

## Mayor's Report – July 2, 2024

Yesterday at Memorial Park I participated in the official Canada Day flag-raising ceremony with MP Albas and MLA Ashton, which was also attended by Deputy Mayor Trainer, Councillors Peake, Betts, Van Alphen, Barkwill, and most of Summerland it seemed. It was an amazing turnout and a great day.

The Summerland Legion once again organized the Canada Day celebration, as they have for many years. This year they partnered with the Chamber of Commerce (Destination Summerland), who received a \$2,000 grant, in addition to the District's \$500 grant-in-aid to the Legion, to help make the event bigger and better with live music and activities for children. There was also a pancake breakfast provided by Kiwanis to go along with the traditional lunch-time barbecue, ice cream and Canada Day cake. MLA Ashton and I teamed up once again – likely for the last time—to cut the cake and hand out pieces. Last year we ran out of cake, so this year there were two cakes. But we still ran out. Apologies to the firefighters who were there that I wasn't able to save them each a piece.

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July means school's out for the summer, and out for good for the grads. On June 24, I was able to attend the Summerland Secondary School graduation ceremony, along with Councillors Van Alphen, Peake, and Barkwill.

Fiona Girard, who is one of our casual lifeguards and swim instructors at the Aquatic Centre, received the Verrier award for best all-round student. On behalf of Council, congratulations to Fiona and to all the Class of 2024 for their outstanding achievement. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

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On June 19, Councillor Barkwill and I attend the Chamber of Commerce AGM, where a new board was installed. There wasn't a lot of turnover on the board, and Mike Hildebrand remains president. This continuity will be important as the Chamber rebrands itself as Destination Summerland to focus on bringing people to Summerland either as a visitor or to become a resident. Another priority is the sale of the visitor centre property, and finding a new home downtown that should help to bring more people into town.

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On June 13, Councillor Van Alphen and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where directors approved the awarding of a seven-year contract to Waste Connections Canada for the curbside collection of garbage, recycling, and mixed food and yard waste in the rural areas outside the municipalities.

In order to obtain economies of scale, the Regional District collaborated with its member municipalities, including Summerland, on a regional RFP. Each local government was then responsible for awarding their own contracts. In all the bids received, the service cost for the rural areas increased much more than it did for the municipalities. For this reason, back in May, the board asked RDOS staff to evaluate if an in-house service could be delivered at a lower cost. The analysis came to us on the 13<sup>th</sup> and, while the decision was not unanimous, most directors felt there was too much risk and not even time to bring the service in-house.

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At the same board meeting, RDOS directors agreed to a six-month trial of a four-day work week with the aim of improving employee recruitment and retention and offering a better work/life balance for staff. The trial won't be the same as Summerland's compressed four-day work week – RDOS staff will work fewer hours overall and office opening times will remain the same. To maintain productivity, the idea is to reduce time-wasting tasks that have become common in the traditional work week model. The trial starts this month.

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Finally, at the same June 13 meeting, the Board approved a project to establish a corporate pathway for reaching net-zero emissions for RDOS buildings and facilities. The project will look to see what can be done through improved energy efficiency and where greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced through the electrification of buildings that currently rely on fossil fuels. The project cost of \$678,000 is 100% funded from a grant received from Natural Resources Canada's Smart Renewables and Electrification Pathways Program.