



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

Beneath the Clocktower

Your Insight into Issues and Events at Duncan City Hall
May 2009

Budget Increases Mostly Due to Policing and Pool Costs

Municipal budget increases for 2009 are almost entirely due to new policing costs (7.1% or \$58) and increased costs of debt and operating for the pool (2% or \$16), based on the average home assessment of \$256,116.

Most other expenses have been held down to keep the increases as low as possible while incorporating a 3.75% increase in 2009 wages which was previously set in the collective agreement.

“The 2009 budget was a challenging one due to the implementation of Municipal Police Services. This will be the first year the City will be directly responsible for the costs of providing this service,” commented Mayor Phil Kent. “Council worked hard to ensure that these costs would be implemented over a number of years, rather than all at once.”

The average home assessment decreased from \$258,237 in 2008 to \$256,116 in 2009 (-0.8%) due to the province’s assessment freeze. The municipal tax increase on the average home is 11.7% meaning the total tax bill for the average home (before the homeowner grant) increased from \$1,769 to \$1,859 (\$90).

The average business assessment decreased from \$373,513 to \$371,693 (-0.5%). The municipal tax increase on the average business is 9.7% and the total tax bill for the average business increased from \$7,896 to \$8,304 (\$408). This increase is almost entirely due to policing (9.1% or \$365).

Estimated Future Increases in Taxes
2010.... 13.7% (7.8% due to policing)
2011.... 10.3% (6.0% due to policing)
2012..... 5.7% (1.3% due to policing)
2013 2.5%

Craig Street Open For Business Throughout Makeover

Craig Street will soon be undergoing a makeover which will transform it into a pedestrian friendly, European style streetscape complete with new curbs, sidewalks, benches, trees and planters.

Downtown merchants want everyone to know that throughout the construction it will be business as usual with lots of Construction Specials and Makeover Madness planned by local businesses.

Market in the Square - What A Success!

Market in the Square in City Square and stretching the length of Craig Street will temporarily relocate during the Craig Street construction to Ingram Street west of Liquidation World.

A special thank you to all members of Market in the Square and their tireless Board of Directors who have worked so hard with the Duncan BIA to ensure the success of the Market.

For comments/questions/concerns about this newsletter, please call 250-746-6126 or email suggestionbox@duncan.ca

Some Notes on Budget Items & Ongoing Activities

Municipal Policing Services

Council negotiated hard to keep these costs as low as possible, however the increases are still significant. Council and City staff worked with the Police Services Branch of the Provincial Government to implement Municipal Policing Services for the City and secured a grant of \$700,000 to assist in providing this service.

Cowichan Aquatic Centre

Costs for the operating budget for the Aquatic Centre are higher than anticipated since the budget originally established was estimated based on the Nanaimo Pool.

Environmental Initiatives

The 2009 budget includes \$30,000 for environmental initiatives such as an Environmental Strategy, a Woodstove Exchange program and an Urban Forest Strategy.

Craig Street Revitalization

Council was successful in securing \$400,000 from the province and \$190,000 from the Island Coastal Economic Trust to move towards completing the vision for Craig Street. The remainder of the costs are being paid from prior surpluses, with no impact on current taxes.

Centennial Park Revitalization

Council was successful in securing almost \$300,000 in grants towards the costs of the first phase of Centennial Park which was estimated to cost approximately \$700,000.

The plan is that community support will assist in funding the improvements so that some of the City's funds can be used to finance the remaining phases. To find out more about contributing, contact centennial@duncan.ca or call 250-746-6126 or see the brochure on the City website <www.duncan.ca>.

The Spraypark, Playground and Loop Trail will be completed in 2009.

Traffic Control

A new light at the Cowichan Way, Trunk Rd, Duncan Street intersection is in the detail design stage and will hopefully begin construction in early September.

Other initiatives, such as the roundabout at Allenby and the Duncan Street/Canada Avenue one-way couplets, are awaiting funding from grant applications.

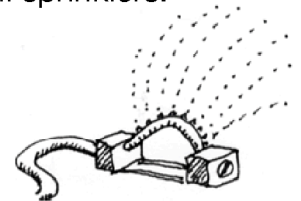
Organics Collection

The City is currently investigating vehicle options to implement this service.

Reminders...

Watering Restrictions Begin June 1

- Odd numbered buildings water on odd numbered calendar days (1, 3, 5, etc.)
- Even numbered buildings water on even numbered calendar days (2, 4, 6, etc.)
- Time – 6am to 9am and 7pm to 10pm
- When the fire alarm sounds, turn off all sprinklers.



Open Burning

Open burning is not permitted within the City limits. Yard and garden waste can be taken to the Transfer Station at Bing's Creek (free tipping).



Temporary Tents

A temporary tent is permitted in the back yard as a summer "gazebo," but using temporary tents on your property to cover vehicles or other items is prohibited.

