

Beneath the Clocktower

YOUR INSIGHT INTO ISSUES AND EVENTS AT DUNCAN CITY HALL
March 2007

Check out our award winning website at www.duncan.ca

Official Community Plan 2007

Watch the local newspapers and our website for upcoming Official Community Plan meetings! The City of Duncan is reviewing its Official Community Plan (OCP).

An OCP is a bylaw containing a broad set of guidelines and policies on the direction of our city over the next 5 – 10 years. The OCP will provide direction to Council and certainty to residents and developers about topics such as:

- Overall growth management
- A vision for the city
- Secondary suites
- Home based businesses
- Economic development
- Environmental protection
- Locations for single and multi-family developments
- Density for townhouses and apartments
- Height guidelines for the appearance of commercial development in the downtown and along the highway
- Downtown revitalization
- Transportation issues
- Greenspace and walkways
- Public safety
- What the new Zoning Bylaw should look like

Please watch for notices and plan on attending the upcoming meetings so that you can have a voice in how our community grows!!!

Rotary Park Lights Need Supporters

The City of Duncan is seeking financial and in-kind support to replace the lights at Rotary Park.

A new lighting plan has been designed for a large scale improvement to replace the existing wooden poles with new taller poles. The lighting will be similar to those at the Chesterfield Sportsplex and the park would then be able to be used more in the evening, especially in the fall and winter. Should your group wish to donate funding, in-kind services [e.g. electrical supplies or the services of an electrician], it would be greatly appreciated. It is estimated that the new lights will cost +/--\$50,000, with the total cost, including installation, being +/--\$70,000. A donor list will be affixed to the various poles to acknowledge the donations.



Tax receipts can be issued for donations of cash or materials valued at fair market value. Tax receipts may be issued for time and labour under special circumstances. If you have any questions or require additional information or clarification of the above, please feel free to contact Len Thew, Operations Manager at 746-5321, or call City Hall at 746-6126.



Duncan City Hall-Watercolour by Robert Amos, reproduced by permission of the Heritage Society of B.C.

STAFFING CHANGES

With the retirement of long serving employees, Paul Douville and Lynn Ketch, the City is pleased to welcome aboard Tom Ireland and Cheryl Wirsz.

Tom Ireland, our new Chief Administrative Officer joins us from Prince Rupert and Cheryl Wirsz, our new Director of Corporate Services joins us from the District of Sooke. Many of you may remember Cheryl from her days as a planner at the CVRD.

Both Tom and Cheryl have diplomas and degrees from the public administration program at UVIC and bring strong policy backgrounds to the City.

SNOW CLEARING

Now that March has come in like a lion, let's hope it continues to go out like a lamb. In the event of another snowfall, however, we would like to remind you that snow-clearing in front of businesses and residences is the responsibility of the business or resident. The City has snow-clearing priorities for the roads, starting with the busiest, and getting to the residential streets later. Please do your part and keep your sidewalk cleared.

Centennial Park Revitalization Plan

The vision for Centennial Park is that the park will become a welcoming, well used, and safe city park with opportunities to play, socialize, exercise and participate in community events. By next fall, Phase 1 of the redevelopment should be near completion.

Plans include: a welcoming feature at the entrance on Third Street, improved entrance and viewing area from Government Street, a walking track and enhanced pedestrian pathways with seating every 50 m, new tennis courts, plus a basketball court, new playgrounds, a water play park, compost demonstration at the community garden, restoration of the riparian vegetation around the pond, management of the invasive species in the park, interpretative centre overlooking the wetlands, a covered picnic area, enhanced parking, and a raised stage area for special events.

Many of these improvements will happen over the next 5-10 years. If grant funding is secured the timelines will shorten. Most importantly, we want a City park that is a beautiful jewel in our downtown where people feel safe and welcome.



Bio Degradable the way to go!

If you have ever noticed, and been irritated by, white plastic bags filled with doggy-do tossed in the bushes of the parks, well groan no more! The City is now purchasing dark green bio-degradable bags for those people who somehow just can't make it to the conveniently placed garbage cans.

2006 Budget and Tax Rates

City Finance staff are working hard to complete the 2006 Year End and to prepare figures for the 2007 budget deliberations. The City intends to solicit public input into the budget process in late March, so look for more information on that in the coming weeks.

Initial BC assessment figures show the average assessed value for a single family home in the City of Duncan went up 20% for 2007 while the average Business Property assessment went up 21%.

In last year's five year budget (2006-2010) total revenues from taxes were budgeted to increase in 2007 by 8.6%. However, the City looks at all opportunities to be more efficient and will make every effort to lessen the increase.

The toilet rebate program was recently expanded to include apartment complexes and commercial buildings.

Several grant applications have recently been sent out to hopefully assist in the implementation of projects like: Centennial Park Revitalization, Government Street Upgrades, City wide water meters, and Craig Street Revitalization.

The Inflow and Infiltration Sewer project is nearing completion. The elimination of storm water from the sewer system is expected to reduce flows into the sewer lagoons by as much as 15%. This \$1.5 million dollar project is two-thirds funded by the Canada/ British Columbia Infrastructure Program. The final upgrade includes replacement sewer lines on Brae Rd., Coronation Ave. and Duncan St. and should be completed by early April.



Larger versions of these plans can be viewed at City Hall and on our website under press releases.

TAX DEFERMENT NOW AVAILABLE AT 55

For those taxpayers over the age of 55, the Province of BC offers a tax deferral program that allows you to defer your taxes. The taxes not paid now will be taken out of your future estate (at low interest rates – currently 4%). More information is available by calling 250-387-0555 or 1-800-663-7867 and request a transfer to 387-0555. or at http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/rpt/property_tax_deferment.htm

Potholes and Streetlights

Two of our very favourite topics! This year after the extreme weather, the potholes have been unbelievable. City crews are out every day patching until the weather improves. You are welcome to report not only potholes, but streetlights that are out. Very soon, there will be a convenient form on our website that you can fill in with location information to be sent to Public Works.

