

Lake Country BC CAO

Weekly journal about the activities of the District of Lake Country in the Okanagan, British Columbia, Canada

Friday, September 10, 2010


➤ Efficient Garbage Collection

At the last Council Meeting on September 7, Council discussed a proposal for a more efficient garbage collection. After a lengthy and healthy discussion, which included all Council members present, District staff and the Regional District manager who is in charge of this project, Council decided to approve the improvements in principle and to defer the matter of funding to the budget process. Not everybody was in agreement and some valid concerns about the system were raised. There was a big article in the Kelowna Daily Courier about this topic, which can be found at http://www.kelownadailycourier.ca/top_story.php?id=292967&type=Local.

I'll try to summarize the issue and provide the information we gave Council.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan, in concurrence and with the approval of the four member municipalities (Kelowna, Lake Country, Peachland and West Kelowna), implemented an automated and diversified garbage collection system for the whole Central Okanagan. Each household was provided with a cart including a radio transmitter-receiver called RFID that can be read wirelessly with a handheld reader. So each cart belongs to a particular household/owner. After a few months of garbage collection, it was noted that people still throw the wrong garbage in the wrong bins and the manual sorting of the 'contamination' (a fancy

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word for the wrong mixing issue) is costly (in fact very costly) and inefficient. The 'offenders' are advised and life goes on.

The words 'costly' and 'inefficient' are not a good mix, especially when it comes down to taxpayers' dollars. So the Regional District staff found out that by expanding the RFID system or, in other words, expanding the capacity of the chip to include more data, and specifically the type of garbage dumped in the bin, the contamination management can become cost effective and efficient for two reasons: 1) the annual cost of the technological expansion is about \$1.60 per cart (yes, you read it right: one dollar and sixty cents); and 2) contamination is spotted on site and 'offenders' are advised immediately (I believe the contaminated bin would not be unloaded of its 'cargo').

Additional immediate benefits from expansion of the RFID system include the ability to do targeted education with individual residents. Past Waste Reduction Office education campaigns have been done through the media with the hope that the targeted minority will be reached. This approach has been ineffective in addressing recent issues including yard waste contamination and carts in bike lanes both of which required door-to-door education with individual residents in order to show improvement. In both examples the data necessary to do targeted door-to-door education was unavailable and the message was addressed to entire streets with bike lanes and the entire region in the case of yard waste contamination.

Finally, the expanded RFID system puts the technology in place for implementing a user pay system where households are charged based on how frequently their cart is tipped. This type of system is more equitable than the current flat-rate system. Where it has been implemented, the user pay model has proven to result in significant waste reduction efforts and behaviour changes. The realization of a user pay model would require additional investments in District financial and customer billing systems to

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accommodate the change.

The concern is about privacy. How far would we go with the 'big brother' technology and are we sure it would be used properly? Staff feel comfortable with the this solutions and ensure that it will be properly and effectively utilized. However, at the end of the day, the decision remains with the policy makers.

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→ Water and More Water

It seems that water is getting a lot of attention these days, and rightly so. First, there was a BC Water Symposium which focused on creating a Water Science strategy. The symposium was held concurrently in Prince George (UNBC), Kelowna (UBC-O), and Victoria (UVic). The purpose of this event was information and knowledge translation and exchange as it pertains to the sustainable management of water and resources. At the symposium, I heard clearly that:

- We need to act now and scientists and policy-makers need to work together before it is too late; and
- First Nations knowledge and science of water needs to be taken into account when it comes to water conservation and use.

I was impressed by what Chief Keith Matthews of the Simpcw First Nation had to say. He said that First Nations have a sacred connection with water and have had since time immemorial; that First Nations have protected this critical resource through traditional conservation practices; that, in order to conserve water properly, people need to understand the natural

and spiritual laws of water; that water is a way of life and we can't live without it. I was also impressed by Dr. Hans Schreier who clearly said that we have an archaic legal system dealing with water resources and conservation; that we need new policies allowing conservation rather than waste; and that water metering is absolutely essential to conservation (Canada is the country that uses the most water in the world and pays the least).

Then the Okanagan Basin Water Board had its Annual General Meeting and I was shocked to learn some simple usage comparisons. Did you know that in Israel the average consumption of water per individual is 135 liters per day? And in France is 150 liters per day? It seems a lot. But get this: in Canada the individual consumption average is 329 liters and in the Okanagan is a whopping 675 liters per day. Something is wrong with this picture. Well, France and Israel have universal water metering and have had it for decades, like most European countries. What are we waiting for?

