Black Press

Trolley dreams derailed by council

By **Kathy Michaels - Kelowna Capital News**
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Kelowna councillors moved through Monday's meeting at a rapid rate, covering off issues both quirky and practical in nature. Among the highlights were everything from roads to trolleys that could run along them, and meetings that will eventually shape the city.

Trolleys

Musings about an alternate, albeit relatively ancient, form of transportation were laid to rest Monday.

City council was presented with a report on the feasibility of a trolley service, and learned that it would be a costly, ineffective manner to move locals from point A to point B.

"The introduction of specialized heritage buses in Kelowna would pose a significant logistical challenge because the buses would require specialized parts and maintenance and can only be used on a single route," said Ron Westlake, director of regional services.

The estimated capital cost for two buses required for operation of a local downtown shuttle service would be in the range of $600,000 to $800,000 and the annual operating costs would be approximately $400,000.

The report also said a trolley service would do little to boost overall transit ridership and therefore would rank lower than other potential investments in high-need transit corridors.

Welcome Rutland

After a public backlash, city council pushed for an Official Community Plan meeting to be held in Rutland.

Initially three neighbourhoods were identified but the area where one-third of the population lives wasn't among them, much to the chagrin of Rutland neighbourhood groups who said they've been

losing out for some time.

"Now the final insult, you are in the final discussions of the OCP and city staff cannot even find the time or place to have an OCP open-house in Rutland," said Todd Sanderson, a Rutland businessman, founding member of the areas Business Improvement Area and candidate in the last council by-election.

"The population of our little area is closing in on 40,000. Rutland deserves better than what you, as a board of directors, are providing."

Council agreed and Mayor Sharon Shepherd said its members unanimously voted to get Rutland on the list.

Tracey Hulten, president of the nearby Black Mountain/Belgo Residents' Association called it welcome news, as it's bound to attract more people to come out and speak up.

"Amenities haven't kept pace with population growth," she said, pointing out her neighbourhood has grown 40 per cent in the last 10 years.

"So, I'd like to see residents in our area weigh in. Already our membership is polling area residents and I would love to see people take an active stance on the direction the community needs to take."

Residents are invited to attend an open house and provide their feedback on the updates to the plan either Feb. 17 at St. David's Presbyterian Church from 4 to 7 p.m., Feb. 19 at the Laurel Packinghouse from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Feb. 21 at Rutland Centennial Hall from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. or Feb. 23 at St. Paul's United Church, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The review of the Official Community Plan started in early 2008 and is expected to conclude in June with council consideration of a new community plan.

An opportunity to comment on the plan will also be available online beginning Feb. 17 or the City of Kelowna

Downtown Plan

Council received an update from city staff on the outreach strategy for the Downtown Plan.

A week-long urban planning exercise will be held June 7 to 13. Staff was directed to return to council before the planning exercise with a list of key stakeholders who will participate in the process, described in the planning profession as a charette.

Water board grants

Grant applications to the Okanagan Basin Water Board totalling $85,000 were approved by council.

If granted, the funds would be used to achieve water conservation and quality improvement measures.

McCulloch Road

Council approved a $1.17 million construction contract with TT Contractors Ltd. to upgrade a deteriorating section of McCulloch Road near the Canyon Creek development.

The city and developer have a partnering agreement to complete this work.

"I'm glad to see this come forward," said Coun. Andre Blanleil. "This is a popular road."

Coun. Robert Hobson pointed out that while the improvements are welcomed, he hopes users don't mistake the enhanced section to mean the whole road has had a facelift.

"I hope people don't get lulled into thinking the road is safe all the way to the trestles," he said.

Tommy Awards

Last weekend the Okanagan branch of the Canadian Home Builders' Association held its annual awards ceremony and builders throughout the Valley got a nod for a job well done.

"We have to be proud as a city that there are so many great buildings being built," said Mayor Sharon Shepherd, listing everything from green buildings to social housing as cause to be proud.

And the winners are:

Residential Development of the Year: Ledingham McAllister—Waterscapes

Residential Renovator of the Year: Gord Turner Renovations

Multi- Family Builder of The Year: Ledingham McAllister—Waterscapes

Single Family Home Builder of The Year: Small Volume Frame Custom Homes

TOMMIE 2010 Judges' Award: George Schluessel Real Estate Investments Ltd—White Spirit

Home of The Year: Quiniscoe Homes Ltd.—Villa Gran Sasso

For the full list go to http://www.chbaco.com.

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