



Highlands News

May 2006

The Official Newsletter of the District of Highlands Council

RURAL LIFE NATURAL BEAUTY STRONG COMMUNITY

A message from Mayor Mark Cardinal

Volunteers are the backbone of our community. One of the definitions of “backbone” is “the part of an organization or system that is its strongest unifying factor and main support.” I would say that is an excellent way of expressing what volunteers mean to our community.

The Highlands Fire Department is made up of volunteers. Your neighbours practice every Thursday night and have for years. They willingly give up their free time to attend all kinds of emergencies in the Highlands—vehicle accidents, search and rescue, and, yes, fires. They risk their lives for their neighbours, and there is no way we can thank them enough for their devotion.

The Highlands is a community that relies on neighbours helping neighbours. In this community, we know our neighbours and know we can depend on them. The HELP (Highlands Emergency Local Preparedness) neighbourhood groups are working to prepare us for those inevitable times when disaster is upon us—wildfire, earthquake, search and rescue, or something we haven’t even thought of. I thank all the people working hard to be ready when the worst happens.

The many volunteers who form the volunteer organizations in the Highlands are neighbours who happily give their time to enrich the lives of us all through the Highland District Community Association, the Highland Firefighters’ Association, the Highland Heritage Park Society, and the Highland Parks and Recreation Association. Each group puts on cultural events and/or takes responsibility for an aspect of Highlands’ life which benefits us all. The most recent event was the HDCA’s Community Cleanup which saw the removal of enough roadside garbage to fill a metal garbage container to overflowing. One community member recycled a large pile of scrap metal, and whole families were involved in cleaning up their roadside areas. You all make the Highlands a better place to live and deserve the thanks of all Highlanders.

The organizations above need money, as well as time. Inside you will find items about donations of land and money. These are in a long tradition of Highlands donations (think of the new Schoolhouse meeting place).

We’re all busy people—so are those above who have contributed so much to our quality of life in the Highlands. Consider joining your busy neighbours by helping out as a volunteer in some way in the coming months and help out with other donations.

2006 Tax Notices

Your 2006 Property Tax Notice will be mailed out at the end of May. For 2006; the tax due date is 4:30pm on Tuesday July 4, 2006. Any outstanding property tax amounts are subject to a 5% penalty after this date. Another 5% penalty will be applied after 4:30pm on September 1, 2006.

*** Important *** If you have moved or bought your property this year, please ensure that this important document reaches you by calling us immediately with any mailing address changes.

*** New This Year *** The District of Highlands is pleased to offer a new payment option. You can pay taxes at any bank or credit union. Other payment options are by mail, in person, or in the mail slot at the Municipal Hall. We accept cash, cheque, or post-dated cheques (please include roll# on cheque for reference).

*** The Home Owner Grant *** If eligible, please claim your Home Owner Grant by filling in the back of the property tax notice. This year, the Province has increased the grant to \$570 for residents under 65 and \$845 for those over 65. This Grant must be claimed every year, even if you are not making a payment. Please claim before due date to avoid penalty.

Councillor's Corner

Councillor Michelle Mahovlich writes:

Beyond stumbling through the first few months of getting used to proper protocols and realizing that I have to get used to raising my hand to speak, I have found being on Council both challenging and enjoyable.

As a rookie member on Council, perhaps the most frequent question I get asked is, "What exactly do you do there?" Being on Council is challenging enough, but many people don't know that the Mayor and Council also represent the District on committees and boards which affect the entire Capital Regional District (CRD) or Westshore area.

At the beginning of our term, all members of Council were asked which committees they would like to serve on. As an example, some of the committees that exist in the CRD or locally on the Westshore include the Arts Committee, Greater Victoria Library Board, Westshore Parks and Recreation, and Western Communities Policing. Members of Council chose committees or boards in which they have a personal interest in or which are related to their work or academic background.

Council appointed me to represent the District of Highlands on the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee or FCYJ. Family court and youth justice matters include several current aspects that you may be familiar with either through our local schools or the local news, such as Crystal Meth. problems, bullying, and youth criminal and custody matters.

