grant money through the Ministry of Health and UBCM to monitor West Nile mosquito population. This will further the work started in 2005.

No treatment of mosquitoes is intended at this time.



If a resident is *currently* – meaning from early August 2007 and on – experiencing a mosquito annoyance problem, please let the District's consultant, Mr. John Henigman know at 886-8706. We will pass the location on to our consultant for consideration for testing.

For more information on West Nile virus and the current situation in British Columbia, please see the Vancouver Island Health Authority's (VIHA) web site at: http://www.viha.ca/mho/disease/west_nile_virus.htm.

Highlands Fire Equipment

At a Council meeting June 4th, council approved purchase of a new pumper truck for the West Fire Hall. Funds for this purchase were accumulated through savings in other areas over the past 5 years or so. This means that funds normally allocated for replacement of fire fighter turn-out gear (coveralls, gloves, boots, helmet etc.) have not been provided to the degree that they should have been. The estimated total cost of one set of turn-out gear is nearly \$2,000. This year our budget allows for five sets of new turn-out gear. There are currently nearly 35 volunteer fire fighters in our District. To safely outfit our volunteers this gear should be replaced every 7 years or so. Council is working pro-actively with our Fire Chief to ensure that there is sufficient budget to allow our fire fighters to be safe.

Highlands Fire Ponds

The Highlands is not serviced by piped water and therefore does not have the luxury of pressurized fire hydrants. Water supply for fighting fires comes from

two sources: trucks and storage tanks or ponds. We have two pumper trucks (one for each Fire Hall) and one tanker truck (2500 gallons). The remainder of the fire water is sourced from storage tanks and fire ponds spaced throughout the District. In recent years many of the fire ponds constructed in the District have not been properly installed and/or are not properly maintained. Some do not hold water properly, others have become substantially overgrown. Council allowed for \$10,000 in our fiscal budget to address up to three ponds immediately. One of the ponds which requires work is located on Highlands Park Terrace. This pond does not hold water in the summer months to the degree that it should. In the upcoming weeks a 20,000 gallon storage tank will be placed beside this pond, camouflaged and established with the least amount of disturbance and sight lines as possible. A second tank will be established at the Williams property on Munns Road. This tank will be installed at the cost of that landowner, with the tank already in our District inventory. The Fire Chief has been working closely with our Administrator and staff to establish a priority list to ensure there is proper maintenance of our fire ponds.

Conservation Tip



Did you know that many local stores offer a credit when you use your own re-usable cloth or other carrying bags for such items as groceries or hardware supplies?

Using organic cleaners for laundry, dishwashers, household cleaning not only preserves your septic field it helps protect your well water from any contamination resulting from faulty septic fields. Most local stores carry a variety of organic household cleaning products.

Organic Waste Composting

The CRD is looking at a ban on organic waste in the Hartland Landfill as early as 2009. There are currently two pilot scale programs within Oak Bay and View Royal testing various methods of organic collection and re-use. The nearest organics composting facility on the island is in Nanaimo where this waste is currently transported. Discussions at the CRD Environment Committee indicate that the Highlands would not likely be part of future door to door organics programs due to the rural nature of our community and our ability to have on-site organics composting. Residents are encouraged to be proactive and compost at home in your own yards. For more information on backyard composting visit:

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/organics/compostingathome.htm>

LGB9 (Bear Mountain) Property Tax Appeal

In the early summer the District received notice that LGB9 (owners of Bear Mountain) had appealed their property tax assessment. The District gave notice that we intended to participate in the appeal process as an interested party. The District has received documentation that the appeal has been dropped and no further appeal is indicated at this time. Reasons for the original appeal were not known.

Edwards Bridge

Edwards Bridge is located in the dip in Millstream Road, just north of Millstream Lake Road. Last year Council was set to award a contract to upgrade Edwards Bridge. The contract was not awarded as the District is sorting out the standard to use for the bridge upgrade. Our structural and civil engineering consultants are looking at these issues now, particularly in light of a recent accident which caused damage to the guardrails on both sides of this bridge. It is expected that work to repair the damage and upgrades will take place in the early fall of this year. In addition, there will be some analysis of the grades of the bridge for the bridge approaches on either side.

The Return of the School Bus

The new school year is upon us. Once again we remind residents to be aware of the school bus picking up and dropping of children in our neighbourhoods. During winter road conditions priority is given to clearing the main road arteries and then clearing the school bus routes. If at any time you experience unsafe conditions in your area please feel free to contact the District Office.



Community Hall Task Force Update

In the spring of 2006, Council formed the Community Hall Task Force with the objective of determining the potential for a community hall in the Highlands. The committee has reviewed previous community surveys and findings from other halls, and has looked at potential uses, funding options and general location criteria.

Earlier this year, Council expanded the committee's terms of reference to examine the potential for a community centre for the Highlands which could include a community hall, municipal building, small commercial area and sports fields. The committee will be seeking input from the public on potential sites, and is planning an *open house this fall*. The District of Highlands has applied for a BC Spirit Squares grant for community centre planning.

Community Cultural Mapping Project

At the Council meeting of August 13th Council supported the intentions of the HDCA and the Community Cultural Mapping Group to apply for \$15,000 of funding from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) to create a "green map" of the Highlands. This project would create a map that would include public parks, streams, wetlands, hills and officially approved public access points for the benefit of tourists. Heritage buildings and recreational facilities, farms, local artists' studios, local markets and lodging would be identified. The map would be illustrated by local artists. Highlands resident Elaine Limbrick is the Project Coordinator. Highlands resident and Lakewood parent Marcela Strasdas will coordinate involvement of *Lakewood Elementary school children* in this project through agreement with the Lakewood principal.

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