

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from the City of Nelson Council Meeting

May 6, 2019



Community Flag and Banner Policy Repealed

Due to the controversy around community banners and the need for Council to remain neutral with its policies, Council decided to repeal the Community Flag and Banner Policy that allowed local non-profit organizations to apply to have the City hang their banners and raise their flags to promote local events. Banner and flag applications that had already been approved for this year will be honoured. However, effective May 10, 2019, the City is no longer accepting banner or flag applications. Moving forward, Council will utilize the banner space to promote City initiatives and events, such as Fire Prevention Week or the Green Home & Energy Show.

Curling Club

In order to ensure curling can continue this fall, Council is providing funding in the amount of \$30,000 to the Nelson Curling Club (NCC) to refurbish the ice plant. This will be funded from the City's Community Works (Gas Tax) fund on the condition that a lease agreement for the City owned curling facility be negotiated with NCC that allows other community groups to utilize the facility. Second, Council directed staff to meet with staff from the Regional District of the Central Kootenay (RDCK) to explore the RDCKs involvement in the operation of the facility, similar to the Civic Arena. Finally, Council will create a task force to identify opportunities to better utilize the current Nelson Campus recreation facilities, including the curling facility. The NCC has also reached out to the rural directors requesting financial support as many of its members are from the rural area. This is the first time in its 108 year history that the NCC has had to ask the City or RDCK for a grant for capital upgrades or ongoing operations

Tax Rate and Five-Year Financial Plan Bylaws Adopted

After a series of all-day budget meetings over the past 6 months, a live streamed public open house and strategic planning workshop, City of Nelson Council has adopted the 2019-2023 Five-Year Financial Plan and 2019 Tax Rate bylaws. Some highlights from the Five Year Financial Plan include a continued focus on infrastructure renewal and the delivery of core services. New funding has been provided to increase staffing for the Public Works department to meet the growing demands of our expanding city; Federal grant funding of \$125,000 which will cover 82% of the wages and benefits of a new Climate Change Coordinator position for a two year

period; a new Emergency Management Planner position to expedite the City's emergency preparedness; funding for a temporary summer Beat Officer, funding for the Nelson Innovation Centre and additional funding to the Cultural Development Officer to write and secure more grants.

The hard work of this and previous Councils and its rural partners in the RDCK has resulted in two positive developments for 2019. The RDCK Regional Park service (which had previously only funded rural parks) will provide \$350,000 in funding to the City of Nelson to assist in the funding of the operations of Lakeside Park, Lakeside playing fields and the waterfront pathway. The City's rural partners also agreed to the City's proposal to reduce the City contribution to the Regional Emergency Management ("EM") Program by \$74,000 annually, to allow those funds to be redirected to the City EM program.

Although there is no increase in the City of Nelson portion of property taxes, the average 14.89% increase in the residential assessment values for 2019 has resulted in tax shifting, in particular for school taxes. This shift has resulted in a 9% increase or \$73 in school taxes on a \$453,000 assessed home, which is now the average value of a single family dwelling in Nelson. On a positive note, school taxes for Nelson businesses will be reduced and will result in a property tax reduction for many businesses. For the average residential home in Nelson, the municipal property taxes for 2019 are estimated to be \$1,654 or \$138 per month. Depending on an individual property's assessment increase, compared to the average assessment increase in the City as a whole, different properties will see higher or lower property tax increases.

Water, sanitary and hydro rate increases are at or near inflationary levels.

Diversion of Organic Waste

At the April 23, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting, the RDCK presented its Organics Waste Diversion Strategy and requested that the City partner with the RDCK by agreeing to implement a city-wide curbside collection program for organics. The new central facility and curbside collection program is projected to be in operation by 2022 depending on securing grant funding. Diverting organics is estimated to reduce GHG emissions from City residents and businesses by 869 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Adding organic collection to the city's curbside collection program is estimated to increase the cost of collection almost three fold from \$66 per household annually to \$190+ per household annually.

Council put a number of conditions on its participation in this program including: negotiating a separate service for organic waste diversion; that the program will be funded by user fees only and not taxation; tipping fees for municipal solid waste will be increased and taxation reduced to move to a more user pay system; that any incentives to rural residents are provided to city residents and that this is funded by user fees not taxation; and finally, that the City will explore an opt out option for city residents who can demonstrate they are diverting organics from the waste stream. The City included funding in its 2019 financial plan to pilot alternative organics diversion strategies.

Council Extras This Week....



Councillor Janice Morrison took time out of her week to plant her Council planter. Nelson City Council are promoting sustainability through the planting of vegetables and other edibles this season. Be sure to come visit City Hall in the coming weeks to see what "sprouts" up.

Freedom of the City



Mayor Dooley presented the Kootenay Kiltie Pipe Band with the Freedom of the City on May 4th, 2019. David Hogg received the award on behalf of the band.

The Freedom of the City, as selected by Council, is bestowed upon individuals or groups to honour their contributions to the City of Nelson.

The Kootenay Kiltie Pipe band are celebrating their 100th anniversary this year.