



**Town of Sidney**  
**Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith - Inaugural Address**  
**November 5, 2018**

Good evening everyone. I would like to begin by welcoming the Honorable Associate Chief Judge, Carmen Rogers; Staff Sergeant Wayne Conley from the Sidney North Saanich RCMP detachment; Town Crier, Kenny Podmore; members of the public; Town Staff; and fellow Council members.

It is an honor to have the opportunity to serve as Mayor of this fine community. I want to congratulate my six Council member colleagues on their election. We have four new Councillors: Sara Duncan, Scott Garnett, Terri O’Keeffe and Chad Rintoul – congratulations! And we have two returning Councillors; I want to recognize Barbara Fallot on her reelection to serve a second term; and to recognize Peter Wainwright on his reelection to begin serving his 7<sup>th</sup> Councillor term – congratulations! In recent months, as I have come to know each of you better, I am impressed with how diverse our backgrounds are in Sidney, along with the range of experience many of us bring from other places we have lived. I look forward to working together over the next four years.

While many in attendance here tonight may know members of our dedicated Town Staff, I want to introduce the senior management team:

- Randy Humble, Chief Administrative Officer
- Paula Kully, Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer
- Sandi Nelson, Corporate Officer
- Andrew Hicik, Financial Officer and Director of Corporate Services
- Tim Tanton, Director of Development Services, Engineering, Parks & Works
- Brett Mikkelsen, Fire Chief

Together these individuals lead a team of some 80 Town Staff and over 30 Volunteer Fire Fighters to provide a remarkable range of services to the public.

I want to take a moment to thank members of the previous Council for their service to the community: Steve Price, 2 terms as Councillor and 1 term as Mayor; Tim Chad, 7 terms as Councillor; Mervyn Lougher-Goodey, 3 terms as Councillor; Cam McLennan and Erin Bremner-Mitchell, each with 1 term as Councillor.

Earlier in the agenda this evening, I mentioned that citizen appointments to several committees will be made in December for 2019. I want to now recognize and thank the citizens who served on these committees during the past year. Thank you to Don Carscadden, Chair of the Advisory Planning Commission, and to the other citizens who served with you. Thank you to Brian Losie, Chair of the Economic Development Commission, and to the other citizens who served with you. Thank you also to the citizens who served on the Peninsula Recreation Commission, the Ports & Waterfront Infrastructure Committee, the Saanich Peninsula Water & Wastewater Commissions, and the two Victoria Airport Authority Committees. Your service to the community is appreciated.

As I think of about the future for the Town of Sidney, several words come to mind:

Community, Vision, Values, Change, Balance, Engagement, Collaboration, Respect, Pride.

For a many years I thought of our community in terms of people, what they do, and their needs and wants: residents (children, youth, families, seniors, homeowners, renters), business (business owners, their employees, commercial property owners), visitors (family and friends who visit or tourists from around the globe), and the many, many community organizations (groups of people with a purpose in the community).

While this framework is somewhat helpful, all towns and cities can be seen through this lens and it is missing something.

In recent years, I have found a more meaningful idea of community and that is, “what is our sense of place”? How do we collectively have a strong identity and character connected with our place? What do we collectively value? What gives us our sense of community pride?

Answering these questions brings out the uniqueness of our community – what makes us special. I won’t try to answer with a long list, so here are a few: The W̱SÁNEĆ People. The Salish Sea. Our diverse economy including many commercial and recreational marine activities; the downtown business district - the envy of many; our West Sidney industrial and technology companies, with several on the global stage. Part of our economic prosperity comes with being in a transportation hub: BC and Washington State Ferries, numerous marinas, the Victoria Airport and related aviation activities, tourism. Very important to us is the high quality of our cultural and recreational life, which is enriched by numerous organizations - including the Mary Winspear Centre, ArtSea Community Arts Council, Peninsula Celebrations, Sidney Sister Cities, Panorama Recreation and many others. We have great amenities to enjoy along our waterfront and in many of our parks ... and I could go on.

When my wife Daphne, our 10-year old daughter Emily, and I moved to Sidney in 2001, we felt a strong sense of place in Sidney. And that was before the Mary Winspear Center had opened. Before the Pier Hotel development led to the larger Beacon Park, a bandshell, and the Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea. Before the substantial improvements to the waterfront walkway, and new amenities in several parks. Before the SHOAL Centre was built or the second pool at Panorama. Before numerous new community events started, such the Sidney Fine Art Show, Family Day in Sidney and others. Our family has certainly noticed how our *sense of place* became noticeably better over the past 17 years.

The largest changes in our community over the last 3 years have involved development activity, which has been the busiest in Sidney’s history. During this time more than a dozen larger developments in the downtown or nearby residential areas have been approved. Only a few have been completed, some are near completion, some have recently started, and several, including three 6-story downtown developments, are approved and have yet to begin construction.

Many in the community feel the scale and pace of this development activity has and will have some unintended consequences for our sense of place. I am confident the new Council you have elected will determine the best ways to engage the community, to discuss our shared values, to renew our vision, and to review our Official Community Plan – the OCP – appropriately.

Reviewing the OCP is a complex challenge for a community like Sidney to undertake. Fortunately, we are not starting from scratch. Several initiatives have been underway in recent years. A high-level Downtown Waterfront Vision was prepared; a Master Parks Plan is underway; a Downtown Streetscape and Urban Design Standards study needs to be implemented; the West Sidney Local Area Plan needs to be completed; a review of the Downtown Local Area Plan, which includes development guidelines is part of the mix; transportation, transit and parking need to be considered; a housing strategy is a priority; we want to ensure our economic vibrancy; the Town’s Climate Action plan should be reviewed. Believe it or not - this is not a complete list, but it does give an excellent picture of the significant impact your local government has in everyone’s daily lives.

An OCP review and each of the components I mentioned need to be undertaken while Town Staff maintain the high level of day to day service in all departments. The Parks department maintains Sidney’s 28 parks, 17 beach accesses and the downtown streetscape. They keep our Town beautiful and we want that to continue. The Town Engineering and Works departments have been involved in 72 capital projects for infrastructure replacement during the last year. Water, pipes, wiring, roads, sidewalks – we expect that to be maintained as well. I mentioned the record number of development permit applications for some 3 years now, which has kept our Planning Department going full tilt.

Your new Council, which has its first formal day on the job starting tomorrow, has two large tasks ahead. The first is to maintain the usual Town business through public Council meetings and other meetings associated with our committee appointments. The second is to start the strategic plan process and begin setting priorities for 2019 and beyond. We need to find the right balance among the long list of priorities. Underpinning nearly all the choices that Council will make is maintaining fiscal responsibility for the hard-earned taxes that you, the residents and business, pay each year.

I know my colleagues and I are eager to get started and we look forward to serving our community well for the next four years!

We all appreciate you coming this evening. We’re pleased to offer refreshments and look forward to meeting you.