



Comox News

We respectfully acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional lands of the K'ómoks First Nation ... Gila'kasla ... Hay ch'q' a'

March 2014

The Town of Comox Community Newsletter

Mason bees in Town parks

This spring, Blue Orchard Mason bee boxes were installed in six parks throughout the Town. Mason bees, looking somewhat like a black fly, are small and non-aggressive, with a metallic green/blue sheen. They are one of the best pollinators

of early flowering plants and trees, and are commonly used throughout orchards because of their efficient pollination of fruit trees. Mason bees will forage and pollinate up to 60 – 90 metres (200 - 300 feet) of their nest box.



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Brooklyn Creek riparian areas



In October of 2013, School District 71 sold the old Brooklyn School site at 1475 Noel Avenue to the Northgate Christian Education Society. In the lead up to that transfer, the Town collaborated with School District 71 to have a portion of the environmentally sensitive areas surrounding the school transferred to the Town.

These environmentally sensitive areas include the riparian areas of Brooklyn Creek and its tributaries.

The Town is currently in the process of dedicating the land as parkland, in order to protect the ecological function of the area and support passive recreation.

AED device

At the November 6, 2013 Regular Council Meeting, the Comox Firefighters' Association presented Council and Town Hall with an automated external defibrillator (AED) device.

An AED is a portable electronic device that will diagnose and treat life threatening cardiac problems. The device is simple to use with audio commands, and can provide life-saving treatment in time sensitive conditions. Council and staff are very thankful for the generosity of the Comox Firefighters' Association. The AED device is located next to the front entrance at Town Hall.



Curbside organics collection program



In June of 2013, the Town expanded its curbside yard waste collection program to include kitchen waste.

Residents are now able to throw most kitchen scraps, as well as food soiled paper and cardboard, into either their existing lidded yard waste container or a designated lidded organics container.

Since the program began, the results have been very positive. At this point, we estimate that just over 10% of households are participating in the program. Even though participation seems low to start, the reduction in garbage going to the landfill is significant.

Between June and December of last year, over 84 tonnes (8.1%) of residential garbage were diverted from the landfill, when compared with 2012. At the same time, organics collection (including yard waste) was up 85 tonnes, or 9.5%.

We have learned a few tips from residents to help avoid potential odours or pests that we would like to pass along:

- A curbside container that has a tightly closing and/or locking lid will do the best job of keeping fruit flies, maggots and odours to a minimum.
- Place your curbside container in your garage or in a shady location outside. Warmer locations speed up decomposition which, in turn, causes odours and attracts pests.
- Use a glass or metal kitchen container as these do not absorb odours. Line your kitchen container with newspaper or paper towel for easier cleanup.
- Have a second container in your freezer to store meat scraps until collection day.
- Empty kitchen container into your curbside container as often as possible, preferably daily. Empty freezer container on the day of collection.
- Wrap your kitchen waste in newspaper before disposing in curbside container, or completely cover with a layer of yard waste or newspaper. This is especially helpful if you do not have a tight fitting lid on your curbside container, as fruit flies do not seem to be attracted

unless food waste is exposed.

- Deter smells and pests from your curbside container with mint or eucalyptus oil.

We thank those residents who are participating and encourage those who aren't to give it a try. Just think how much more we could divert from the landfill if participation was higher!

If you haven't already started separating your organic waste, now is a great time to get started as there are no fruit flies at this time of year (fruit flies were our number one complaint during the summer). For more information on the program, please see our website at <http://comox.ca/services/waste/> or contact us at Town Hall.

Inter-Community business licence

Starting January 1 of this year, the Town has partnered with various other municipalities within the central Vancouver Island region to jointly offer an inter-community business licence. Mobile businesses operating in certain municipalities throughout the region now have the option of purchasing an inter-community business licence from the Town of Comox that will allow them to operate in all participating municipalities. The inter-community business licence is in

addition to a business' principal business licence, and must be issued by the community in which the business is based.

Communities participating in the inter-community business licence program include all those from Campbell River south to Duncan, as well as Lake Cowichan and Port Alberni (excluding Lantzville).

For more information on the program, please see our website at <http://comox.ca/services/business/>.

2014 Water rates

Council has adopted water rates for 2014 that could result in savings of up to \$147 for metered residential water customers who enroll in metered billing.

