

Q-City News

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Other News

The City of Quesnel is in the midst of finding a new City Manager.

Charles Hamilton, who was City Manager for nine years, resigned December 8 to take a new position as Chief Administrative Officer with the Columbia Shuswap Regional District in Salmon Arm.

It is hoped the new manager will be in place by early spring 2009. The interim City Manager is Byron Johnson, Director of Finance and Administration.

On-street parking will no longer be allowed on the 300 block of Front Street as of January 1.

The increasing demands of industry and highway traffic create safety concerns for those exiting vehicles parked along the curb. Ministry of Transportation officials advised the City of the required changes in November, who agreed to remove the parking stalls.

There will, however, be a "drop-off" zone in front of the Holley Clinic.

New Council in place for Quesnel

City of Quesnel residents have elected a new Council.

The seven members will serve a three-year term that expires in December 2011.

Mayor Mary Sjostrom was elected with 1,856 votes.

Returning to Council are incumbent Councillors Coralee Oakes (2,446), Ron Paull (2,222), Sushil Thapar (2,131) and Peter Couldwell (2,108).

There are also two new Councillors elected, Michael Cave (1,651) and Laurey-Anne Roodenburg (1,450).

Voter turnout was 47.42%, with 3,521 votes cast out of 7,425 eligible voters.

Now that the election is over, Council starts by setting direction and becoming familiar with one another and with staff.

Part of the process includes a Council orientation session. Senior staff provide Council with a presentation explaining various aspects of local government, City departments and their roles.

That session takes place in December, allowing Council time to prepare for strategic planning sessions in January and the budget process for 2009.



Clockwise, from front centre are Mayor Mary Sjostrom and Councillors Laurey-Anne Roodenburg, Ron Paull, Sushil Thapar, Peter Couldwell, Michael Cave and Coralee Oakes.

A vision for the future

As your new Mayor, I look forward to serving for the next three years along with Quesnel City Council.

We will address the ideas and concerns raised by City residents and move forward together.

There are some emerging issues to deal with, as well as some long-standing projects that need to be completed.

The Multi-Centre "Yes" vote was a big step for our community to take; I am committed to helping us take even greater strides towards a successful facility.

The West Quesnel Land Stability Program has entered the remediation stage, which is good news

for the entire community.

As Budget 2009 unfolds, I am committed to providing quality services in an economically responsible manner. We have streamlined our committee structure to make more efficient use of Council and staff time. This will allow us to address issues in an even more proactive fashion.

I thank you for your confidence and support and am emboldened by our community's strength and vision for the future.

On behalf of Council I wish my best to you, your family and friends this Holiday Season.

Mayor Mary Sjostrom

The City of Quesnel will provide its residents with an outstanding quality of life in a vibrant, prosperous, diversified community, achieved through a process of public consultation and trust.



Multi-Centre passes referendum stage

What are the next steps?

Voters in the North Cariboo passed the referendum for the North Cariboo Multi-Centre on Nov. 15, 2008, with 2,765 in favour and 2,524 against.

This approval allows the Cariboo Regional District (who provide the recreation function for all residents of the North Cariboo, including those who live within the City limits) to borrow up to \$15 million for the construction of a 2,000-seat arena, 450-seat performing arts theatre and accompanying event and assembly space.

Now that this stage has passed, what are the next steps?

The project has a budget of \$30 million, which means the City and CRD need to secure an additional \$15 million before the project can proceed.

Once the majority of that funding is in place, the City and CRD will advance the design and planning stages of the project. There will be a series of meetings to gather input about the components and design of the facility.

Once all funding is in place, the City and CRD will finalize the design work and select the winning firm to design and build the facility for a fixed fee.

It should be noted that this process could take many months, if not years to complete - it depends on how quickly the additional \$15 million can be secured.

However, once all the funding is in place, the design process is complete and the decision to proceed has been made, the original \$15 million will be borrowed and taxation to pay down that debt would be collected.

