

## **CRD Board Chair's Address**

*December 12, 2018 – check against delivery*

Thank you to Christine and Florence for the blessing and land acknowledgment/welcome. It truly is appreciated as I could see on everyone's faces it means a lot to have your blessing here.

You will shortly hear that the topic of First Nations relations and Reconciliation is something that this Board is advancing through the strategic planning process. I'd like to tell you of a new, yet very simple initiative, I will ask us to implement as a Board even before that strategic work is finished.

Each month we start our meeting with an acknowledgement of the territory where we are meeting. I believe there is great value in doing this acknowledgement and would like to invite a different Director each month to provide this acknowledgement in order to show our collective and personal commitment to this acknowledgement. Working with staff, we have created 6 different forms of the acknowledgment that Directors can use.

Our First Nations Relations Committee Chair Director Tait has agreed to provide the January acknowledgement but if you would like to do a subsequent one, please let me know.

You will also note the seating arrangement is the same as our inaugural meeting. In November I liked the fact our seating was not based on political preferences of the Chair and several of you commented the same. However there will be a change in July. At our July meeting we will flip so the other side of the room can look out the window at our splendid region.

As Directors will all know, but the public may not, we have been working through our Strategic Planning process since the last Board meeting. We held a meeting at Royal Roads last month where we identified a myriad of strategic priorities that were then prioritized at our meeting earlier this month. We have engaged with former Metro Vancouver Board Chair, Greg Moore, who was also a long time mayor in the Lower Mainland to facilitate the process. We aim for a leaner strategy focused on key priorities rather than many action items.

Thus far the four main areas we have identified as priorities are

- Transportation
- First Nations Relations
- Housing
- Climate Change and the Environment

While many of us represent a municipality and have colleagues to consult with, three Directors at this Board are our sole political representatives in their community. The significant work our Electoral Area Directors do sometimes has been unheralded and the Directors have recently identified two Strategic Items that we will carry forward as a Board. They have asked the CRD Board to take on an advocacy role so that all residents of the CRD have access to high-speed internet.

The other initiative that we will hopefully improve with their guidance and leadership is that of assisting the EA Directors in their operations by undertaking a review of the way in which Electoral Areas operate with their commissions and consider new governance structures.

I would like to return to the topic of the Board's four main priority areas that have been identified thus far. Not surprisingly, a vast majority of us have said Transportation is a regional priority. I believe, and I suspect you do too, our residents are looking for leadership on this topic and I am confident we can work together to identify our collective needs and the way in which we wish to see transportation planning occur. We nearly made it last term thanks to members of the Board who were part of that process. This time I believe we will achieve success.

I have appointed Vice-Chair Blackwell from Langford to the position of Transportation Committee Chair. It is our intention to propose a sub-

regional process that will result in each of the three main areas of the CRD; the Westshore, Core and Peninsula hosting community meetings where both staff and politicians will talk with our constituents as to what they see as transportation priorities in their part of the region and how we should pursue a coordinated regional approach to access funding from other levels of government. However, the committee will first start with a review of the work done over the past 6 years in identifying a path forward on transportation.

The Province is watching and we need to demonstrate we can work together to identify our priorities and determine how we wish to govern transportation planning. I cannot stress it strongly enough; we must work together and find a way forward.

The topic of First Nations relations was explored and considered during the past Board's term and we were presented with the findings of the Task Force just before the election. The new committee, First Nations Relations, will be tasked with discussing and recommending the initiatives of the Task Force. If we truly want to see Reconciliation and progress in our relations with First Nations, it is time for us to take action and not just talk about better relations.

Acknowledging First Nations right to participate in decision-making that affects them is something that will require our willingness to find a

common ground built on respect, dignity and the opportunity for Indigenous self-determination. I thank this committee in advance for the work they will do on our behalf and I encourage us all to commit to supporting the work they bring to us as a Board.

The topic of affordable (or as I prefer to say 'attainable') housing is one every person in this room likely has spent hours working on. Our role as a Board is to continue to work together to ensure we can effectively work towards ending homelessness and create more affordable and attainable housing in our region. The leadership of the last Board, saw us create the Regional Housing First Strategy. That 30 million fund was then matched by the BC and Federal govts. These 90 million dollars are now being spent and we need to consider what is next for our region as this fund requires us to be building these units by 2021.

The recent announcement of nearly 500 units in Langford and Sooke is life-altering for the 500 families who will access these homes and continue to live in our region; some having the first home they can call their own.

Any level of government that does not prepare for climate change and try to limit it is not doing its future citizens any justice. That is why we collectively must continue to acknowledge and support the plans the CRD that we have created to adapt and mitigate the effects of our

actions. When difficult decisions come before this Board where we are tested, we must have the courage as a Board to do what is right for this planet.

I want to transition to discussing a couple of committee changes I am implementing. When the previous Board recommended the creation of a First Nations Relations Committee it would have resulted in us having 9 standing committees if we did not readjust committees.

Like you, I am committed to seeing our organization work smarter and not longer wherever possible and I believe we can demonstrate this through the combining of the Finance and Governance committees into one new committee whose Terms of Reference will consider both areas in their deliberations. Staff were receptive to the idea and many of you have expressed your support for this change.

The other amalgamation of committees is the new Parks and Environment committee. This committee will have the task of dealing with issues such as our Regional Parks, Climate Change and Solid Waste. One item the new committee will face is developing recommendations for the Board to consider regarding the highly successful land acquisition fund. Since the fund started in 2000, the regional parks and trails system has grown from just over 8400 hectares to over 13,000 hectares. This expanding system helps protect the

environment and biodiversity while connecting an ever-increasing number of people with nature. This committee will review public survey results regarding future spending priorities for regional parks and consider whether to extend the fund, how to use those funds and what new parklands we may want to acquire.

While I have highlighted the combining of these committees, I want to ensure all Directors and members of the Public of the great importance I (working on your behalf) have placed on these other committees. All of our committees do important work.

The other committees remain intact and I have attempted to spread the leadership opportunities around. There are 16 Chair and Vice-Chair positions, 17 if you include the Arts Commission and we have 16 different people fulfilling these roles. Some of those members who are not appointed as chair or vice-chair have been appointed to external committees.

Before we get on to the work of this meeting, I wish to state that I am working with staff, who have been very supportive, to see us create a monthly memo that you can share with your colleagues back in your home constituencies.

I have heard the need from councillors around the region for greater communication from the CRD and we will be working on creating a document to provide you a high-level summary of the topical issues of each meeting. Expect your first memo later today or tomorrow detailing some of the topics we are working on in 2019 that were carried forward from the previous Board.

Thank you again for your support last month in electing me as Board Chair. I have appreciated your support and the efforts of staff to welcome and engage with me as I get to better know the organization.

I will end with a pledge ... to help you whenever you ask. I am serving at your pleasure. Let's get on with the meeting.