Under new rates, metered residential customers will be able to save up to \$147 on the yearly cost of their water (47% compared to the flat residential rate of \$327). These maximum savings apply to residential customers using 14 cubic metres (m³) or less per month (168 m³ or less per year). Customers who use more than this can also save

if they enroll in metered billing, as long as they use less than 250 m³ of water per year. Most of the 1,500 metered single family homes in Comox already use less than this amount.

In addition, residential customers who have signed up for metered water billing can now withdraw and return to flat rate billing if they feel the change is not working for them.

For more information, see <http://comox.ca/services/water/> or talk to us at Town Hall.



Thank you, Public Works, for the long hours and hard work in keeping our roads clear – job well done!

New Public Works and Parks buildings

Council has been funding reserves for the replacement of the parks and public works buildings for the past few years. The existing buildings, located at 1390 Guthrie Road, are now more than 30 years old, and do not meet current or future needs for operations. A building assessment study was completed in 2012, and recommended the replacement of the main public works and parks buildings.

For various reasons, it was determined that the best

approach would be to create three new separate structures: one for public works activities and storage, one for parks activities and storage, and one for the administration of both functions.

The budgeted cost of replacing the buildings is \$4.95 million, with \$2.7 million coming from borrowing. In order to keep borrowing costs to a minimum, the Town's Director of Finance has suggested "borrowing from

reserves". This is a recent provision granted to municipalities, which enables us to borrow money from one capital reserve account to fund a project for which another capital reserve account has been established. The two conditions under which this is permitted are: that the funds are not immediately needed in the first reserve, and that the funds borrowed are repaid with interest no later than when the original funds are needed in the first reserve.

Among the benefits in borrowing from reserves, are that the interest repaid is to the Town rather than to an outside organization, and that better repayment terms can be established resulting in reduced interest expenses each year. It is estimated that by borrowing in this way for the new Public Works and Parks buildings, approximately \$200,000 in interest expenses can be saved over a 10-year borrowing term.



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See us at:
comox.ca

Snow removal

The Town would like to thank everyone for their patience and support during the most recent snow fall event. We wish to bring to your attention the following:

- Snow removal is achieved through the use of ploughs that do not have the ability to lift and place large volumes of snow in select locations. It is the nature of this equipment that requires a constant side casting of snow into windrows at the side of the road and across the ends of private driveways. We regret the difficulty created by this necessity, but the use of ploughs, as opposed to loader buckets, offers the only means of safely and quickly removing the large volumes of snow that fall upon our streets.
- During snow events, residents are requested to remove their vehicles from the road. The presence of vehicles on the road will result in large sections of these roads, often well beyond the area covered by the vehicle itself, not being ploughed. In certain cases, parked vehicles may reduce the available width of the road to a point where our ploughs cannot pass and the entire road may be left unploughed;
- Removal of vehicles in Cul-de-sacs is especially important. The narrow frontage of these lots offers few locations for our ploughs to deposit snow. Encumbrance of these locations by parked vehicles inevitably leads to our depositing snow in locations that encroach on private driveways or infrastructure such as fire hydrants;
- Do not deposit snow from driveways or walkways onto the road. Should ploughing of your street take place afterwards, these piles will be broken and redistributed across your own and your neighbor's driveways by the action of our ploughs. These piles are best placed onto the boulevard areas behind the curb or sidewalk;
- Increasingly, we are seeing large piles of snow, originating from commercial parking areas, being placed onto the roads. These piles of snow pose a significant hazard to the general public and compromise our ability to effectively plough our roads. Contractors, employed by commercial and institutional properties to remove snow from parking areas, are requested to refrain from this action in all future snow events.



Notices

Business licence renewal

Business licences must be renewed each year your business is operating in the Town. Fees are due by February 28 of each year. If you have outstanding fees, please ensure they are paid as soon as possible,

Ticketing provisions

Council has recently updated the Dog Licensing and Pound Bylaw to authorize ticketing for various infractions. For a copy of the bylaw, see <http://comox.ca/hall/bylaws/>.

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 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 prohibited

Tax Notices

Tax notices will be mailed out in May. If you have not received your tax notice by May 31, please contact the office. More information on your property tax and utility rates will be provided with your tax notice.