

Roberts Creek SCRD Director's Newsletter, March 2017

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In person: Gumboot Café, most Saturday Mornings, 10-12

While different folks mark the start of Spring in different ways, the One Straw Society's **Seedy Saturday**, is an important signpost to the gardening season. This year's event, held on March 4 was a huge success and filled both the Community and Masonic Halls. Every year this event grows and grows. See what I did there?

Upcoming Budget

While the Budget is yet to be fully approved by the Board, **the average Roberts Creek property owner can anticipate a roughly 7% increase** in the SCRD portion of their Rural Property Tax this year.

Regular readers of this newsletter will recall last month's attempt to clarify the impact of an average 28% property assessment increase in Area D. The short version is that, because Roberts Creek **average assessment rose more than several other areas of the Coast** this year, that even with at 0% increase in the amount taxed for by the SCRD this year over last, **our taxes would have gone up about 5%** on average. We would have been paying for about 5% more of the pie, regardless of the size of the pie.

As it is, on March 23 the Board is likely to approve a **further 2%** (for the total of 7%) increase spread across the 40 or so services that the SCRD provides.

Of particular note are the benefits of a Transit upgrade that will lead to regular 30 minute express service on Route 90 (Hwy 101) at peak times, along with a shift in the Route 1 (Lower Rd/Beach Ave) service as per the Transit Future Plan adopted by the previous Board. Transit service is funded jointly through user fees (tickets and passes), BC Transit, and SCRD Taxation. Improvements will be implemented in September 2017 and more scheduling details will follow as the initiative rolls out. I have been a long-time supporter of an enhanced Transit service, as it simultaneously addresses pressing ecological, social and economic concerns. **This accounts for about 1% of the taxation increase.**

The **further 1%** can be attributed to items such as staff wages, operational costs and capital projects in such areas as Solid Waste, Parks, Planning, Library Services and Water Infrastructure. It should be noted that **the figures above are based on averages.** Actual taxation depends on the services that are provided to your property, and of course the assessed value of your particular buildings and land. Staff have produced an excellent visual summary of the Budget, which once updated can be accessed here (*link coming shortly, or check scrd.ca*) and of course I am available most Saturday mornings between 10-12 at the Gumboot to discuss this, or any other topic.

Chapman Lake Water Source Drawdown Project Update

As per the Tetrahedron Provincial Park Management Plan, the SCRD Board was asked by the Province to, commission, fund and submit a second **Environmental Report** (the first was done in 1999) with regards to the impacts of drawing down Chapman Lake source in times of drought. Further, this report was able to **address the specifics of the "lowering the channel" approach in terms of potential impact and mitigation.** The completed report is 180 pages long and available towards the bottom of this page www.scrd.ca/chapman-lake-supply-expansion. It does include an executive summary for those who want to "cut to the chase", however it is also a good resource for those wishing to drill down on specific concerns.

The Board is **awaiting a formal response from the shishalh nation and the Province**, who are the permitting authority, both of which should be forthcoming shortly. More on this project on my website.

In **other water-related news**, the Board have asked Staff to provide options for a shift in the use of water conservation funds. Now that all new toilet design standards have reached the low-flow criteria, the idea is to consider shifting those rebate resources into **programs for water efficient washing machines (typically the next largest indoor water user) and outdoor rainwater retention initiatives** such as cisterns or other approaches. The low-flow toilet rebate program will be wrapped up towards the end of this year. A report will be forthcoming, likely in the 3rd Quarter of this year.

SCRD Director Remuneration

As anticipated, the topic of SCRD Director pay has caught the attention of the press and the public. I brought the issue forwards to the Board with the goals of seeking to **diversify the range of people who could afford to serve their community in this way, and to resource the kind of representation that our communities need** in these rapidly changing times. Please read my blog post on the topic if you are seeking further clarification on my rationale for a review process, which would impact only future Boards. www.robertscreekmark.com/news-blog/

Grant in Aid

The deadline for SCRD Grants-in-Aid is **March 27th**. These are small grants used to support non-profit societies and organizations operating in the fields of recreation, education, community development, the environment, arts and other cultural endeavours. Grant criteria, application forms and a list of recipients from 2015 and 2016 can be found here: <http://www.scrd.ca/Grants-in-Aid>

Cleanup Landfill Coupons

In case you missed it, last year's Clean Up Coupon, which entitles property owners to one free 450kg (~small pickup) load at the landfill was on the reverse of your Annual Utility Statement. Watch for it again there this year, replacing the historical colour mailing inserts. Last year's coupons can be **redeemed until May 3rd**. You must bring the coupon/bill with you, and material restrictions are listed on the coupon.

Water Meters

Probably because of the winter weather conditions while they were being installed, a number of folks have raised concerns about the possibility of their new water meters freezing during periods of extended sub-zero temperature. Infrastructure staff have assured me that the **depth of installation** (18 inches min) and frost plates will prevent any cold weather damage. Here's a contact number for any other meter technical concerns 1-800-667-4387. Installations in the Creek should be wrapping up shortly.

SCRD March Newsletters Topics

The **March edition of the SCRD's "Coast Current" Newsletter** includes information on the following topics: Disaster Preparedness for Seniors, Waste Reduction Grants, Reducing Plastic Waste, Transit Driver Appreciation Day, the 2017 Budget Process, The 13th Annual (but not to be taken for granted) awarding to the SCRD of the Government Finance Officers Award for Financial Reporting, and more. It can be found here: www.scrd.ca/newsletter

Note that a copy of this Newsletter is posted in the glass case beside the General Store, and hard copies are available in the Roberts Creek Library Reading Room, immediately on the left as you walk in.