A very important current focus of the FCYJ (and one to which former Councillor Sandy McPherson dedicated much time) is the Youth and Mental Health Initiative (YMHI). The focus of the YMHI is to introduce mental health support directly into our schools, where our youth are most accessible and spend most of their days. I, personally, am a big advocate of this initiative. It makes a lot of sense to me to provide help to our youth in the place where they are most reachable. The YMHI is still in its start up phase, but certainly the CRD can be proud of the work being done by the FCYJ in focusing on this much needed service to our vulnerable youth.

Within the FCYJ are several sub-committees. I am chairing the Youth Matters sub-committee. Chairing the Youth Matters sub-committee has been a real eye opener

for me. I have toured the Youth Detention Centre—that is the new fenced building right next to the Trans Canada Highway near Thetis Lake. I have had meetings with four very interesting members of our community including: the Youth Detention Centre Case Management representative; the Team Leader, Youth Probation for Greater Victoria Youth Services; the director of the Boys and Girls Club; and local police representatives. I must say that I now look at our two young children, about to face all of these issues as they grow up in our school system, with a bit of a wake-up call as to what they may be exposed to.

The Youth Matters sub-committee has identified four areas to focus our future research on. These include: the lack of a youth alcohol and drug facility on Vancouver Island (currently youth must leave the island for treatment); the lack of affordable housing or support recovery services for youth released from detox; concern over youth mental health aspects and how the lack of mental health support, in turn, leads to youth issues (substance abuse, crime); and ,finally, the problem of limited outreach (street level) programs. I will continue to meet with my sub-committee on a monthly basis and will work to move these issues along to try to provide help for our young people.

Each Councillor provides a report on his or her committee work to Council at each Council meeting. The minutes of our meetings are readily available on the District website. I welcome any calls from the community if you have any questions related to the FCYJ committee.

As an aside, to this, I strongly encourage you, as property and business owners and adults in our community, to support youth in our own community by hiring them to help you at your home (paint, mow the lawn, clean the yard) or in your business, or by volunteering your time as a coach or mentor in the areas of sport, arts, or trades. I know that when I read one of my campaign speeches at our all-candidates night, I indicated that I felt that active youth are ones that do not get into trouble. That has become even more evident by my time spent learning more on the FCYJ Committee.

I hope you have an enjoyable summer! Michelle Mahovlich

Bear Mountain provides letter

Bear Mountain has provided a letter to the BC Assessment Authority that they will not appeal a supplementary assessment now that the rezoning

by-laws have been re-instated. It is expected that the supplementary assessment will considerably increase the taxable value of the lands owned by Bear Mountain in the south Highlands.

Johnsons exemplify community spirit

Anyone who has lived in the Highlands for some time knows the kind of generous people the Johnsons are. Sue and Charlie Johnson, who live at Lost Lake, have been ready to lend a hand wherever it has been needed for years. Sue's parents, Barbara and Tommy Taylor, bought the Lost Lake property in the early 50s as a cottage getaway for their family. Sue and many other Highland teenagers and children have spent their childhoods around and in the lake.

When Sue and Charlie married, it was natural that they would want to give their children the same wonderful experiences, and they built a log house on the lake. Even when Sue and Charlie lived and worked in Prince George and Vancouver, they always came home to Lost Lake for their holidays. They moved permanently to the lake in 1980.

Once the Johnsons came to live in the Highlands, they threw their energies into helping out. Sue was a volunteer firefighter for five years and on the HDCA executive. She was a Councillor on the first two Councils. Charlie has been a stalwart at the Highland Market with his fresh vegetables and canning. Sue is now a HELP neighbourhood co-leader for the Lost Lake area, and the Johnsons have donated 1,000 emergency preparedness packages for neighbourhood participants.

The *Goldstream Gazette* has recently highlighted their donation of \$100,000 to the Royal Roads University Foundation to help upgrade the Royal Roads Community Trail, a trail that has been in use since First Nations days.

The Highlands is fortunate, indeed, to have people like the Johnsons as volunteers and contributors to the common good

DoH names new APC members

New members of the District of Highlands APC (Advisory Planning Commission) named recently are

Mara Dhillon, Honora Johannesen, and Fred York. They replace Michael Bocking, Rod Glover, and Alan Philip. We thank all for their contributions.

