



Town of Sidney – Mayor’s Address
2017 Organizational Meeting of Council
Monday, December 4th, 2017 – 7:00 pm

Good evening everyone and welcome to Council’s Annual Organizational Meeting for 2017. This is the time of year that we take a look back at what has happened over the past year and look forward to the next.

On behalf of Sidney Council, I would like to begin by, once again, recognizing the Towns’ long service award recipients:

- Mike Kimber - Crew Chief, Underground Services
- Cheryl Wingerter – Financial/ Admin Assistant
- Greg Collins - Purchaser/Inventory Controller
- Adriano Sumberac – Forman, Surface Infrastructure
- Laurie Davis - Gardener
- Alison Verhagen – Manager of Planning
- Mike van der Linden - Manager of Environmental Services & Engineering
- Shawn Ingham – Administrative Assistant
- And Melanie Bogusz – Development & Administrative Coordinator

Thank you all – we couldn’t do it without you.

Having served on Sidney Council for nine years, with the last 3 as Mayor, I recognize that the Town’s hard working staff greatly contribute to making this community one of the best in the province. I know that I speak for all of Council when I say, that we sincerely appreciate all that you do for the Town as an organization and for Sidney as a community.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the Town’s volunteer committee members who give so freely of their time and professional expertise. Your willingness to share your knowledge and participate in your local government is invaluable to us and to the greater community.

Looking back over 2017 - it was a ground breaking year for Sidney on many levels.

To begin with, we literally broke ground on the new seismically sound emergency safety building. This much needed, new facility will house the Fire Hall, BC Ambulance, Emergency Operations Centre and a training tower.

We have decided to sell the site where the current fire hall stands along with the adjoining parking lot in order to offset the cost of the new building.

You only have to look around to see the many other new developments happening – year to date we saw 63 new development proposals and 308 new permits issued with a total building permit value of over \$34 million. This is slightly down from 2016 but still indicates a strong economic and development climate in our community.

Perhaps one of the efforts that I am particularly proud of is the continued focus by our Town on fostering a strong and positive relationship and partnership with our First Nations neighbours. I have continued to engage in meaningful dialogues with the local Band Chiefs that are based upon a foundation of honour, openness, transparency and respect.

Council embraced 2017 as a year of planning and visioning for the future. Through significant public consultation and community involvement we completed several key policy documents; including:

- The Downtown mixed use & multifamily density review
- The Downtown waterfront vision
- The Westside local area plan
- Review and adoption of a new Parking and Loading Bylaw
- And the Parks Master Plan is in its final draft.

An example of the type of interesting initiatives that resulted from just one of these plans is the very popular lawn chair pilot project in Beacon Park. This was a recommendation that came out of the Waterfront Vision, and although minor in cost and scope, it was a huge success.

Although we are a relatively small community, Sidney is forward thinking and often ahead of the curve when it comes to embracing new technology and ideas. A good example of this is the Modo car sharing program that we signed on to this year. Our involvement in this innovative program is just one of the ways the Town is working toward addressing the issues of transportation and parking. Another area of focus that the Town has been a leader in is the establishment of a number of EV Charging stations throughout the Town. In fact, just recently, the Town, in partnership with BC Hydro committed to placing a new Level 3 fast charger in the Town’s parking lot just to the south of the Visitor Centre.

2017 was also an exceptional year of celebration as we recognized the 50th Anniversary of Sidney’s incorporation as a town and the 150th Anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

We began the year with a special afternoon tea on New Year’s Day followed by over 20 new events and initiatives as part of Sidney Celebrates Canada 150.