Visit www.city.quesnel.bc.ca/multi-centre often for progress updates and more information about the process.

No bottled water at City Hall

During a recent City Council meeting, Coun. Ron Paull raised the issue of bottled water that is routinely kept at City Hall for various meetings and events. It was noted and asked that if the City's water is so good, why was this practice still in place? It was also noted that every environmentally conscious decision is a positive one.

As a result, Council voted to discontinue the purchase of bottled water for City Hall.



The new tennis courts at West Fraser Timber Park opened this spring. The courts were relocated to the West Fraser Timber Park as part of the deal to expand Dunrovin Park Lodge. The new courts are a superior surface and an overall upgrade from the older facilities.

Underpass construction to proceed in spring

The construction of the underpass for Hwy. 97 at Racing Road has been scheduled for spring 2009. The underpass will provide a safe link for pedestrians and cyclists under Hwy. 97. The project is valued at \$1 million and will be built entirely thanks to grant funding from a variety of sources.

Take the easy route

Fly Quesnel!



With 18 scheduled flights from Quesnel to Vancouver every week, Sunday to Saturday, the Quesnel Regional Airport is by far the easiest way to begin your trip. While you're away, take advantage of our free parking.

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Your boarding pass
is waiting for you.

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Quesnel Regional Airport

YQZ





Residents of Quesnel and the North Cariboo anxious to catch the Olympic Spirit will have the opportunity to see the Olympic Flame in person on **Thursday January 29, 2010** as it passes through on its way towards the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Above, Mayor Mary Sjostrom and Cariboo Regional District Area A Director Ted Armstrong help hoist the official Route Community flag on Nov. 21 when the route was announced. The torch relay route is available at vancouver2010.com and information on how residents can apply to be torchbearers can be found at icoke.ca and rbc.com/carrythetorch.

Museum news

Facility and exhibit design for the proposed new museum and visitors centre is underway. The City hired Urban Arts/Karo to complete the work, estimated at \$320,000. Of that, more than \$288,000 came from grants and donations. The company has visited several times, met with stakeholders, and is working on a report to City Council, expected to be presented in early 2009.

The Quesnel & District Museum and Archives' newest exhibit, **River of Memory Took'oh Whunats'ulnih: Reflections on the Fraser Expedition** opened at the North Cariboo Community Campus on Saturday Nov. 29. When Simon Fraser undertook his famed journey 200 years ago, seeking a route to the Pacific, he encountered the Dakelh people. This exhibit explores the relationships between the earliest Europeans in this area and the local inhabitants.

The exhibit also focuses on two other members of Fraser's crew: Jules-Maurice Quesnel and Jean-Baptiste "Waccan" Boucher.

Other parts of the exhibit include:

- A series of interviews of Dakelh Elders, which has been turned into a new DVD: **Elders' Stories: Survival on the Land**. It's available at the museum gift shop.
- New interpretive signs developed by the North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society that mark significant aboriginal sites in Quesnel and will be placed along the Riverfront Trail.
- A bronze plaque explaining how the City came to be named after Jules Quesnel.

More transit for Quesnel

The Quesnel transit system expanded starting Sept. 8. A new route was added, providing hourly service along North Fraser Drive. There is also enhanced service to Carson subdivision and the North Cariboo Community Campus, as well as schedule changes allowing better connections for riders.

This is the first major expansion since the service's inception in 2001 and is being fully cost-shared with BC Transit.



Land Stability work continues

The City plans to spend approximately \$61,000 to design a full-scale dewatering program for the West Quesnel Land Stability study area.

Monitoring costs for 2008 are well below budget, which left a surplus of \$85,522 in the West Quesnel Land Stability account. This surplus will be used to design the next phase of the program.

The trial dewatering program ran in the spring of 2008. It showed that groundwater levels and pressures decreased in

areas where dewatering efforts were made, and provided good direction for the next phase. While the provincial



government is still reviewing those results, the City will advise the Ministry of the

proposed action and seek endorsement of the plan.

