



Comox News

December 2007

The Town of Comox Community Newsletter

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Big pipe works great

The first major storm of the season hit Comox during the Remembrance Day weekend. While it wasn't as severe as the storm of 1998 that caused major flooding in northwest Comox, it could have caused some flooding if it weren't for the recently completed storm system upgrades to the Anderton Road/Noel Avenue area.

This \$3.5 million project consisted of upgrades to the storm system, construction of new sanitary sewer mains along Anderton Road, new water mains along Noel Avenue, the complete reconstruction of



Noel Avenue including sidewalk between Aspen and Anderton Roads and the construction of sidewalk along the west side of Anderton Road.

The Town extends our gratitude to the many motorists, residents and business owners whose patience allowed for the completion of this major project.

Comox Fire Department

As the Town of Comox grows so does the demand on its services. The many important services delivered by the fire department are in high demand by our citizens, and this demand is **rapidly** increasing as our community grows and matures. Because of our many fire prevention programs, good equipment, strong leadership and high level of training, our community continues to have lower than average property losses, civilian injuries and deaths from fires, and lower than

average firefighter injuries.

These results could not have been possible without the ongoing support of the Town of Comox municipal council and the Comox Fire Protection District trustees, combined with the efforts of our paid on call firefighters and our very capable paid staff.

The fire department response volume has increased by over **twenty percent** since 2005. Despite this huge increase, the fire department has managed to maintain an above

average level of service to our community at below average costs. However as the response volume increases so does the strain we place on our paid on call firefighters. Each year they are expected to do more and more.

Key to our fire department's many successes is our outstanding group of paid on call firefighters. The commitment and dedication shown by them is remarkable. This coupled with strong leadership has made our fire department one of the best in the province.

Sustainability initiatives



In 2007, Council adopted a Strategic Plan that included “Advance Sustainability Initiatives” as one of its top five priorities. The following is a list of some of the initiatives that Council has undertaken recently to reduce the Town’s impact on the environment:

Waste Management

- Reduced garbage limit to one 121 litre garbage receptacle per week
- Implemented bi-weekly curbside recycling program
- Implemented weekly curbside yard waste program
- Banned all open fires and outdoor burning
- Switched to biodegradable dog waste bags in dispensing units

Library update

The Town has completed its purchase of the ground floor of the Portside Building for the new Comox Library, and has hired Ketza Pacific Construction to finish the interior space. Construction is expected to be complete early in 2008.

While library space is provided by the Town, its

Transportation

- Converted all traffic lights to LED, resulting in an 80% reduction in energy consumption
- Began using bio-diesel in all Town vehicles
- Installed solar-powered pedestrian crossing lights
- Required the use of cut-off flat lens street lights in all new developments and road projects
- Allowed for the provision of bicycle parking spaces in lieu of vehicle spaces in commercial development
- Recycled waste asphalt from major road project

Storm Water Management

- Created Environmental Development Permit Guidelines
- Added requirement for temporary storm water erosion control ponds on development projects
- Implemented an Integrated Storm Water Management System and alternative subdivision servicing standards for a nearby development in order to maintain the environmental integrity

of the Lazo Marsh Conservation Area

- Implemented an Integrated Storm Water Management System to ensure the long term environmental integrity of McDonald Bog
- Implemented storm water management plan for Butchers Road area, including the construction of major retention facility

Parks and Open Space

- Obtained 4.5 additional hectares of parkland
- Planted 170 trees in Town parks and along roadways
- Installed satellite controlled irrigation system reducing water consumption
- Supported and assisted local stewardship group

Other

- Increased sidewalk width and installed pedestrian bulbs in the downtown area creating a safer and more pedestrian friendly environment
- Participated in Regional Water Education Partnership undertaken by the Regional District

- Instituted the Water Conservation Plumbing Regulation requiring the installation of low-flush toilets in all new development and significant renovations
- Implemented Pesticide Use Bylaw that bans the cosmetic use of pesticides on private residential land
- Implemented “Sustainability Checklist” encouraging developers to incorporate more environmentally and socially sustainable practices
- Initiated a two-year baseline monitoring study of McDonald Bog
- Developed comprehensive greenway and park dedication plan for the Butchers Road area, including the protection of a significant aspen forest
- Adopted Affordable Housing Strategy, including Strata Conversion Policy
- Legalized the development of new secondary suites within single family homes in certain areas
- Held two public information forums – one on Smart Growth and one on Sustainable Buildings

operation is the responsibility of the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL).

The new Comox library will be over twice as large as the former branch, featuring a children’s area and enlarged reading lounge. The Comox Friends of the Library are working with VIRL to provide some furniture.



Snow and ice control

During snowfall and ice events, the Town will make every effort to provide for the reasonably safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians. Roads will be ploughed upon accumulations of 10 cm of snow, or when lesser accumulations have resulted in dangerous conditions, and will be ploughed in the following order: arterial roads, collector roads, local roads, cul-de-sacs and lanes. In addition, priority is given to routes serving public facilities such as the fire hall, St. Joseph's Hospital, Town hall, school zones, bus routes and the Comox Recreation Centre.

Ploughing will result in a channel of snow across private driveways and business accesses. The Town regrets that we simply do not have the resources to clear these channels afterwards.

Removal of snow from sidewalks in the downtown area is the responsibility of commercial and multifamily property owners. Please have your sidewalks cleared by 10:00 a.m., and we encourage you to help others who can't.

