

qathet Regional District
ELECTORAL AREA 'A' NEWSLETTER

for December 2021

from Patrick Brabazon, Director

This newsletter is being sent to all residents of *Electoral Area A* of the qathet Regional District. At the end of this newsletter you will find my telephone number and my e-mail address. I welcome your comments.

Good to meet you again

When the pandemic hit hard in early 2020, local governments had to quickly adjust their meeting protocols to align with the Provincial Health Orders. Masks, hand sanitizers, and social distancing were now the order of the day and public gatherings were curtailed or banned outright. This latter rule not only included public attendance in our meeting room but extended to directors and staff as well. Suddenly, we were thrust into virtual meetings via a myriad number of programs like Zoom, Teams, Cisco, etc. Any quiet room in our homes became the new chair at the table.

We began with an all virtual format with directors and delegations zooming in to a meeting room empty except for the minimum staff required to keep us connected. As restrictions gradually eased, we transitioned to a couple of directors joining the staff but no public admitted to the room. From there we eased up bit by bit to the situation today where some directors are present, others on Zoom, and delegations may appear in person or virtually.

Through all this, the previous legal requirements for public attendance were waived by the Province which solved that problem but introduced a new one: how to chair a meeting when the participants are only small faces on a computer screen. New circumstances call for new skills. You can do it but in person, in the room, is so much better. So come on back, the Board and committees are where they used to be and there is room for you.

The Mill

Although people had lived by the mouth of the river for thousands of years prior to the mill, the town as we know it began with pulp and paper. Growing employment brought more and more settlers and their families. Following them came the merchants, the service providers, and all of the various attributes of a twentieth century industrial town. The population grew and spread beyond the urban boundary with the economic benefits seeding businesses from Saltery Bay to Lund. Finally, the boom turned into stability, and eventually into decline.

First the pulp went and now our community faces a “curtailment” of the paper making; a curtailment which may end in closure. This is not just a City of Powell River matter; many employees and their families live throughout the mainland electoral areas of the qathet Regional District. Area A is not excepted.

These are very early days and no one is able to provide a clear picture of the future but those of us who are not directly affected will know some who are. This is the time for a kind word, consideration, and offers of support.

Fire News

COVID-19 hit hard but it couldn't be allowed to shut down the various public safety operations of local governments. Throughout the qathet Regional District, the volunteer fire departments stood ready to respond to your call for help and continued the training regime necessary for them to do so.

In previous *Green Sheets*, I advised that our Northside Volunteer Fire Department was to be responsible for a new training centre which would be available to all fire departments in the region. COVID-19 hasn't stopped the work on this and the construction of the facility continues at the auxiliary fire hall just south of Lund.

A term you might hear around fire departments is "full service." No, this is not the opposite of self-serve like the gas station. When new recruits join a fire department they are restricted in what they can do; part of the team but not yet masters of the task. A big barrier to the full service classification is the training for the knowledge and skills required for entry to a burning building. It's one thing to fight a fire from outside, keeping it from spreading to other structures and the forest, and quite something else to go inside in hopes of saving the building itself, not to mention finding people trapped and desperately in need of your assistance. That's "full service" indeed! Over half of Northside's members are now rated for full service. Thank you folks.

Speaking Of Service . . .

Local governments in British Columbia run on a four-year election cycle with the next one coming due in October 2022. This means that anyone who wishes to stand for election has only some nine months to get themselves organized.

Why am I telling you this? Three years ago, I announced that this would be my last term. Since then I have dropped a comment here and there but I have an idea that few have been paying attention so here it is again: next November Electoral Area A will have a new director. Could it be you? Why not?

The first thing you have to do is ask yourself why you want to do it? That's your job, can't help you there. What I can help you with is the job description, where to get the answers to your questions and advice on navigating the intricacies of local government. The contact information is below.

Holiday Greetings

The holidays are all but here. Following two years of COVID-19 stress and turmoil with the potential loss of a major employer does not make for a jolly season. However, this is surely the time to replace our anxieties with the spirit of community, caring, and sharing. I wish all of you the best of the Season with hope for the future.

Patrick Brabazon

Regional Director, Area A

Cell Telephone: 604-414-5673—e-mail: pbrabazon@qathet.ca

qathet Regional District

202 - 4675 Marine Avenue, Powell River, B.C. V8A 2L2

Telephone: 604-485-2260 - e-mail: administration@qathet.ca