

South of Town Events

December, 2020

From the Area C Director....

Man, it's getting a little tiresome reading and writing about restrictions and Covid cases but these are the times we find ourselves in and I guess we need to make the most of it. I've been really impressed with how diligent the vast majority of our community is with mask wearing and social distancing – after hearing how other towns are finding it challenging to maintain community support for necessary safety protocols it's nice to see that everyone around here is willing to do their part to reduce the risk to all of us. Keep up the good work!

Things were pretty quiet this month at the RD, which wasn't a bad thing considering we are soon entering the busy budget season. I did attend my monthly Library Trustees' meeting where I learned that a provincial Library Technology Grant allowed the Powell River Public Library to increase public access to the Internet and improve access to eBooks. A number of upgrades have been made to the library's Wi-Fi network and their Advantage Collection, which is a collection of eBooks and eAudio that are accessible exclusively to local patrons. Circulation of eMaterials remains high, and circulation overall is at 71% of last year. Another grant, this one through the Community Forest, provided the library with a RemoteLocker, which was delivered this week. This will allow patrons to pick up on-hold materials after regular hours and without the need for in-person interaction. Invigilation services have been re-started, which will be welcomed by the significant number of students who are working remotely and need to complete exams. Also, two spaces have been added in the public computer area where members of the public can sit and charge phones, read a book or use their own laptop. They have been very well used.

At our monthly Regional Board meeting it was decided that letters would be sent to Vancouver Coastal Health and the Ministry of Health asking that Covid restrictions be imposed on a more targeted basis instead of blanketing the entire province. The hopes are that communities such as ours, where Covid cases are very low or non-existent, will have fewer restrictions than other communities that are experiencing high caseloads. Our goal is to make life easier for the many small businesses that are trying to survive the pandemic. We also requested that information about case totals in our area be shared with local government and the public so that we can protect ourselves appropriately should the situation worsen. There's a decent chance that this request will fall on deaf ears, but hopefully, if enough local governments send similar letters, the Ministry of Health may take notice and change their way of doing business. In the meantime, please remember to support local businesses this Christmas so that they can continue to bring vitality to our community.

Have a fun and safe holiday season!

Clay Brander, qathet Regional District

