



# Highlands News

May 2008

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

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## A message from Mayor Mark Cardinal

An April Council Newsletter was not produced as the Community Centre Task Force instead sent out their brochure encouraging feedback on the concept of a Community Center for the Highlands. An Open House was held Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>. Two grant applications have been made for infrastructure and planning funds to construct the proposed community center. Thanks to our Task Force volunteers for their continued hard work and dedication to this project!

The CRD and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands have officially announced the clean up of the Millstream Meadows site. This abandoned landfill, located across the street from our District office on Millstream Road will be remediated in the summer by excavating and removing the contaminated soil from the property. The cost for the remediation will be shared between the CRD (61%) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (39%).

Council spent much of March and April debating our District Budget for 2008. Details are contained in this newsletter. After an interesting debate, council voted to maintain the municipal tax rate at its current level.

At the May 5<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, appointments were made to represent Highlands in a possible formal dispute process after June 30<sup>th</sup>. The dispute resolution process is part of discussions related to the Regional Growth Strategy and urban containment boundary. Highlands has asked to adjust the boundary to allow piped services to the Bear Mountain development. Mayor Cardinal and Councillor Fall will represent the District in any dispute resolution processes.

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### Council Meeting Schedule for May & June

Council Meetings: Tuesday May 20<sup>th</sup>, Mondays June 2<sup>nd</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>  
Committee of the Whole: Monday May 12<sup>th</sup>, May 26<sup>th</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> (all as needed)  
Fiscal & Environment Committee: May 7<sup>th</sup>, June tba  
Infrastructure Committee: May 28<sup>th</sup>, June tba  
APC: May 6<sup>th</sup>

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### 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](mailto:JCameron@highlands.ca).

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#### Contacts

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Councillor Joe Kadar	Ph. 391-1409	kadardev@shaw.ca	Fire Chief Barry Ford	Ph. 479-5741	b.v.ford@shaw.ca

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## **Green Mapping Project**

Highlands residents Elaine Limbrick and Marcela Strasdas continue to work diligently with their team of 16 contributors on the Highlands Green Mapping Project. The project is a compilation of community information ranging from parks and trails locations to points of interest. The map is being illustrated using Highlands art and photography contributions. The project is expected to be completed and in circulation by the end of August.

## **City of Langford OCP**

The District of Highlands was one of the municipalities on the external referral list for the City of Langford OCP. The District is expected to send comments to Langford prior to their public hearing, which has been rescheduled to June. Some items of interest raised by Council include: provisions for a park and ride on the Highlands side of the Trans Canada Highway and allowance for a restrictive covenant near the Kingco/TLC property that would mimic the one within the DOH.

## **2008 Budget**

A leaflet providing details of the 2008 budget will be mailed separately to all Highlands residents. New items highlighted in this year's budget include:

- ◆ \$25,000 in 2008 for fire hydrant/tank maintenance
- ◆ Road repair budgets for such items as crack sealing and shoulder maintenance as well as several smaller paving projects
- ◆

The select findings and recommendations are being considered by Council but have not yet been ratified.

## **Mount Work Regional Park Update**

The Land Conservancy of BC intends to donate a large tract of land to the CRD as part of Mount Work Regional Park. Residents have raised concerns pertaining to public access to the additional tract of land, litter and provisions for washroom facilities. A public information session is anticipated in May to discuss

options. **May 15<sup>th</sup> 7 to 9pm** will be the date of the information evening and opportunity to comment.

## **HDCA Roadside Clean Up**

Highlands District Community Association should be commended once again for their volunteer efforts to clean up the District roadsides of litter. Litter is becoming an increasing problem along our major thoroughfares.

It really helps if neighbours get together once every few months to walk your area. As little as 30 minutes of your time can result in at least two garbage bags of litter removed from our roadsides!

## **Cyclists and Horseback Riders On Our Roads**

Spring brings with it an onset of people using our rural roads for exercise. Please be careful and pass wide and clear of cyclists and horseback riders.

## **Community Bulletin Boards**

Council passed a resolution to spend up to \$800 erecting community bulletin boards at strategic and commonly accessible areas in the District. Since most of our community news is passed by word of mouth and bulletin board postings the boards will provide a visible and consistent location to share information. Thanks to the HDCA and to Bob McMinn and Sheila Taylor and the volunteers in our community who have worked diligently on moving this project forward.

