

Roberts Creek SCRD Director's Newsletter, January 2018

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

Email first if you want to be certain that I'm there.

Best of the New Year to all.

I hope that your holiday season has been one of family, friends and festivities, enhanced perhaps by a good book from our Library, a ski up at Dakota Ridge, some memorable music at a local venue, or a good walk in the woods. We are so fortunate to live where we do.

A number of folks have been asking about my intentions with regards to running for office again. The turn of the calendar is a good time to let Roberts Creekers know that **I will not be seeking a second 4-year term in the October 2018 Local Government Elections.** These past 3 years have been very rewarding, sometimes frustrating, full of learning and growth, and I continue to be humbled by the opportunity and privilege of representing the Creek at the Board table. I look forward to the challenges and achievements of 2018 and beyond! We all know Roberts Creek is a very special place, and one of the great pleasures of the role has been learning more about what makes this great place (and to some degree the rest of the province) "tick", while working towards a more resilient Sunshine Coast alongside my Board colleagues.

However, with **only a couple more years of kids living at home and with elderly parents off-coast**, the current time/availability/remuneration balance does not make it a personally sustainable role for my family and for me. In this day and age of accelerated change, **I believe our community expects, deserves and requires full-time Director availability** to read staff reports, attend Standing Committee, Board and Advisory Committee meetings, meet with individuals and organizations, advance initiatives, support community groups, attend learning and advocacy conferences, do personal research on issues and communicate with constituents. (More on this topic below.)

I will continue to serve this community in other capacities post 2018, as so many of us do, and will offer myself as a resource for the next Director, as my predecessor did so helpfully for me. **Clarifying my intentions now has the result of removing any question that my actions and votes on an issue might be politically (re-election) motivated**, rather than doing what I feel is best for Roberts Creek and the Coast, which has always been the case. I am told by political veterans that this period in an election cycle is sometimes called the silly season!

Some **brief and very insufficient thank you's**...to my exceedingly understanding wife and children, to my valued Alternate Directors Michelle Morton and Chris Hergesheimer, to those who supported me during and following the 2014 election, to our dedicated local advisory committees members, to the other committed SCRD Board Directors, to the skilled and hardworking SCRD Staff and the 3,421 thoughtful citizens of Roberts Creek. A different kind of deep appreciation is extended to the shishálh and Skwxwu7mesh Nations on whose traditional territory I am fortunate to be raising my family.

Personal growth, challenge, reward, a supportive and appreciative community...**could this be the job for you?** There are many others in our community with the capacity to serve in this role and some may have an interest in doing so. To that end I have just compiled a **“Local Governance Resources” page on my website** that includes background information on Regional Districts, a job description, and links to a number of other relevant resources, including a great blog from a veteran politician about the great reasons to run for office, (and a few reasons not to). I would encourage anyone interested in the role to review the page's contents, and for community members to use it to help make a thoughtful and informed choice on October 20th, 2018. It is available here : <https://robertscreekmark.com/local-governance-resources/>

I will return to this topic in a future Newsletter, and as always, I am available most Saturday mornings between 10-12 at the Café.

Lest I give the impression that I'm “retiring” early, here is a look forward at some of the key issues that will require our attention in 2018. You can track these issues in the media, via SCRD online resources, and I will endeavor to provide timely Newsletter updates:

Water

With the adoption of the 2013 Comprehensive Regional Water Plan by the previous Board, the related 2015 decision by the current Board to petition the Province for drawing down Chapman Lake in times of need, and the installation of Water Meters, I was confident that a balance between conservation and source development had been struck that would serve the coast well in times of climate change both in the medium term and eventually the long term. Getting to the place we are now has taken significant time, public engagement, environmental and engineering work, and taxpayer resources.

Recent comments by the new Board Chair and some others have me concerned that we are in danger of veering from this path, which could result in further delay and uncertainty, and potentially much greater long term ecological impact than the Chapman Drawdown entails. More on this topic can be found on a recent post on my website : <https://robertscreekmark.com/news-blog/>

I have once again brought forward a motion to be debated in the New Year with regards to banning the watering of private lawns with potable water, a climate change adaptation I feel is required if we are going to further support local food production.

Solid Waste

With an estimated 10-12 year lifespan left for the Sechelt Landfill, plans for diverting waste from both the landfill, and whatever option is in place afterwards are pressing. Organics (compostables) have been targeted due to their prevalence (40% of waste stream) and our ability to process them locally, as opposed to recyclables that often end up being processed in the Fraser Valley or overseas.

