



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

MAYOR'S AND COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Report from: Councillor Lynda Hundleby
Subject: UBCM 2017 Conference and AGM, *Roots to Results*
Council Agenda: November 6, 2017

Recommendation:

That Council receive this report for information.

Background:

The Conference and Annual General Meeting Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) took place in Vancouver September 26 to September 29.

I was pleased to be a part of the Esquimalt delegation partaking of many of the available topics that Local Government officials could choose to attend. The whirlwind week was full of opportunities to listen and learn so I will limit my report to some of the highlights.

From my previous life as a pharmacist, I am very interested in the changes coming forward on the legalization of non-medical cannabis; hence my preference to attend two sessions on this topic.

I attended the pre-conference study session on Monday September 25 on *Legalized Cannabis in BC*. The Federal Government has announced that non-medical cannabis will be legal in Canada by July 31, 2018 through the legislation of Bills C-45 and C-46. While the federal government has its mandate, the province and the municipalities each have a role in managing its portion of this complex topic.

Under Bill C-45 provinces will decide how non-medical cannabis will be managed and distributed taking into account social aspects, economic aspects, including retail, distribution, and if there will be greater restrictions on personal cultivation.

Bill C-46 will be amended to include the laws in Canada around non-medical cannabis. I am hopeful that the legalization of the medical and non-medical use of cannabis can be clarified as the current situation is muddy indeed.

The forum discussion covered an overview of cannabis issues, provincial remarks and the public consultation announcement from the Provincial Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General; brief comments on the Federal Task Force Presentation of 2016 which provided guiding principles and values, noting that more research is needed as

well as a flexible framework; legal considerations for Local Governments; and finally a panel discussion about what is happening around non-medical cannabis in four areas of the province – cities of Victoria, White Rock, Nelson and the District of Fort St James.

We heard government's key issue is to keep cannabis away from children preventing possible brain damage, and to keep profits away from criminals by affecting the price.

Provincially the priority policy issues are: the establishment of minimum age, allowable amounts for personal possession, public consumption, drug impaired driving, personal cultivation, distribution options, and the retail model.

Written submissions based on the discussion paper at <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/BCcannabisregulation/> were due by November 1. We heard later in another session that the Province received 10,000 letters on the first day.

Once the Province has specified what municipalities will do, each community will be involved in finalizing its own bylaws around land use (zoning) and whatever else the senior governments would have us assist in. .

Overall the big question is – will we be ready by July 2018? Will the police be ready? Is there enough time to resolve the outstanding issues? And, Will there be adequate time for public education to raise awareness of the new rules and regulations? Time will tell.

I also attended the Provincial policy sessions with Ministers on the regulation of Non-medical cannabis. Ministers and staffers heard that local government politicians had many concerns; among them – the need for provincial dollars to manage local policing costs; protection of children regarding edibles; availability and standardization of cannabis, especially for edible products (brownies, lollipops, etc); municipal benefits along with the legalization of cannabis; provincial testing of homegrown cannabis; safe locations for public access; supply chain issues; purity, possible deliberate adulteration/contamination, and much more. Given all the concerns, many requested a delay in implementation.

A special forum for Mid-sized communities gave delegates an opportunity to hear how six municipalities have built effective economic, environmental, and First Nation partnerships to benefit all of their communities. In quick overviews delegates heard about Dawson Creek's Liquefied Natural Gas and transportation project. The old Sullivan mine in Kimberley has been recreated into a profitable sun farm now mining solar energy. In Salmon Arm a collaborative approach has birthed an innovative economic development approach to tourism. A cooperative venture in digital arts in Qualicum Beach has created a technology hub. In partnership with their local First Nation community Ladysmith successfully remediated their waterfront to the benefit of both communities; and Williams Lake managed a very successful physician recruitment campaign. With solid leadership, creative thinking, and public consultation, it was marvellous and truly inspirational to celebrate the economic and partnership successes in these communities that took years to develop. I like to think that our Township of Esquimalt will be among them as our visions come to fruition.

Along with the education sessions, I attended the Annual General Meeting of UBCM as well as the three resolution sessions, with some 150 resolutions, where delegates made recommendations to the UBCM Executive and the provincial government and federal governments. Most often resolutions take time for senior governments to process so

results are sometimes a long time coming. One of the late resolutions was the request to the Province to regulate campaign financing for the 2018 elections. However, so nice to see this late resolution (from Oak Bay's Councillor Kevin Murdock) be approved by delegates, and taken up by the Province in legislation tabled this last week. The process can and does work!

I was pleased to be able to attend a couple of special sessions in the Resource Breakfast series that was created to share the roles of rural and resource-based economies. Again we heard the theme of partnerships involving First Nations, all levels of government, associations, and resource sector leaders. These panel conversations helped to broaden my understanding and perspective of our amazing province as we listened to the energy sector highlights in Dawson Creek and forest sector highlights in Campbell River and Prince George.

Throughout the UBCM conference, there were many opportunities to network among delegates, provincial and municipal staffers, and Trade Show contributors.

As mayors, councillors, and staff each working in our own communities, I see the importance of tapping into the creativity, imagination, and inspiration of others around the province working in similar capacities with similar goals. Communities who have succeeded are only too happy to share their programs and insights with others. And we all benefit from that sharing and learning and new-found perspectives. It's a win-win.

Thank you to the Township for sponsoring my participation this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Hundleby