Message from Jayde and Cassidy

Brooklyn Elementary School
1475 Noel Ave
Comox, B.C.
V9M 3H8

RECEIVED
OCT 09 2007
Town of Comox

September 25, 2007

Dear Town of Comox,
This is from Cassidy and Jayde in Brooklyn Elementary grade 3 Div. 7. On Tuesday September 18 we walked from Brooklyn Creek to the Spit. That's about 3km. We picked up 930 pieces of garbage. It weighed about 17kg. You know what there was? Garbage in the water so do not litter!! Could you tell people in the Comox Valley not to litter.
Your's truly
Jayde McLellan

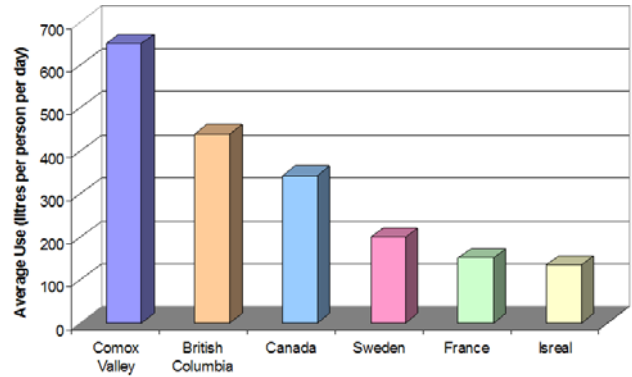
New bylaw enforcement officer

The number of complaints that the Town receives on bylaw infractions has increased in recent years, prompting the Town to hire a Bylaw Enforcement Officer. We are very pleased to announce that

Bill Smith joined our team on December 3, 2007. Bill will be working on implementing an effective bylaw enforcement program as well as updating some of the Town's bylaws.

Welcome, Bill!

Water metering update



The Comox Valley uses a LOT of water, particularly in the summer. Delivering all that water from Comox Lake to the Town, and then to your home requires a lot of infrastructure – water mains, reservoirs and pumps – all of which have to be built big enough to cope with peak consumption. And of course, taxpayers pay for all of this infrastructure through water user fees and parcel taxes.

The fact that households in Comox can use unlimited amounts of water for \$204 per year (in 2007) doesn't encourage water conservation. And as population and consumption continues to grow, conservation of water becomes critical.

Council has the strategic objective to cooperate with the Regional District on water metering throughout the Town, the City of

Courtenay and portions of the Regional District. While there is a substantial cost to metering (approximately \$4.5 million for the Town), the benefits will offset those costs over time. It is hoped that we can achieve at least a 20-30% reduction in consumption. With those savings, the Regional District can delay up to \$30 million in capacity upgrades to the water system, which would have pushed your water rates up significantly.

Once water billings are based on metered water consumption, there will be an opportunity for consumers to save money by reducing their household water use. A couple of ways in which you can do this are by installing low flow toilets and showerheads, and obeying watering restrictions in your yard.

Dec 25th/Jan 1st refuse collection

The Town has been advised by International Paper Industries (IPI) that garbage and yardwaste regularly scheduled to be picked up on Tuesday December 25th will be deferred until **Saturday December 29th**.

Similarly, garbage, recycling and yardwaste regularly scheduled to be picked up on Tuesday January 1st, 2008 will be deferred until **Saturday January 5th, 2008**.

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Paul Ives
Councillor

John Marinus
Councillor

Marcia Turner
Councillor

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.comox.ca

Town advances schedule for additional police officer

The Town currently funds 10.3 police officers, with planned increases for an additional officer every four years. In its Financial Plan adopted in 2007, the number of officers funded was set to increase to 11.3 in 2009.

Due to unexpectedly lower policing costs for the RCMP fiscal year ending March 31, 2007, the Town had a surplus in its policing budget in 2007. At its Regular Meeting on August 15, 2007, Council resolved to use the surplus to advance the

funding of an additional officer. As a result, the Town of Comox will now fund 11.3 officers in 2008.



New accessible door

In July, Town Hall received a new, modern, accessible door! The old, manual double-doors at the entrance to Town Hall posed challenges to those with mobility limitations wishing to enter. The new automated door is much wider and enables customers easier access if they need it.



Blue Box recycling

The Town has been advised by International Paper Industries, Ltd. that they can now accept recyclable materials in blue boxes or clearly marked refuse containers in addition to blue bags. Residents are advised that if they choose to use containers, please ensure that they are covered to prevent paper items from blowing about on windy days.

Notices

Yard Waste

Did you know that "dumping" your grass clippings and tree and hedge trimmings in a park or on a neighbouring vacant lot is considered littering? Littering is both a provincial and a Town offence regulated under the Environmental Management Act (for littering in public places) and the proposed Comox Public Nuisance Bylaw, 2007 (for littering on private property). Please do not "dump" your yard waste or any other kind of litter. Instead, take advantage of our new curbside pick-up program for yard waste. Yard waste, in clearly marked containers or bundled branches is now picked up weekly, on the same day as your regular garbage.

Business Licences

Business licences must be renewed each year your business is operating in the Town. Business licence fees for 2008 can be paid at any time after January 31, 2008.

Dog Licences

Just a reminder that all dogs in the Town must have a valid dog licence, which must be renewed each year. Dog licences can be purchased anytime at Town hall or at the SPCA on Ryan Road.

School Zones

The Town would like to remind parents that school zones are very busy areas during times that parents are dropping off and picking up

students, and can be unsafe if the following parking and driving practices are not adhered to:

No parking

- on sidewalks or boulevards
- in front of or within 5 metres of fire hydrants
- across or within 6 metres of crosswalks
- across or within 6 metres of intersections and public entranceways
- in loading zones or bus zones, except as permitted by sign
- across or within 2 metres of private driveways
- within 6 metres of stop signs

Maximum speed limit of 30 kilometres

No U-turns where specifically prohibited by sign

This newsletter is a result of Council's initiative to increase communication with residents. If you have any comments or suggestions, or would like to see anything in particular in upcoming editions, please contact us.