This included events such as:

- The Paint the Town Red and White Street Party
- A special Comic Book Superheroes exhibit at the Sidney Museum which reportedly saw the highest number of people that the Museum has ever experienced during May and June
- A Children’s Carnival
- The Sidney Lawn Bowling Club hosted a series of Canada 150 tournaments
- The SHOAL Centre coordinated an event which included the planting of a commemorative tree
- Of course Sidney Days and Canada Day were bigger and brighter than ever and I have been told by many that the Fireworks show this year was the best ever seen
- The Sidney BIA truly outdid themselves with the annual sidewalk sale which included street vendors, artisans, games for the kids and a beer garden
- The Sidney Concert Band celebrated their 30th anniversary with a special performance in Beacon Park
- We saw the Grand Opening of our brand new skatepark in Tulista Park including the installation of Ollie the bronze skateboarding bull dog which was purchased from the Sidney Sculpture Walk

through fundraising efforts led by Kenny Podmore. Since its opening, the skatepark has been consistently busy and has added to this family recreational area of the community

- The Legion honoured their veterans at a special Canada Day Luncheon where veterans were presented with Canada 150 medals
- The RCMP created a Challenge Coin in honour of the 150
- And Sidney commissioned the beautiful Welcome Figure carving that now stands in Beacon Park looking out over the Salish Sea. The pole was carved in the Coast Salish style by local artist Perry LaFortune and his brother Tom.

As a result of Canada 150, three events proved to be so popular that they have been taken on as annual events.

- The Vancouver Island Comic Con attracted 2,500 people of all ages to Sidney. The event was so well received that the Sidney BIA has taken it under their wing.
- Beacon Park was a sea of red and white as the wildly popular Dinner en Rouge took place. The event was so well received that the Mary Winspear Centre has taken it on in 2018
- The last event of the season was the first ever Sidney Seaside 10K run hosted by the Town of Sidney and organized by Front Runners. The event was a huge success and has also become another annual event that we plan to grow

These events and initiatives brought our community together in a way that made us all proud and which created lasting legacies and memories.

On a personal note, 2017 has ended with a new challenge for me as I was elected as the Chair of the CRD. I am looking forward to this role and to working with elected officials throughout the Capital Region.

Moving forward, our priorities for 2018 were set out during our recent review of the strategic plan. The full document can be viewed on the Town’s website but I want to share some of the highlights with you.

- We plan to work towards the extension of the crown lease and sublease with the new Port Sidney Marina owner and implement the divestiture of the breakwater. (I would like to add that Port Sidney Marina was purchased in 2016 by Mill Bay Marine Group who have been very engaged in the community. By working with other community organizations and the Town, they have aided in attracting the 2018 National Standup Paddle Board Championships to Sidney.)
- We will initiate a phased approach for the employee parking lot south of Mary Winspear. This parking lot will also accommodate overflow for events at the Winspear Centre.
- Development of attainable workforce housing
- Completion of the parks master plan
- Completion of the community safety building
- Implementation of the downtown public realm design standards with a focus on public realm, including streets, sidewalks, underground infrastructure and plaza space
- Reay Creek remediation
- Implementation of Provincial flood hazard management guidelines
- Develop an urban forestry management strategy
- And incorporate the West Sidney Local Area Plan into the Official Community Plan

As an elected official, it is inspiring to see the plans we have set out as a Council come to fruition. We realize that our exemplary town staff and input from our residents are what makes this possible and ensures we are creating a community for everyone.

2018 is also a municipal government election year with voting day taking place on Saturday, October 20th.

In closing, I must recognize the commitment of Sidney’s volunteer base which is surely the envy of the Island. No matter what the occasion, these committed volunteers can always be counted on to ensure a service is provided, a task is completed or an event happens. This has never been more evident than during 2017 as our community celebrated Sidney’s 50th and Canada’s 150th.

Along with countless volunteer hours - many local organizations and businesses came forward and organized events or provided funding to ensure other events could happen. As a show of appreciation, and because this event was such a big success in 2017, Council has decided to host a New Year’s Day Tea. Tickets are now on sale at the Mary Winspear and I encourage everyone to attend and show your appreciation for the hard work that went into this past year.

On behalf of Sidney Council, I would like to wish everyone all the best of the Holiday Season. We invite you to join us after the meeting for a few refreshments to celebrate our community and this festive time of year.

Mayor Steve Price