In Lake Country we are dealing with many water issues. The Oyama Boil Water Advisory is on and will stay on until the new water system is constructed, which may take a few years. Our Water Master Plan is near completion and our staff and Water Advisory Committee have worked hard to come up with recommendations and options. Still, more work needs to be done and we hope to have recommendations for Council in November. Finally we have prepared a Water Primer, which we are going to give to the public and which we hope is going to help with water conservation efforts.

As I mentioned before, it is a tough topic but we all need to work together on this. Water is a precious resource and our future depends on it.

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Friday, September 3, 2010

Upcoming Council Meeting - September 7

Council will hold a regular meeting on September 7 at 7pm. The agenda is not as heavy as the last two meetings but has some interesting items for discussion by Council.

The Director of Development Services submitted a report on the School District direction to apply school site acquisition charges within its boundaries, which include Lake Country. The province requires school districts to consider the need for a School Site Acquisition Charge as part of their ongoing capital planning. Money collected goes to the purchase of new school sites within the district. New school sites are needed to accommodate the demand created by community growth. The rate is based on forecast growth rates within the school district and the anticipated cost of new school sites. Lake Country has a deficit of classroom space of approximately 6%; this is projected to reach 21% over the next ten years. The School District is proposing a rate of \$605 for each new development unit constructed within the school district area. Staff is not supportive of the proposed formula as it does not pass on land cost savings to individual municipalities. Rather it provides a standard charge throughout the school district irrespective of land costs in local areas. Also, the charge does not recognize the surplus of school sites within Lake Country.

Council is also receiving and possibly approving the report on its strategic priorities. The strategy for the rest of the term was named "Thinking Forward" and is based on 12 objectives approved by Council in 2009. The report can be found at the following link: [http://lakecountry.civicweb.net/FileStorage/63025E0CF54B4F8E95E6957685DA7FD7-Council%](http://lakecountry.civicweb.net/FileStorage/63025E0CF54B4F8E95E6957685DA7FD7-Council%20Strategic%20Plan%202010-2012.pdf)

20Strategic%20Priorities%20Report.pdf It is an interesting report and outlines the major priorities Council and staff are working on. Some of the recommendations and priorities are already being implemented, such as the inclusion of a Strategic Priorities Chart in all council packages. The Chart will be reviewed and updated quarterly by Council and staff and update reports will be provided to the public. The first update will be done on September 21.

Also, the 6-month financial results report will be in front of Council. The budget is in good shape thanks to the good work of our Finance department. You can view the report at the following link: <http://lakecountry.civicweb.net/FileStorage/1AB8B26CCC5B46269C3017BCA8BDC2CC-Residential%20Curbside%20Waste%20Reduction%20RFID%20System.pdf>

Finally, the Engineering Department has submitted a report on the expansion of the residential curbside waste collection radio-frequency identification (RFID) system. The Regional District and member municipalities have made an initial investment of almost \$300,000 in the RFID system through purchasing and equipping all collection carts with RFID tags, purchasing readers and creating a database of addresses and inventory of corresponding carts. Expansion of the RFID system would yield a number of immediate benefits in the ability to identify the time and date each cart is tipped, which cart [garbage, yard or recycle] was tipped, and the address to which the cart is assigned. Drivers will have the ability to immediately flag offenses such as contamination or overloaded carts and education can be targeted to individual residents. Ultimately, the expanded RFID system could enable implementation of a user pay system where households would be charged based on how frequently their carts are tipped. Staff are recommending that Council approve the expansion of the system at a cost of between \$1.50 to \$1.70 per household per year.

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Posted by LakeCountryBC at [9:34 AM](#) [9 comments](#)



Friday, August 27, 2010

Municipal Bylaws: Enforcement, Compliance or Service?

It is summertime and the Okanagan is thriving with tourists and recreational activities. The weather is beautiful and our orchards are ripe with Mother Nature's goodness. Our lakes offer an amazing amenity for those who come from other areas and try to enjoy what we have all year around. But with that, some trouble comes too. Lack of parking, noise, unsightly premises and other issues cause frictions that can become hotter than the weather we are enjoying these days.

The local newspapers picked on Lake Country's bylaw system of enforcement to make an issue of it and hammer on a seasonal diatribe that is increasing and will continue to increase with the rising and well established popularity of beautiful Okanagan Valley in beautiful British Columbia.

Until a few months ago, Lake Country did not have a Bylaw Enforcement Department. This service was provided through a contract agreement with the BC Commissionaires. Unless you have in-house officers, there are limitations to what can be accomplished through contracted services. The decision was made by Council to bring this service in-house and begin a more organized approach to enforcement.

We can discuss Bylaw Enforcement for ages. It is indeed a complex topic. I am not going to do that. However, I wish to clarify some basic points and

foundational principles that, I hope, can bring some understanding of this service.

