



Mayor's Report

January 24, 2022

On January 14 I attended the most recent in a series of webinars regarding the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative. The initiative is designed to bring syilx and non-syilx partners together to address the cumulative impacts threatening the long-term viability of Okanagan Lake and its ecosystems. These ecosystems and watersheds provide clean drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and erosion and flood control. They also contribute to reducing the impacts of the changing climate.

The webinars are led and hosted by Okanagan Nation Alliance and Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program. Through the District's participation in the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program, Summerland is part of this collaborative effort. This webinar was about how Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can provide a framework for setting strategic directions for land use planning processes and action plans. My two biggest takeaways from this webinar were a clearer understanding of TEK and syilx worldview and how both can guide us to solutions on how to restore health to watersheds and, ultimately, downstream to Okanagan Lake.

Council spent the better part of January 18 and 19 on operational and capital budget discussions. The proposed property tax rate is 4% this year. Details on this proposed increase and where our tax dollars are being put to work will be provided at a one-hour virtual budget open house scheduled for February 3, 4 pm. More information on how property taxes relate to increased assessments is available in the District's February newsletter that is mailed out with your utilities invoice.

As an aside: Did you know that the District has a Tree Reserve? When you sign up to receive your utility bill electronically instead of by mail, **every** month the cost of saved postage is redirected to the Tree Reserve. The money is used to purchase and plant trees. "Don't Print — Save a Tree" takes on a whole new meaning.

On January 18 MLA Ashton and I took part in a teleconference with Health Minister Dix and Susan Brown, CEO of Interior Health. We raised the matter of the temporary closure of the Summerland Lab and its impact on residents, particularly those who have challenges getting to the Penticton Regional Hospital Lab. Thursday, January 20 I had another call from Interior Health advising that Interior Health is actively working on Summerland's temporary lab closure and efforts are underway to reinstate this service. There are no details to share at this time, but I am hopeful we'll hear good news in the coming days.

Finally, many people in Summerland are saddened by the passing of Dick Clements. Mr. Clements was an amazing storyteller and could recite a poem or lines from a theatre script, or sing a song—Tom Paxton's Ramblin' Boy comes immediately to mind. Dick served in the British Royal Navy during WWII before immigrating to Canada and was an active member of the Summerland Legion, often participating in the flag lowering/raising ceremony on Remembrance Day. Dick was also a close friend of George Ryga, renowned Summerland author and playwright and participated in the opening of the George Ryga Arts & Cultural Centre in October 2021. On behalf of Council and those who have reached out to me in

the last few days with their fond memories of Dick, our condolences to your family and your friends at the Legion and elsewhere. Summerland will miss your twinkling eyes, wit and spirit.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Toni Boot