Mayor’s Update

 March 22, 2017

Happy Spring!

There is so much to celebrate! To start the year, I had the absolute pleasure of connecting with many of the volunteer and non-profit groups that contribute so much to the life we share in this special part of the world. Things don’t happen on their own, and we are truly lucky to have so many folks willing to give of their hearts, minds, energy and time to this community. On behalf of Council - THANK YOU!

Spring is the time that we solidify our annual budget – which tends to shape the work and direction of the year to come. And what an exciting year this is shaping up to be! Outlined below are some highlights for 2017:

* **SPRINGER CREEK MICRO-HYDRO PROJECT**: We are absolutely thrilled to announce that the Village was successful in obtaining **$2.4 million** through the New Building Canada – Small Communities Fund for this **community renewable energy project**. The project will allow us to generate as much power as we currently consume, will contribute to our economic sustainability, and will build our capacity to invest in our community for generations to come. Ultimately, it will provide us with a localized source of renewable energy.

The announced funding brings some certainty to project financing, but there is still work that needs to be done before it is a definite “go.” We are still working through permitting, financing and other processes that will be critical for project success. We are committed to ensure that this is the absolute best project that it can be. Based on the predevelopment work that is still in process, construction likely will not start until next year. We’ve compiled responses to some frequently asked questions about the project. **Please read** to get an **up-to-date understanding** of the project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or staff through the Village Office.

* **SENIOR’S HOUSING:** The folks from the Slocan Valley Seniors’ Housing Society continue to work extremely hard on this project that will see **12 units of Seniors’ and Affordable Housing** built on the lots behind the Wellness Centre. Earlier this year, they announced that they were successful in obtaining **$500,000** towards the project. Village staff is working hard to ensure we do our part to support this project moving forward in 2017. If all goes well, they plan to break ground this summer.
* **RURAL DIVIDEND:** The Village of Slocan was successful in obtaining a **$10,000** grant to move forward with research and **planning for the waterfront area, west of the old mill site**. The purpose of this project is to recruit a professional consultant to create a long-term waterfront management and development strategy. The consultant will connect with all stakeholders, host a community engagement session, analyze existing and new-found data, and create an implementation plan. Data compiled will include landowner information, traffic patterns, existing/future uses, climate change impacts, and local/regional economic benefits. As the area becomes more popular, with a variety of user groups, the intent of this project is to work with all stakeholders, landowners, and the community to create a plan that we can all support.
* **RURAL DIVIDEND (REGIONAL)**: In 2016, the Village submitted a joint application to the Rural Dividend Fund, partnering with the Villages of New Denver, Silverton and RDCK Area H to develop a Slocan Valley Economic Development Strategy for our region. A series of public engagement sessions were held and the consultants are in the process of preparing a draft report. Thank you to all who have provided input thus far. We will keep you posted.
* **PAVING:** The Ministry of Transportation will be working on Hwy 6, north of Slocan starting this year. This provides us with an opportunity to obtain significant savings on paving. Council has **approved $200,000 from our Gas Tax fund** to be put towards paving improvements of some of our most damaged streets. Note: this is not yet a definite “go” and will be dependent on an agreement with MOT. Timing would be based on timing of the highways contract. (See March Newsletter for more information).

That’s it for now! Please feel free to contact the office at any point if you have questions about these or other initiatives. Enjoy the excitement of the season! ~ Mayor, Jessica Lunn ☺