Local Governments have the authority to adopt bylaws for a number of issues for which they have jurisdiction. Most of these bylaws have enforcement provisions and the taxpayers expect those provisions to be applied. This is a reasonable expectation but it cannot be done every time.

First of all, the reason why we have bylaws is to regulate public behaviour and to accomplish peace and order in our community (I did not say society because that is a responsibility of other levels of government, and laws exist to that effect). So each community has different regulations about same or similar behaviours. For instance noise issues are different in Kelowna, or for that matter Peachland and other municipalities, than in Lake Country. Enforcement regulations are also different because the bylaws differ as well.

Because the primary purpose of bylaws is to have peace and order in the community, the effect that we wish to obtain is compliance. In other words, if a local government decided to have any loud noise cease at 11pm every night and someone, either not knowing the bylaw or wanting to push the proverbial button, has a party that creates loud noise beyond that 11pm time limit, that local government final goal is to have that individual refraining from repeating that behaviour in the future. In fact, to cease the behaviour immediately.

The odds are that infractions happen every day and many times. The area under our jurisdiction is also fairly large (48 square miles) and we can afford only one (yes 1) Bylaw Officer. The rest can be easily guessed. We can only do what we can. So Lake Country's policy is that we first act if we receive a complaint. And we receive a number of them. The one and only officer has limited time and resources and is spread thin trying to respond

to complaints and investigate issues. He seeks compliance first and then, if after reasonable time is given compliance is not obtained, 'enforcement' is applied.

Enforcement can be done in a number of ways and because we brought this service in-house only recently, we are equipping ourselves with all the tools needed to make life easier to our Bylaw Officer in responding more effectively, timely and efficiently to bylaw infraction issues. I think that by next Summer will be more effective in the delivery of this service because the tools, or the majority of them, will be in place by then.

I also wish to clarify what Bylaw Enforcement is not.

1. It is not a way to solve a dispute between neighbours. If you have a grudge against your neighbour and you believe there is a bylaw infraction, chances are that it may not be so and our Bylaw Officer will tell you that. You will not be happy, but a civil dispute can only be dealt with civilly and through the courts. We can't give your neighbour a ticket because his fence line is within your property. It is not against our Zoning Bylaw or our Subdivision Bylaw.
2. Even if you have the right to go to Council and ask for leniency about a bylaw infraction you committed, Council can only deal with the bylaw or policy, not with the individual infraction. Bylaws are applied to all citizens, no exceptions. Those who commit an infraction have always an excuse. If you wish to fight it, again, you have legal recourse. But Council will politely listen but will not be able to ask the Bylaw Officer to reverse his decision.
3. Our Bylaw Officer is not a police officer. He does not work shifts, he does not deal with crime, and he does not deal with vandalism, altercations, drunks and so on. He only deals with municipal bylaws and those only. And he does it from 8:30 in the morning to 4:30 in

the afternoon. The RCMP has the authority to deal with municipal bylaws after hours. So, if there is excessive noise at night and you wish to have it dealt with immediately, you can call the police. But beware that they will put the call on a priority roster. If there is an accident or a crime happening, that will take precedence.

Now, one of the tools we are setting up is to have an Adjudication System which will provide a form of appeal of penalties applied for bylaw infractions. We are working on it and we hope to have it ready by the Fall.

In the meantime, please behave, and enjoy what is left of this beautiful summer.

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Oyama Water Quality Issues Addressed

In recent weeks we have received a number of inquiries from Oyama residents about the quality of their water and the Boil Water Notice in effect for their area. In particular, they wish to know when the Boil Water Notice will be lifted and what has been done to date and what is going to be done to improve and solve water quality issues in their area. In response to these inquiries, our Engineering Department has issued the following information:

"The District of Lake Country will be building a new \$5 million pipe line, reservoir and chlorination station in Oyama which will improve water quantity and quality to customers on the Oyama Lake Source, east of Wood Lake. In addition to water being sourced from Oyama Lake, as is

currently the case, a UV treatment system, pipe line and interconnect will be installed to draw water from Kalamalka Lake and supplement the Oyama Lake source. The design and planning of this project has started and is expected to be completed in stages by the spring of 2013. These upgrades are some ongoing steps towards meeting the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines and Interior Health Authority's filtration requirements.

Installation of the new reservoir and chlorination station is one of several actions undertaken to address ongoing drinking water quality issues. The District has been improving water infrastructure to the community on a priority basis, including improvements in quality monitoring and operations both in terms of our people and our systems. In addition, the District is in the process of completing a Water Master Plan which is expected to recommend preferred options this coming fall with a presentation to Mayor and Council in November 2010.