The City has invested more than \$1 million towards finding a lasting solution to the WQLS issue.

The provincial government has provided close to \$1.2 million.

New garbage collection system on the way

The new automated garbage collection system will start in April 2009. Specially designed carts will be supplied to all residents who are currently provided with garbage collection. The system involves using a special truck, equipped with an articulating mechanical arm that automatically picks up the carts, empties them, then returns them to their original position.

The City had hoped to start the new service in September 2008, but there was a delay in securing the right truck for the job. As the new truck won't be available until December at the earliest, the program's startup has been moved back. This will allow the new system to get up and running and allow any wrinkles to be straightened out during more favourable weather.



Mayor Mary Sjoström met with Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Kevin Falcon on Dec. 2. The Mayor took the opportunity to show the Minister the heavy traffic Front Street faces due to being the Highway 97 route through downtown. The City, Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation, and Ministry are investigating developing a business case that will analyze the potential North South Interconnector routes and their feasibility.

Arts and Rec Centre upgrade almost done

The Quesnel and District Arts and Recreation Centre's energy retrofit is nearing completion.

The City and Cariboo Regional District received nearly \$260,000 from the federal and provincial governments through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund to fund more than \$390,000 worth of improvements.

The retrofit work includes:

- Installation of a dehumidification reclaim system for the pool air.
- Installation of an exhaust air reclaim system.
- Installation of a solar hot water heating system.
- Replacement of two natural draft boilers with smaller and more efficient models.
- Installation of a heat exchanger that will use heat extracted from the air to preheat domestic water.

The retrofit is forecast to reduce natural gas consumption

by as much as 58%. The retrofit also reduces the relative humidity levels within the facility and will improve the longevity of the swimming pool.

All that is left to complete before the entire system can be brought online is the installation of the solar panels.

Pool Shutdown: December 8 – 26, 2008

Each year the pool is closed for two-and-a-half weeks. It is necessary to drain the main pool to make repairs and properly clean and re-grout the tile surface.

Other work includes pool pump and motor maintenance. A variety of areas in the facility are painted and some deep cleaning is done. Work on improving the facility's accessibility is also underway and some improvements have been planned.

New fire alarm policy set

False fire alarms, the number of times they occur, and the cost to respond to them has become a serious concern for the Quesnel Volunteer Fire Department.

In 2007, the department recorded 95 false alarms out of 337 calls. To provide the best overall service, the City of Quesnel has instituted a new policy regarding the issue of response to automatic fire alarms.

As of January 1, 2009 the City will adopt a Verified Response Alarm Program for fire alarms that are not required to be

monitored by the B.C. Building Code. Alarm companies will be required to verify an automatic fire alarm signal via an eyewitness before the fire department is dispatched. Should the witness discover a fire, the department will treat it with high priority.

Residents should already have received notice from their alarm company notifying them of this change. If you haven't, the City urges you to contact your alarm service provider to find out more details.

You may also contact the fire hall at 250-992-5121.

Lawsuit appeal dismissed

The British Columbia Court of Appeal has upheld the decision of Mr. Justice Nathan Smith of the B.C. Supreme Court to dismiss the lawsuit filed by Gook Country Estates Ltd. against the City of Quesnel and members of City Council and City staff.

The lawsuit challenged a number of decisions and acts involving the City that were in connection with land being developed by Gook Country Estates Ltd. and companies associated with Victor Newman. Allegations were made that the City unlawfully approved the extension of a waterline, and

that staff members abused their authority in the subdivision approval process. Gook Country Estates Ltd. also challenged the lawfulness of development approvals issued by the City for some of the buildings in the Newman development.

The suit was dismissed on Sept. 13, 2006 on the grounds that "The plaintiff has failed to show that it is entitled to any of the declarations sought and the action is dismissed." This decision was appealed by the plaintiff, but dismissed by the Court of Appeal on October 10, 2008.