



HIGHLIGHTS of April 27, 2020 City of Campbell River Council Meeting

Mayor's opening remarks

First, a big thank-you on behalf of Council for all the positive comments, questions and suggestions from community members on how Campbell River can adjust to the current COVID-19 crisis. These are extraordinary and challenging times, and we are encouraged to see Campbell River adapting and finding ways to stay positive and comply with the public health orders.

We also acknowledge the great work that the federal and provincial governments are doing. Each level of government has specific responsibilities, and it's heartening to see how all parties are also working collaboratively. In particular, immense thanks to Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister Dix for the daily briefings and updates they provide.

While the curve appears to have levelled in British Columbia, there is still a huge potential of risk. We cannot let up and urge everyone to stay diligent with physical distancing, frequent handwashing, and respecting others when at the grocery store or picking up essential items.

We are fortunate to live in such an amazing and generous community, where clearly most people continue to do their part to follow the public health directives. This is the best way to protect each other and help keep Campbell River healthy and strong.

Also, on behalf of Council I want to thank all the organizations and volunteers that have stepped up and raised funds or offered to help to people in need.

We must also acknowledge that there's a sense of desperation for some people. We see that in inappropriate behaviour and crime, including recent acts of vandalism around town and in our parks. The senseless destruction to some of the carvings, even at the Gateway Casino, is very troubling.

Please continue to help our RCMP and Bylaw officers by reporting activity of concern. We thank the City's bylaw officers, the downtown security patrol and Inspector Preston and all the members of the RCMP detachment for their dedication and service to keep the community safe.

During this meeting, Council will continue to deal with important issues. From amending user fees and charges to provide some relief to CR taxpayers, to moving ahead with zoning bylaws, planning procedures and tender awards to keep development and business moving forward, providing it is done in full compliance with COVID-19 public health guidelines, and continuing discussion on how we best support our most vulnerable during these challenging times.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

COVID-19 financial relief measures

As initial financial relief measures for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, Council approved:

- No City fees charged on payments returned due to insufficient funds until the end of 2020
- No late payment penalties of 5% on metered water and sewer bills through the end of 2020 (with an exception for bulk water deliveries)
- Rollback 2020 Water User fees to 2019 rates
- Rollback 2020 Sewer User fees to 2019 rates

Council continues to lobby the Province to expand the property tax deferral program and increase the homeowner grant to people who've lost income due to the pandemic.

Proactive short-term borrowing bylaw

Council adopted a bylaw to authorize borrowing against anticipated revenue for the year, if required to maintain City operations. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, this bylaw is a prudent, proactive measure to avoid cash flow shortfalls and ensure continuing services in uncertain times. If borrowing is required, Council will receive a report with information on the amount of funding required as well as costs and payment terms prior to pursuing borrowing. Council gave first, second and third reading to the bylaw at the special April 20 meeting.

Status of 2020 projects and new ongoing services

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected regular City operations, and several projects have been cancelled or delayed to future years for a variety of reasons, from lack of available resources to complete the project to inability to comply with current public health directives. Other projects are currently unaffected as they are scheduled for later this year.

Robron Fieldhouse contract

Council approved up to \$146,241.80 for Upland Contracting to provide excavation, paving, fencing, electrical, watermain, and sewer forcemain services to the Robron Fieldhouse.

City sends letter to Province in support of expanded property tax deferral program

Council agreed to send a letter to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing asking for an expanded property tax deferral program in consideration of financial hardship. Currently, 70 per cent of B.C. homeowners qualify for property tax deferral due to age (over 55) or family status (living with children at home under the age of 18).

BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Development applications proceed without in-person public meetings due to COVID-19

Council approved amendments to the planning procedures bylaw that support changes to development application processes during the COVID-19 pandemic. To comply with the public health prohibition on gatherings, the in-person neighbourhood public meetings and public hearings will be suspended for all development applications. When applications propose rezoning or variances, the City will advertise proposed developments and send letters to neighbouring property owners, seeking their feedback. The bylaw amendments also include changes to allow the use of online technology for applications that require pre-application meetings.

Council gave first, second and third reading to the bylaw amendments at the April 6 meeting.



Golf Course Resort Community designation to be added to Official Community Plan

Council gave third reading to an amendment bylaw that would add Campbell River Golf Course Comprehensive Development Zone Three to the City's Official Community Plan. The bylaw amendments will be considered for adoption following:

- sign-off from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- confirmation that dedication of 0.193 hectares of land to the City to increase the Shetland Road right-of-way has been accepted by the Land Title Office
- a financial contribution of \$13,233.65 for intersection improvements

Council gave the proposed bylaw amendments first and second reading on December 16, 2019, and a public hearing was held on March 9.

Subdivision approved at 1500 Perth Road

Council approved rezoning a portion of the property at 1500 Perth Road to allow for a single family residence with the option of a secondary suite and/or a secondary residence. Following rezoning, the applicant intends to subdivide the rezoned portion of the property into three lots, allowing for a total of up to nine dwellings units. This application received first and second reading on March 9.

Secondary suites considered for the 300-block of Erickson Road

Council gave first and second reading to consider rezoning three properties at 325, 329 and 335 Erickson Road to permit a secondary suite in each house. The public hearing was waived.

Bus stop changes and lane improvements near CR Bowling Alley

In response to a letter from Ian Fong, Campbell River Bowling and Billiards, Council directed relocation of the bus stop and improvements to the laneway at 1661 16th Ave.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Proactive enforcement re-affirmed

Council discussed the need for proactive enforcement by the RCMP and City bylaw officers in the downtown core to ensure people are following physical distancing requirements. Island Health is reaching out to vulnerable people to help them access COVID-19 assessment and testing as necessary.

Funding requests for meal programs directed to Community Foundation

Council directed three requests for funding support to the Community Foundation. Requests from Grassroots Kind Hearts Society, Radiant Life Outreach and the Campbell River and District Coalition to End Homelessness all sought funding support for local meal programs for vulnerable people in the community. Earlier this year, Council endorsed a City donation of \$20,000 to the Community Foundation's fundraising drive for local non-profit organizations working to help people in need.

City support for virtual Canada Day celebration

Council agreed to provide City technology support for preliminary plans to organize a virtual Canada Day celebration.