



VILLAGE OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE

VILLAGE VOICE

SEPTEMBER 2010

**MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

What a great summer we have had, and are continuing to have in Queen Charlotte. The months of July and August provided opportunities to be outdoors and to explore a bit of our surroundings and the community in general.

Unfortunately however, the cycle of municipal administration and operations did not stop and we have continued to work on activities that are either required by municipal legislation or are needed in order to manage the community efficiently. In addition we have been

working on completing projects budgeted for in 2010 or earlier and which we hope will make a difference to the community.

In this newsletter, we will report on the status of many of our major projects and activities in order to give you a sense of what we have accomplished and what we have yet to complete this year. Debra Uliana, Chief Financial Officer, will report on efforts to collect and remit taxes and on other financial matters; Ben Greenough, Superintendent of Public Works, will report on the status of the

Water Treatment Plant and on other projects that the Public Works Department have been actively working on; and Bill Beamish, CAO, will report on Spirit Square, bylaw development and the background to recently adopted policies.

If, after reading this newsletter you have any questions about projects or activities discussed please do not hesitate to contact any one of us at the municipal office and we will endeavour to respond to you.

*-Bill Beamish, CAO*

**SPIRIT SQUARE**

This project is continuing to develop under the general guidance of council and Colin Greenough who was hired in June as our site project manager. In July, Council approved a final concept plan for the stage and details of this plan have been provided to a civil engineer in Vancouver who is preparing the engineered construction plans. The construction plans are expected to be completed shortly and the next step

will be to tender construction of the stage and building. In the meantime we have installed drainage along the causeway, underground conduit was placed across the causeway before paving was completed; on site water service has been placed to areas which will be planted; we have entered into an administrative agreement with Parks Canada to complete work on their property adjacent to the Spirit Square and this

work has commenced; on September 7<sup>th</sup> Council awarded a tender for construction of retaining walls that will provide seating and support for the grass mound to be installed on site.

This project will continue for the next several weeks but the end is in sight with three major activities to be completed: the building, the surface and the electrical works.

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**COMING EVENTS:**

**COUNCIL MEETING**  
MONDAY, SEPT 20TH  
@ 7:30PM

**COMMUNITY DIALOGUE**  
THURSDAY, SEPT 23<sup>RD</sup>  
@ 7:00PM

**TOPIC:** COMMUNITY REGULATION AND OPTIONS

**ELECTRONICS RECYCLING DAY**  
SATURDAY, SEPT 25TH  
9:00AM TO 1:00 PM @ TICKERS HAULING & STORAGE

## ENCROACHMENT POLICY

In July Council adopted a policy that will enable property owners to encroach on municipal lands and rights of way as well as to legitimize many of the encroachments that currently exists. This is a common policy in municipalities and one which has proven to be of great assistance to residents buying or selling homes if needed.

## BYLAWS

There have not been any new bylaws adopted by council in recent weeks but don't worry, they are coming. In December we will finally assume responsibility for road maintenance within the municipality and this includes the full 20 meter right of way that roads are developed in. In order to move forward we also need to develop and adopt standards for development of roads in case there is a need to provide access to new properties or to upgrade access that already exist. The standards we adopt must be included or referenced in a bylaw, a draft of which will be presented to council for initial consideration on September 13<sup>th</sup>. This is a **Works and Services Bylaw** in which we propose to adopt the most current Master Municipal Construction Document Standards (MMCD) as a starting point for new development of public works.

Council also needs to consider a **Street & Traffic Bylaw** that will enable the Village to regulate the use of roads and rights of way and to do things like approve new stop signs and speed limits, remove abandoned vehicles and to exercise other powers authorized by Division 5 of the *Community Charter* or section 124 of the *Motor Vehicle Act*.

Work is also continuing on the drafting of our new **Official Community Plan Bylaw** and a draft will be available in the next few weeks for consultation with the community. Michael Rosen, Planner, has been working with staff and council to develop the new bylaw and he recently participated in a meeting with Council and the Advisory Planning Committee at the Village office.

