



# **CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT**

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## **MAYOR'S AND COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Report from: Councillor Meagan Brame

Subject: Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities  
Conference (AVICC)

Council Agenda: April 18, 2016

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The Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) Conference was hosted by Nanaimo this year and was held April 8 to 10<sup>th</sup>.

AVICC is always a great conference as it is smaller and very local. The Greater Victoria Region was well represented and it allowed for some strong networking and relationship building.

The convention started for some with a train ride through Nanaimo on the E and N rail line. It was amazing to see the excitement of the people who lined the track, waving and taking pictures of the train. During the conference there was a resolution on the Island Corridor Foundation and federal funding. It was to petition the Government of Canada to approve and release the \$7.5 million for capital works on the Victoria to Courtenay rail line in order for work to begin as soon as possible and ensure the future of rail based freight and passenger transportation between Victoria, Courtenay and Port Alberni; it was carried.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Chief Robert Joseph – Reconciliation Canada. Chief Joseph is a Hereditary Chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation who upholds a life dedicated to bridging the differences brought about by intolerance, lack of understanding and racism at home and abroad. His insights into the destructive impacts these forces can have on peoples' lives, families and cultures were shaped by his experience with the Canadian Indian Residential School system. In his talk Chief Joseph shares his journey of reconciliation, including his childhood experience at St. Michael's Residential School to leading a 70,000 person Walk for Reconciliation during the Year of Reconciliation in the City of Vancouver. He speaks about the important role of reconciliation in moving forward through trauma and will address the work that is being done across Canada to build meaningful relationships among Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians. In light of the release of the TRC Findings and Recommendations, it is critical for organizations, communities and local governments to take action and understand the importance of their role in building a new way forward and creating vibrant, resilient and sustainable communities.

Chief Joseph believes the will is there on all sides for reconciliation and that we are ALL Canadians. He feels there is some strong leadership in municipal government for moving forward towards reconciliation. Municipal leaders have the power to effect change. He believes this is the time to right relations, to reconcile; 7 out of 10 Canadians agree we need to reconcile.

The time for change is upon us and things are happening through courage and vision. Reconciliation is a two way street, not charity. We need to understand each other, create the space to have the dialogue and share our stories. Reconciliation begins with you, it won't be easy, we all will have to work hard to make it work, even when that seems tough to do.

Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development also spoke to the delegates. He spoke of the budget and how it was their 4<sup>th</sup> balanced budget, which means the Province ensures their triple A borrowing rating. He discussed how the Liberals have increased the local government grant program by 30 million and that they are investigating shared economy projects like Uber. They want to know what Uber is, where is the money going and does it have a benefit to British Columbians? The Province won't rush the process; they want to make sure they make good, solid decisions. The Province wants to know our thoughts on Uber, the good, the bad and otherwise.

I attended a workshop series that started last year called the Open Space Workshop. It is a place where people can go and have roundtable discussions on emergent issues. I chose to attend this workshop due to the emergent issue around parental rights for elected officials. At that workshop we discussed the gaps in the legislation and started a draft resolution that was completed and put on the floor as a "very" late resolution and I am happy to say it was passed unanimously. It was truly amazing how councils from all over the AVICC worked together to build this resolution and stood together in support. Some asked us why; the answer was – because it is 2016.

I spent a lot of time discussing sewage, amalgamation and clarifying Esquimalt's position on these areas. Many only knew what the media put out and it was nice to have some dialogue on what is really happening in our community.

As always, AVICC was a great experience and I was happy and proud to represent Esquimalt.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Meagan Brame