## **Strategic Planning for the DOH**

Staff and Council continue to work together to keep the District's Strategic Plan up to date. The Strategic Plan is our list of projects in priority that aid in allocating our finances to appropriate projects at appropriate times.

Economic development in the south Highlands remains a "high" priority on this list. Our groundwater monitoring program, fire department and protection planning, wildfire protection, sustainability planning all remain ongoing and also high priorities.

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Conservation Tips 

*Bottle Drives & Community Support*

By now we are sure that most of us recycle your drink containers.  
A great opportunity to recycle and embrace community is to support local fundraisers  
when they raise money during bottle drives!

**Litter on our Roads**

There has been a rash of littering along District roads. The Community Infrastructure & Services Select Volunteer Committee has been researching options to decrease littering along our roads. The District is working closely with roads contractor to determine an appropriate level of litter clean up. A report is due back to council shortly.



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**Rezoning Application – Highlands Day Care Facility**

Council reviewed a rezoning application for a proposed 20 child daycare facility on Millstream Road near to the District Office. All on Council recognized the need for this service in our District, especially in a location easily accessible as community members commute to and from work. Council has requested feedback from our committees and the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) who are the licensing authorities for daycares, along with the Ministry of Environment. If successful “Little Bears” may be up and running before the Fall of 2008.

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**\*\* 2008 PROPERTY TAX NOTICES \*\***

Your 2008 Property Tax Notice will be mailed out at the end of May. This year's *due date is 4:30pm on July 2, 2008* (note the extended hours for the month of June and tax due date). After July 2, any outstanding 2008 (current) property tax amount is subject to a 5% penalty. Another 5% penalty will be applied after 4:00pm on September 2, 2008. Arrears and delinquent taxes accrue daily interest at a % set by the province. **PLEASE NOTE OUR EXPANDED OFFICE HOURS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE, 8:00 AM TO 4:30 PM.**

**Important**

If you have moved or bought your property this year, please ensure that the District has your current mailing address by calling the Municipal Office at 474-1773.

**The Home Owner Grant must be completed every year!** If eligible, please claim your Home Owner Grant (HOG) by completing the reverse side of the property tax notice and dropping by our office or mailing-in at 1980 Millstream Rd, Victoria, BC, V9B 6H1. We also have a mail slot in the front door. If not claimed by the due date, the HOG portion is subject to penalties. **You do not need to make a payment to claim your home owner grant.**

**New for 2008**

*Interact* - the District office is pleased to offer a new method of payment - we now accept debit card payments! You can still pay by cash, cheque, or postdated cheques (please include roll# on cheque for reference). However, we do not accept credit cards or on-line payments. As you know, you may also pay your property taxes at your bank or credit union. The bank or credit union will require the bottom of your tax notice to process your payment and will accept Home Owner Grant applications only if accompanied by a payment.

**Increase in Threshold for HOG Phase-out**

For properties assessed at \$1,050,000 (threshold) and above, the HOG is reduced by \$5 for each \$1,000 of assessed value in excess of the threshold. The basic grant (\$570) is therefore eliminated or phased-out on properties assessed at \$1,164,000+ and the additional grant (\$845 for seniors, veterans and persons with disability) is eliminated on properties assessed at \$1,219,000+. For more information on the Home Owner Grant (HOG) Program please go to [www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog](http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog).

**Expansion of Eligibility to Low-Income Seniors, Certain Veterans & Certain Persons with Disabilities (HOG \$845)**

As of last year, a new measure ensures that low-income seniors and other qualified individuals who own and reside in properties that have increased in assessed value beyond the threshold, but who may face financial hardship, receive their homeowner grant.

How it works....as in previous years, once you have received your property tax notice, mail or bring your HOG application to our office before the due date. If that homeowner meets the low-income criteria, he/she should then contact the Provincial government to claim the remainder of the decreased (or phased-out) HOG. Details about income eligibility can be found by visiting the provincial website at [www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog](http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog) and downloading form FIN 65 or by calling 1(888)355-2700.

**Property Tax Deferment Program Change**

As of last year, the age at which a homeowner may begin to defer the property taxes on their principal residence is lowered from 60 to 55 years of age. For details on the Tax Deferment Program go to [www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog](http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/hog) or call 387-0555. Applications are also available at our office.

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