## GOOD NEIGHBOURS BYLAW

These are bylaws under section 64 of the *Community Charter* which are generally adopted to regulate relationships between neighbours. These bylaws are complaint driven and can include activities like noise, odour, unsightly premises and so on. Rather than move forward with bylaw development, we are trying to identify: What should the process be to

consult with the community before a bylaw is developed? What are the options to bylaws? and, If a bylaw is adopted, what kind of process can we put in place to ensure that ticketing is a last resort and not a first response. A small group of community volunteers is working with me on these issues and generating good ideas for Council's future consideration. We are

making an effort to approach bylaw development on the basis that less regulation is better. However, it is important to recognize that now that we are incorporated as a municipality we need to replace some of the regulations previously exercised by the province or by the regional district with new regulations developed and adopted by our Council.

## UBCM 2010

Members of Council and the CAO will attend this annual conference with Mayor Kulesha. (The Deputy Mayor, Kris Olsen, remains behind to cover emergency services). The UBCM Conference is an opportunity for members of councils from across the province to meet together

and to debate issues of local, regional and provincial interest. This year Queen Charlotte has sponsored two resolutions dealing with the Northern Gateway Pipeline Project and will be asking other communities to oppose the project on the basis of the potential environmental and

economic consequences of an oil spill in northern coastal waters. This conference is also an opportunity to meet with provincial cabinet ministers and staff on a variety of issues and Council has requested several meetings in this regard.



The Village is accepting resumes for part time/ temporary employment for a labour position in the Public Works Department.

Preference will be given to workers with experience in road maintenance.

Resumes can be dropped off at the Village office. If you have any questions please contact Ben Greenough, Public Works Superintendent.

## PUBLIC WORKS: WATER, SEWER, ROADS & PARKS

**Water:** We have made it through another dry summer without any incidents. Even though the Honna river level had dropped significantly in the month of August, the Honna Intake was able to keep up with the water demand without having to fall back onto the Trundle Wells. I would like to thank everyone for their cooperation with the water restrictions this summer. The new Water Treatment Plant has been in full operation since mid June of this year. We are producing water with 0.16 turbidity (fine dirt particles) and 0 colour units. The Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines require a water to have a max turbidity of 1 and no more than 15 colour units. In the month of July we used an average of 430m<sup>3</sup> (94,600 gallons) of water a day, and in the month of August we used an average of 460m<sup>3</sup> (101,200 gallons) of a water a day. We are now currently

optimizing the treatment process to lower power consumption and minimize operating costs.

**Sewer:** We are currently assisting Dayton & Knight Engineers with development of a sewage treatment plan that will look at our available options for sewage treatment and their associated costs. There was no major maintenance required for the sewage system this year, and everything is in good operation. Later in September we will conduct an inspection of the sewage outfall pipe to ensure that it is in good condition. Sewage pumped is higher this summer because the waste water created from the new water treatment plant is being pumped to sewage system. In the months of July and August we pumped an average of 486m<sup>3</sup> (106,920 gallons) a day of sewage.

**Roads:** The Village will be responsible for the mainte-

nance of the roads as of December 7<sup>th</sup> of this year. We are currently working on developing a road maintenance policy that will dictate the maintenance the Village is required to do and the time frames when that work will be completed. It also establishes the snowploughing/sanding priorities for winter maintenance of the roads. We have purchased a 2007 Ford F-350 4x4 that is equipped with a sand spreader and set up for a snowplough to assist in the winter maintenance of the roads.

This summer we worked with Highways contractors to do some paving repairs throughout town. We will continue to work with the Highways contractors to deal with any issues that remain with the roads before the takeover in December. We have awarded a contract for the building of a Sand/Salt storage facility that will be built at the Village office yard. We have also awarded a contract to supply sand for the roads to a local contractor.

### **Parks and Recreation:**

With summer coming to an end so does the parks and recreation maintenance. This summer the Village has maintained the cemetery, boat launch/heli-pad, the day park and several planters around town. Colin Benoit worked with us as a summer student and he has now returned to Victoria to continue studies at UVIC. There have been issues again this summer with boat trailers being left at the boat launch. The Village tagged and towed one trailer away this summer, and we still have it stored. If you are missing a boat trailer please contact the Village Public Works department at 250-559-4757. Along with assisting with the Spirit Square Project, we are constructing a Ball Hockey Rink in the existing tennis courts. The Hockey rink will take up half of the court, leaving the other half for tennis.