Notice of traffic disruption

Chew Excavating has contracted with West Shore Environmental Services to install sewers along Millstream Road for the City of Langford. The work extends from the south end of 2120 Millstream road to Industrial Way, a distance of approximately 700 meters.

Trenching will start the week of May 23, 2006 and continue until mid-July. Traffic will be reduced to single lane alternating, controlled by flag persons. Please expect delays between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Emergency vehicle access will be maintained at all times.

Addition to Gowlland Tod Park

A donation of about 2 acres has been made by Michael Bocking and Evelyn Samuel to Gowlland Tod Provincial Park. Michael says, "It's not a large piece, but biologists have identified rare and endangered species on this high, steep outcrop. This donation completes the sensitive

ecosystem polygon, most of which is in the adjacent park and Cal Reville Nature Sanctuary." The donation was made as a requirement of a three-lot subdivision, recently completed by the couple. As a condition of accepting the donation, BC Parks made a stipulation that there should be no public access to this area because of its sensitive nature.

Highland Market starting

Highlanders can now get fresh produce at the doorstep as the Highland Market starts its summer season. The market runs the last Sunday of the month, May through September, from 10:00 am until 1:00 at the

Pike House. They have eggs, honey, flowers, bedding plants, baking, jams, jellies, and crafts.

For more information contact Leslie Wagner at 474-3453.

Groundwater Awareness—Caring for Your Septic System

Part of groundwater awareness is knowing what can affect the quality of water you drink from your water well. One thing that can have an adverse affect on your drinking water quality is the state of your septic system.

The following is taken from the CRD Environmental Services Bulletin:

“Wastewater from your sinks, toilets, and laundry drains through piping in your home to your septic tank. Your septic tank is buried in the ground somewhere on your property. Your tank is designed to hold wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle at the bottom and oil and grease to float to the top. Natural bacteria in the tank start breaking down the solids. However, eventually, the solids build up and must be pumped out. Regular pumping will reduce the amount of solids entering your drainfield and ensure proper drainage and treatment.

“The partially-treated wastewater from your tank flows through an outlet and is evenly distributed to the network of perforated pipes that constitute your septic field or drainfield. The wastewater in the drainfield begins to percolate into the soil through the holes in the pipes. Natural filtration and microorganisms in the soil remove any remaining harmful particles in the wastewater. However, if your septic system is not regularly maintained, there is a possibility that these same harmful particles can re-enter the groundwater system and potentially affect your drinking water quality.”

It is very important to have your septic system inspected on a regular basis and cleaned as necessary. The CRD recommends that you check your septic system on an annual basis. Spring is a great time to think of your annual septic system maintenance.

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 Sandi Chesley at the Municipal Hall at schesley@district.highlands.bc.ca.

Contacts

Mayor Mark Cardinal	Ph. 474-8985 Cell 380-8828	mecardinal@shaw.ca	Councillor Michelle Mahovlich	Ph. 812-5768	michelle_mahovlich@shaw.ca
Councillor Ken Brotherston	Ph. 478-0372	kmbhighlands@shaw.ca	Councillor Jane Mendum	Ph. 478-9449	jmendum@telus.net
Councillor Andrew Fall	Ph. 391-4801	andrew@gowlland.ca	Councillor Ken Williams	Ph. 479-7497	kgwmaya@shaw.ca
Councillor Joe Kadar	Ph. 391-1409	kadardev@shaw.ca	Fire Chief Barry Ford	Ph. 479-5741	b.v.ford@shaw.ca

Council Calendar

June 5 Council Meeting
June 14 Fiscal & Environmental Advisory Committee
June 19 Council Meeting
June 28 Community Infrastructure and Services AC

Pike House 7:00 p.m.
Pike House 7:00 p.m.
Pike House 7:00 p.m.
Pike House 7:00 p.m.

The Highlands News

Official publication of the District of Highlands Council
1980 Millstream Road
Victoria, BC, V9B 6H1

Telephone 250-474-1773
Fax 250-474-3677