

qathet regional District
ELECTORAL AREA 'A' NEWSLETTER

for March 2022

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.

Water

Very shortly after I was elected in 2002, I was approached by Neil Gustafson, the head of the Lund Water Improvement District (LWID). Neil provided a guided tour of the water system and a crash course in the problems and difficulties they were confronting. In short, the water came from two lakes supported by two dams and distributed by an aging infrastructure. The most visible problem came from the appearance of the surface water which was of course full of organic material. While it was treated and safe to drink, the treatment standards were becoming more onerous and the maintenance of the infrastructure an ever increasing cost, not to mention the time and effort put in by the LWID trustees.

Neil wanted help from the qathet Regional District (qRD). Improvement districts were not eligible for senior government grants but regional districts were so over the years, the qRD applied for and received a succession of grants-in-aid attempting to find a ground water source. Wells were drilled but none offered sufficient volume to meet the need. Then there was the matter of the pipes.

The qRD Regional Board had declared that it would consider taking over the LWID if it were already up to the provincial standard. Of course it wasn't, if it were we wouldn't have the problem. So Frances Ladret, qRD Chief Administrative Officer, and I arranged to meet the appropriate provincial minister to seek a solution. At that meeting, we were informed that the Province had an estimate of a cost of two billion dollars to bring all the water improvement districts up to standard. There was no money for Lund. The years passed, and so did Neil, but the qRD never stopped scrounging up small grants and the trustees and their small staff never stopped patching up the system. They never stopped until they had to.

Now they have. Trustee Harry Robertson has turned the keys over to a receiver appointed by the Province. The receiver is in charge of overseeing the operation, while the staff keep the water flowing. The trustees are still around and their knowledge and advice will go far to ensuring the transition is as smooth and painless as possible.

But a transition to what? The Province has the LWID, but their stated policy is that improvement districts should be subsumed into a local government. LWID is just the first improvement district utility to knock on our door. For now the future is not clear; local governments are creatures of the Province so we are working hard to ensure that everyone understands that no matter who runs the shop the same people are paying the bills. There is a finite number of subscribers paying for water out of the tap and that will not change. What must change is the attitude of senior government towards bringing a service up to standard so that the subscribers can keep it there.

Neil and Harry and their fellow trustees were faced with an impossible task. That they carried on as long as they did is a credit to their selflessness and devotion to the community.

The wheels of Savary

A long festering issue on Savary has been the impact of vehicles as the population grows. For most of the past two decades the discussion has centered on the condition of the roads due in part to the increased traffic. A second issue has developed though, that of the numbers of vehicles semi-permanently parked around the approach to the wharf. As well as just abusing public property, they also pose an obstacle to the fire department. The Savary Island Marine Advisory Committee (SIMAC) has for some time been concerned about this and has worked with qRD to get higher authorities to act. Now they have. In February 23, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) tagged some 25 uninsured vehicles parked on crown land and gave the owners three days to remove them. On March 1, MOTI and the RCMP towed four vehicles off the island. Now for those occupying Rogers firehall lot ...

Fire Training Time

School is now in session at the newly installed firefighter training facility south of Lund. Our Northside Volunteer Fire Department has begun using the facility and intends to make it available for neighbouring fire departments for real “hands on” structure firefighting training in our community.

It's closer than you think . . .

The local government election that is. On October 15th British Columbians will go to the polls to elect their local governments. Early in November the new directors, mayors, and councillors will be sworn in and many old familiar faces will fade away. Mine will be one of them. So this could be your chance to step into a leadership role central to the well-being of any community.

The qathet Regional District is governed by a board of seven directors, two from the City of Powell River, and one from each of the region's five *electoral areas*. The Board is the governing body that sets policy which in turn provides direction for the staff, who carry out the day to day operations and keep the wheels turning and the lights on.

The path to your seat at the table runs through that October election in which you and your neighbours in *Electoral Area A* will choose my replacement. Now is a good time to start thinking about it. I'm not going to fill this space with links and addresses, but I will provide them to anybody who asks. There is a lot of information available on what a regional district is and how it operates. I can suggest what your commitment in terms of time might be, what your responsibilities would be, and in general what being a director is all about. My e-mail address is at the bottom of the page; if you're interested send me a note.

The snowdrops have been replaced by the daffodils, covid is waning [maybe], spring is here. Now is the time to look around our beautiful, peaceful land and give thanks that we live here. Do not turn away from the dreadful images and sounds coming from the cities and villages of Ukraine, do what you can to alleviate their suffering. Talk to the Red Cross and other agencies. While you do so please remember that despite whatever discord and strife we endure, we are still so much better off than many.

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