

The Official Newsletter of the District of Highlands Council

RURAL LIFE NATURAL BEAUTY STRONG COMMUNITY

A message from your Mayor



Mayor Mark Cardinal

I'm happy to launch this newsletter on behalf of your new Council, elected November 2005. It's no secret that it was a very close election, indicating that there is a lot of community building to be done. We want this newsletter to be a vehicle to do just that. We will make sure that various voices are heard, starting with articles by individual Councillors.

I would first like to thank Marie Brotherston, Sandy McPherson, and Karel Roessingh for their past contributions on Council. We welcome Ken Brotherston, Joe Kadar, and Jane Mendum back to Council as well as Andrew Fall, Michelle Mahovlich, and Ken Williams as new members of Council. And, a big thank you to all who took the time and energy to run in the last election.

I look forward to working as a productive team for the next three years.

CRD Board accepts Highlands' Regional Context Statement (RCS)

On March 8, 2006, in a 10 to 9 vote (with Chair Alan Lowe abstaining), the CRD Board accepted the Highlands' RCS.

What is the Regional Context Statement (RCS)?

The Regional Context Statement (RCS) is part of our draft Official Community Plan (OCP) and is required under provincial law. It explains how our community's vision fits into the overall plan of the Capital Region's Growth Strategy; in other words, it puts our OCP in the context of the regional plan. The RCS must be approved by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board.

What happens next?

Now that the RCS has been accepted, the Highlands' RCS will trigger an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) which would require unanimous approval by all CRD member municipalities and the electoral area.

Why is it important that Highlands' RCS be accepted by the CRD Board?

The RCS is our vision of how Highlands fits into the region. It contains our commitment to keep the Highlands a rural, green community while, at the same time allowing us to diversify our tax base in the south Highlands. This is a very important step in the economic sustainability of the Highlands

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Groundwater awareness

Why is groundwater important in the Highlands?

All of the water we use in the Highlands comes from groundwater. **Groundwater** is water that is found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock. All of the wells in the Highlands tap into these groundwater reserves.

What do we know about our groundwater?

To really understand our groundwater, the Highlands is considering a Comprehensive Groundwater Study. Details of this study will be coming out in upcoming newsletters. Along with this study, Council will be undertaking a groundwater awareness program. This is the first in a series of awareness messages to our community.

How do I know if my well water is safe to drink?

It is recommended that you test your drinking water supply for potability on an annual basis. This is to ensure that your water is safe to drink (potable). A sample can be taken to a lab that does water tests (see Laboratories-Analytical in the yellow pages). There are two options for potability testing. The first option is suggested for

water supplies where no treatment is applied to the groundwater supply source. The test is called a "potability test" and indicates the presence or absence of total and fecal coliforms, the bacteria that are harmful to your health. If you have some sort of water treatment in place, you could undertake a "water screen". The water screen test provides the total and fecal coliforms but also includes results for the concentration of iron, presence of sulfur-reducing bacteria, yeast and fungi as well as a total plate count (a measure of biological activity in your water). The potability test costs about \$25 plus tax and the water screen test about \$45 plus tax.

How do I collect my water samples so as to prevent contamination?

Water samples should be collected from your drinking water taps in laboratory-prepared sample bottles but can also be collected using a brand new (never been used) zip-top bag. You should keep your water sample in a cooler with an ice pack for transport to the lab and it should be delivered within 24 hours of collecting the sample.

With material supplied by Councillor Michelle Mahovlich

Highlander Elaine Limbrick elected President of West Shore Arts Council

Although a relative newcomer to the Highlands, Elaine Limbrick has been active from the beginning in serving her community. She is a director of the Highland District Community Association (HDCA) and a neighbourhood HELP (Highlands Emergency Local Preparedness) leader. As well, she was a member of the OCP Review Co-ordinating Team and is a member of the Community Infrastructure and Services Advisory Committee. To top it all off, she ran for Council in the 2005 election, but was unsuccessful. Her recent election to the Presidency of the West Short Arts Council will continue to keep her

busy throughout the western CRD region.

What would she like to see happening in the arts in the Highlands? Elaine mentioned a project that she has proposed to the HDCA. "I would like to see local residents and artists collaborating to map and record many things that they love about the Highlands. This is based on an English project called the 'Parish Maps Project.' I feel that we could record the history, geography and ecology of our beloved Highlands. It is my hope that this project might bring the community together," said Elaine. "This project certainly would come within the mandate of the West Shore Arts Council to encourage such an undertaking," she added.

Little known Highlands facts

- Did you know there is a mine on the west side of Jocelyn Hill? You can walk about 50 feet into a horizontal shaft which leads to a dead end.
- There are the remains of a brick lime kiln on the municipal hall site.

- The District of Highlands has over six miles of oceanfront.

Anyone who knows more about these is invited to phone or email information to the municipal office.