In the meantime, an ongoing Boil Water Notice on the Oyama Lake Source originally issued by the District and Interior Health Authority this spring, with renotification on May 20th and July 4th, remains and will continue to remain in effect at least until the Kalamalka Oyama Lake Interconnect project is complete. The District will be installing roadside signage to serve as notification for users entering the Boil Water area.

The District of Lake Country water system includes other water sources: Beaver Lake, Okanagan Lake and Kalamalka Lake all of which are currently on a Water Quality Advisory due to a turbidity rating of "Fair". Turbidity is a measure of how clear or cloudy the water is. The Coral Beach Water System (Okanagan Lake source) turbidity is rated as good and does not have an advisory.

The District of Lake Country advises that all customers in both the Boil Water area and the group of people at higher risk in the Water Quality

Advisory area to drink boiled water or a safe alternative. For further information please refer to the Engineering section of the District of Lake Country web site. www.lakecountry.bc.ca

For more information, contact the District of Lake Country: Greg Buchholz (Operations Manager) or Patti Hansen (Water Quality Technician) at 250-766-6677 or www.lakecountry.bc.ca or Interior Health at 250-549-5714 or www.interiorhealth.ca"

Posted by LakeCountryBC at 8:52 AM [9 comments](#)



Monday, August 23, 2010

➔ District Of Lake Country Strategy Document

As I previously remarked, Council has deemed it important to take a strategic approach to the delivery of services and programs to District residents.

In 2009, Council developed a Master Plan that articulates their long term development objectives. Council has committed to a strategic direction that will:

- Develop a strong sense of community
- Promote a positive community image
- Provide housing for all
- Encourage responsible economic development
- Build a comprehensive and integrated trail network
- Create a vibrant social and commercial town centre

- Protect and enhance the natural environment
- Foster diverse agricultural opportunities
- Encourage enjoyment of the unique lake resources
- Promote environmental stewardship
- Promote an active schedule of cultural and social events
- Develop a sustainable financial plan for servicing and growth

Strategic planning is primarily concerned with determining direction while strategic management focuses on implementing strategic directions. The District's Master Plan envisions a community that addresses and provides for the needs of residents now and into the future. Strategic plans are a means to an end, not the end itself. The result, while informative, needs to be translated into short-term priorities and actions, which is the focus of the District's Strategic Priority Report.

The Strategic Topic List was generated by both Council and staff from a long-list then short list of issues and opportunities facing the District of Lake Country. Council and Senior Staff identified their top ten items from the long list which they felt should be addressed during the workshop. The strategic topics selected for discussion focused on those deemed to require Council attention (versus primary operational).

In a previous blog entry, I identified the final list. I now wish to reiterate that those objectives are being followed up on and that Council will soon receive a report for a formal approval of those objectives. The report will also provide Council with two policies: the first one will be called 'Decision Making Guidelines', which will assist Council on how they come to

their decisions about the various items they discuss or are presented to them; the second one will be titled "Organizational Success Guidelines" and will provide direction on how to measure success and compare that to the significant effort and capacity put into our daily activities at District Hall.

If you are interested in a copy of this report, we will publish it online as part of an upcoming Council meeting. My target is to have this report ready for the September 7th Rwegular Meeting.

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Posted by LakeCountryBC at 3:43 PM [0 comments](#)



➔ Age-Friendly Town Hall Meeting

From Shane Cote', who is coordinating our Age-Friendly Community project:

We are going to be holding a town hall meeting for the Age-friendly Living Guidelines Project. On **Monday, September 27th, from 6-8pm**, at the Lake Country Municipal Hall, we will meet for two hours to talk about age-friendly planning in the area. I invite you to come out, however old you are, and share your opinions, thoughts and ideas about what age-friendly planning might mean for you now, and in the future.

In October, following the Town Hall Meeting, I will be conducting six focus groups with area residents. If you have two hours to spare, I'd love to hear what ideas you have for creating better connections with your neighbours, for how to access services and District amenities more easily, what kind of transportation works for you and what doesn't, what kinds of District events and communities you are part of, and where and how you might like to contribute even more to making Lake Country a wonderful place to live. The focus groups times vary; there is one offered every day of the week but Sunday, and occur in the morning, afternoon, and evening. I

hope to see some of you at these events -- don't worry though, you only need to come to one! Please feel free to print out the posters below and show them to your community groups, friends and family.

Focus Group Times (all will be held in the Carr's Landing Room at the Municipal Hall)

Friday, October 1, 1-3pm

Tuesday, October 5, 1-3pm

Thursday, October 7, 9-11am

Monday, October 11, 9-11am

Saturday, October 16, 10am -12 noon

Wednesday, October 20, 6-8pm

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