

Mayor's Report – September 3, 2024

Over the last couple of weeks, I have been responding to queries from the media and the public about the provincial government's decision to override our local zoning and approve a gravel pit at the end of Garnet Valley.

The property in question is zoned Forestry Grazing, which does not allow for natural resource extraction. It's an environmental sensitive area and there are concerns about the impacts to both terrestrial and riparian wildlife habitats as well as to recreation and tourism, and to our municipal infrastructure.

On behalf of Council, I have written to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation requesting that she overturn the decision.

The Penticton Indian Band, MLA Dan Ashton, Summerland Chamber of Commerce, local tourism associations, agricultural producers, recreation and community groups, and many local residents have also written to the Minister asking her to reconsider.

With this widespread community support, Council will be meeting with the Minister in person in two weeks' time at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) annual convention, where we will appeal to her to reverse the decision.

Also over the last couple of weeks, Deputy Mayor Trainer and I have been fielding media queries on Council's call for the federal and provincial governments to ban non-compostable plastic produce stickers, which is one of four resolutions that Council is bringing forward to UBCM.

On Friday, I joined Cameron Baughen, the environmental services coordinator for the District of Summerland, to tour Global News around our organics processing facility. We saw first-hand a large amount of plastic that had come out of the green curbside collection bins. We also saw how plastic is removed from the compost, except for produce stickers which are too small to be screened out.

Until such a time they become compostable, we must continue to ask residents to remove stickers from fruit and vegetable skins before placing them in the green carts.

Finally, Summerland continues to suffer from a rash of vandalism and graffiti. Besides being costly to clean up for both the District and business, vandalism and graffiti causes public safety issues and makes the community appear unsafe and unsightly.

Property damage is a serious offence. However, Summerland is spread out over 74 square km so it isn't feasible for the RCMP or District bylaw officers to be out everywhere at all hours looking for vandals. With an increasing number of security cameras, we are better able to identify suspects. However, like law enforcement officers, cameras can't be everywhere.

We therefore need members of the public to keep their eyes open and report incidents of vandalism. We also need members of the public with information about who's responsible for these incidents to contact the Summerland RCMP detachment.

Mayor Doug Holmes