

Mayor's Message February 2015

One of many good reasons to live in Gibsons is the opportunity to enjoy more than one spring each year. One day, several layers of clothing are required when the dog insists on a walk; the next, warm sunny weather sees autumn's bulbs sending up bright green spears, and it seems possible to believe the cold, damp days and occasional flurries are behind us for another year.

To me, that is one of the best things about serving with Gibson's Council, as well: each meeting, indeed each discussion, heralds new beginnings, even though logic would suggest the possibility of a squall or two ahead.

Something that is growing nicely in our town, and encouraging to us, as your municipal leaders is the level of citizen engagement. Our Facebook page has seen a threefold growth in friends; visits to our website have increased significantly; our newsletter has attracted many more subscribers; and more people are coming out to Council meetings.

Procedure Bylaws are required under the Community Charter and ensures open and transparent governance. At Committee of the Whole in January, an amended Council Procedure Bylaw was presented, intended to provide Council with a more effective meeting management tool. Council is looking to ensure more efficient and effective decision making process and at the same time improve the way we engage our citizens. Since its inception in 2004, the Bylaw has not been reviewed, despite being identified as a priority by previous Councils.

Inquiries offer an important way for the public in attendance to seek clarification on an agenda item; they are not intended as a means of public engagement. The bylaw will come back to Council in February, with the clear goal of enhancing the effectiveness of Council meetings and decision-making. During the process, Council will be considering other opportunities to engage our residents more effectively.

Many important decisions lie ahead of us this year, and your opinions as citizens is valued. Please let us know how you would prefer to provide those opinions – through email, Facebook or our website, an online survey, or perhaps by engaging with us at a booth at the mall. We look forward to your feedback, and we appreciate your interest in local municipal affairs.

In closing, may I suggest that as spring continues to tease us with its tentative approach, a stroll along the harbour is a healthy way to revel in our surroundings – and to benefit from the work of the Gibsons Landing Harbour Authority, honoured recently by the Small Craft Harbours division of Fisheries and Oceans Canada with the 2015 Pacific Region Harbour Authority Achievement Award. Congratulations to all involved in this achievement.