## PERMISSIVE TAX EXEMPTION

Municipalities in British Columbia have the ability to exempt some property taxes. This option is often used when a group that owns property in the Village is seen to offer an important and usually "not for profit" service to the community. In past years the Queen Charlotte Community Club, the Queen Charlotte Volunteer Fire Prevention Society, the Charlotte Thrift Shop Society, the Royal Canadian Legion Queen Charlotte Local #220 and the Queen Charlotte Youth Education Society have been granted exceptions for their property taxes. These exemptions are considered by Council each year and the 2011 permissive tax exemption will be on the agenda in the near future. Applications from groups wishing to request exemption should be forwarded to the Village Office.

The Province provides a statutory tax exemption for public schools, hospitals, provincial properties, federal properties, municipal properties, libraries, land owned by Indian bands, cemeteries and churches. These types of properties do not need to apply for the permissive tax exemption.

*-Debra Uliana, Chief Financial*



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**2010 TAX SALE**

The annual Tax Sale is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at the Village office. Any properties with delinquent property taxes will be put up for sale. The owners of any property sold at tax sale have one year to redeem their property by paying all outstanding taxes and penalties. Please call the Village office at 250-559-4765 Local 2 if you have any questions about your property.

**PROPERTY TAXES**

July is always a busy time of year in the finance department. Property tax notices are mailed in late May to early June and the payment deadline always falls in the first few days of July. This year we sent out property tax notices valued at \$1,054,240 based on assessment values for properties located in the Village of Queen Charlotte. That number breaks down as follows:

<b>Taxes Collected for Village of Queen Charlotte:</b>	
Municipal Taxes	\$259,203
Water Frontage (Includes Loan Payment of \$67,394 Principal and Interest)	\$205,492
Sewer Frontage	\$10,861
Recreation (\$10,000 to Q.C. Community Club-Balance for Park Maintenance)	\$10,884
<b>Taxes Collected &amp; Remitted to Other Government Agencies:</b>	
School (Provincial taxes including school & general revenue) Taxes	\$452,645
Regional District Requisition	\$80,332
Regional District Hospital Requisition	\$9,080
North West Regional Hospital Requisition	\$18,620
BC Assessment	\$7,103
Municipal Finance Authority	\$20

Thanks go out to everyone that has paid their property tax - \$943,700 has been collected on current taxes so far this year.

August brings us to a time to share – and we send the Regional District, Regional Hospital, North West Regional Hospital, BC Assessment and Municipal Finance their share in full Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>. With the Provincial School tax we pay as the taxes are collected and have forwarded \$431,643 to date. From our municipal taxes we also pay out \$38,500 to our volunteer fire fighters society each year. We forward \$10,000 to the Queen Charlotte Community Club each year from the Recreation parcel tax. The balance of that funding is used for the maintenance of the small parks and heli pad.

The Homeowners Grant program is offered by the Province and applications need to be made on or before the property tax deadline in July. You must live in the home in order to qualify for the grant. The regular grant is up to \$570.00 per year and if you are a senior or disabled the grant can be as much as \$845.00 per year. Usually those qualifying for the grant pay their property taxes less the amount they expect to be granted. This leaves the grant amount owing until we receive the Homeowner Grant application. In order to avoid the 10% penalty that is charged for any late property tax payments you must make sure we receive the application. We will accept the application if it is signed and dropped off at the village office, mailed or faxed – as long as it reaches us before the deadline. Last year we added an eHog option – which enables property owners to claim the Homeowners Grant by going to our web site (queencharlotte.ca) and entering the code printed on their tax notice. We hope that this method will help those paying their property taxes by memberlink as they will also be able to apply for the Homeowners Grant by computer. If you have missed the July deadline – you can still apply for the grant up to Dec. 31, 2010. We will then be able to post this grant against your account and then the only additional amount owing would be the penalty.

- *Debra Uliana, Chief Financial Officer*