Bear Mountain Bylaws

As most people in the Highlands know by now, the Bear Mountain rezoning bylaw passed by the previous Council has been quashed by the BC Supreme Court in an action taken by a group of Highlands' citizens. The reason for quashing the bylaw was that the Public Hearing had been held outside the District (in Isabelle Reader Theater in Langford). In his judgment, the Honourable Mr. Justice Macaulay wrote, **"With considerable regret, I conclude that I do not have any residual discretion to deny the relief sought even though neither the society nor any elector was prejudiced by the fact that the public hearings were**

held outside the boundaries of the district." The complete judgment can be found on the BC Supreme Court website (2005).

At present, Council has instructed the Highlands' lawyer to apply for an appeal. Highlands has also written a letter to the provincial government to see if our case could be considered under the Municipalities Enabling and Validating Act (MEVA) which allows the province to retroactively validate bylaws. Council has also started discussions regarding the process for a new set of bylaws. Council has called a Committee of the Whole meeting to take place on March 27th at the Pike House.

Rezoning Application RZ-08-04: Bylaw 275 (Woodridge Properties) Adopted

At its January 9, 2006 Council meeting, Council gave third reading and adoption to the Woodridge Properties rezoning application. The rezoning application was for two large properties, adjacent to each other, totaling 31.3 ha (77 acres) in the Woodridge area. The rezoning of these properties has been before this and previous Councils for more than three years.

Rezoning Details

The original zoning on the property was Greenbelt 2 (30 acre minimum). The 1997 OCP land use designation on the majority of the property was Rural Residential, which is consistent with the adopted zoning Rural Residential 2A (RR2A), minimum lot size 0.8 ha (2 acre), average area of lots not less than 2.0 ha (5 acres) and is consistent with the existing Woodridge neighbourhood area to the south of the subject properties.

Rezoning Amenity

In exchange for the increase in density to 12 residential lots, the following amenities will be provided to DoH:

- One 7.7 ha (19 acre) lot to be owned by the

- District of Highlands
- Dedication of 3.1 ha (7.7 acre) of park to be added to Mount Work Park (CRD Parks) or retained as Municipal Park
- Dedication and construction of trails leading to Mount Work Park
- Construction of roadside trail from the corner of Munn and Woodridge to the subject property
- A cash amenity payment to the District of Highlands in the amount of \$9,739 per lot to a total maximum of \$116,868. The funds are to be used to provide fire fighting equipment to enhance the delivery of fire suppression services within the municipality.

Council would like to thank Staff and all those in the community who took the time to contact Councillors directly with their views or to speak at the Public Hearing. This was a long rezoning process and Councillors heard from many. It is never easy to make these difficult decisions, but Councillors discussed this rezoning application very thoroughly in all its aspects, and Council opted for what it considered to be in the best interests of the Highlands as a whole. Council also thanks the applicant for patience and commitment throughout the process and for providing amenities which the community values.

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Glimpse of Highlands history: the East Fire Hall



East Highlands firefighters (l to r)

Larry Patterson, Elaine Stone, Sam Harris, Al Adams, Paul Henry, Dave Webster (summer 1978).

Long before the Highlands was incorporated as a municipality, six hard-working residents in the East Highlands formed a volunteer fire brigade. They purchased an old, flat-deck 3-ton hay truck, installed a tank and portable pump, and thus produced the first fire-fighting apparatus.

On January 17, 1978, the Eastern Highlands Volunteer Fire Department became a registered society, and the group began collecting \$50.00 memberships from residents. The first officers of the Society were:

President James Farndon

Vice-president Lawrence Fletcher

Secretary Allan Adams

Treasurer Elaine Stone

Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee

Hubertus Stemkins

Chairman of the Planning committee Samuel Harris

Director Derek Stone

Fire Chief Lawrence Patterson

Money was always tight, and the group raised additional money from dances, raffles, etc. The first “real” fire truck was a 1958 Fargo with a 840 g.p.m. Thibault pump purchased from DND with \$900.00 raised at one of the dances. The truck was kept under cover (and drained in the winter) at Al Adams’ and

later at Greg Cowan’s.

The first bay of the current East Firehall was built in 1982 with a ribbon **burning** to mark the occasion. The second bay was built in 1983, again entirely with volunteer labour and money raised through community events and donations.

The third bay was added in 1994, as volunteers finished an addition to the East Fire Hall. Construction took place over two weekends under the direction of Fire Chief Barry Ford. \$12,000 for materials was provided by District of Highlands taxpayers. Some View Royal firefighters joined a number of Highlands volunteers to complete the addition saving the community about \$15,000 in labour. Councillor Sue Johnson commented at the time, “we’re being thrifty....it’s the kind of thing we like to promote.”

In 2003, Highlanders celebrated the 25th anniversary of firefighting in the Highlands. At the time, Fire Chief Barry Ford noted, “It takes people with a vision, a heart for community, and willingness to work hard to achieve what we have, a Volunteer Fire Department to be proud of.”

With information provided by Fire Chief Barry Ford and Bob Flitton