Along with the potential shift to an every-other-week garbage pickup, there is an opportunity for a “Great Coastwide Garbage Shuffle” that will result in the separation of organics from the waste stream, with the ensuing ecological and long term cost saving benefits. In 2018 the Board will likely be implementing the policy pieces (bans, bylaws, contracts) to make those things happen. While no one will be stopping those who prefer to close the soil loop and compost in their own backyards, even those who produce very little food waste will benefit from the separation and pickup of items like bones, oil-based sauces, food-soiled paper and other hard-to-compost items. The results of the 2017 Organics questionnaire, Draft Organics Management Strategy and two local government workshops are at the forefront of the Board’s upcoming decision making. Stay tuned.

Land use policies for Affordable Housing and Short Term Rental Regulation.

Following the public information meetings at the Hall in late November and referrals of both of the above topics to our local advisory committees, staff will be bringing forward reports identifying themes in the feedback and options for moving forwards on these somewhat related topics. Official Community Plan amendments are being considered, and much public feedback (over 600 submissions) was received on the STR issue. The impact of market demand driven by speculative money in Vancouver and surroundings makes it very important to ensure that we are mindful in our efforts to target affordability.

2018 SCR D Budget

Considerations have begun, and will continue for the next 2 months or so. Staff have provided the Board with a preliminary look at the impact of collective agreements, US Dollar impacts, BC hydro rates, borrowing rates and the like. Round 1 meetings are scheduled for January 22 and 23, and can you find more information on the SCR D’s website.

SCR D Rural Director Remuneration

With Federal and Provincial downloading, and the accelerating pace of change, information and communication tools, there is an acknowledgement by those “in the know” that the role of Regional District Electoral Area Director is shifting. By quick and

imperfect comparison, the Municipality of Bowen Island, with a population of about 3,600, has 6 Councilors and a mayor, while Roberts Creek has a population of about 3,400.

While no one enters local government for the money, I do feel strongly that the role should be resourced at least at a “living wage” level, which is not currently the case. The Provincial Government has passed legislation around limiting election campaign spending, I see this as **the other side of the “democratization” coin in ensuring that sitting as a Regional District Director is open to any citizen who is elected**, and that our Boards are diverse, representative, and that healthy succession occurs. Staff will bring forward a report with more data 2018, and any changes that the current Board makes would only apply to future Boards.

Bike Lanes and Transportation

Due to changes in the Federal Gas Tax funding legislation that supported our “shoulder widening” approach to bike and pedestrian travel , there have been no projects on the coast in the last few years . SCR D staff are working with the Ministry of Transportation to develop **a tenure agreement that would allow program to continue while ensuring sustainable maintenance of future pathways**. Meanwhile, the annual Gas Tax disbursements to the SCR D continue to accumulate in reserves.

There are also ongoing Board advocacy efforts to have some input into the Ministry of Highways’ Maintenance Contract (currently with Capilano Highway Services) as it is up for renewal shortly and impacts **all roads** in Roberts Creek and other Rural Areas.

Regional Growth

Clearly, the issue of sustainable growth is one of fundamental importance to the Coast, not mention our species as a whole.

My understanding of some of the local history is that when a Regional Growth Strategy process was instigated by the SCR D about 10 years ago, Municipal governments were not satisfied with their level of input and walked away from the process after an investment of time and resources by the Regional District and the Province. The lesson here is that **any lengthy formal process requires the full buy-in of elected officials**, and something that a departing Board or Council would likely not want to commit to on behalf of an incoming one.

I will be discussing this issue of broader coastwide land-use and resource planning opportunities with our MLA. In the meantime, there are other current means of ensuring sustainable service levels and “smart” growth, such as **Official Community Plans and Regional Sustainability Plans** like our Coast’s excellent We Envision document. One of the key pieces around this issue is that “growth” per se is not just a factor of population, but population multiplied by consumption levels, something that is often overlooked in our water discussions, as an example.

Other Issues

Public Transit, Suncoaster Trail Development (Sechelt to Langdale Ferry), local Planning and Land Use issues, Cannabis Legislation rollout, Forestry issues, Reconciliation and various other issues will require attention this year.

Neighbourhood Resiliency Small Grant Program

Finally, I want to draw you and your neighbours' attention to the opportunities presented by the **2nd Phase of the Roberts Creek Rural Resilient Neighbourhoods Program**. The program is a partnership between a number of organizations, including the SCRD, and local coordinator Naomi Fleschhut can be reached at the link below. If you think that it's a good idea to bring your neighbours together, get to know each other better, perhaps decide on a neighbourhood-level project to undertake together, and apply for some funds to support those activities, then have a closer look at :

www.resilientcoast.ca

SCRD January Newsletters Topics

The **January edition of the SCRD's "Coast Current" Newsletter** contains information on water savings from Meter installations, the Draft Organics Diversion Strategy, preparing for power outages, dog licences, a request for Advisory Planning Committee volunteers, and more, and can be found here:

<https://secure.campaigner.com/csb/Public/show/lr3h8--eab08-5kg21843>

Note that a hard 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.