

January 2nd, 2015

Mayor's Message – Place Making

Last week, as we welcomed a new year, it reminded of the value of turning back in reflection – and even more so, of the value of looking ahead.

As a community, we can look back with pride on 2014. We have expanded the Gibsons Harbour, including a floatplane dock; our night market on Shaw Road has thrived; the installation of a new fiber optic service that was so well received by local residents; our new craft brewery, Persephone, recently won 'gold' for its stout, a tribute to local engagement in producing quality products; a beautiful new elementary school, build to Leed Gold standards, now welcomes our younger citizens to a fine learning environment; and our Public Market recently held a sold-out gala to help support its future expansion.

At the gala, I had the opportunity to share my thoughts on the value of creating a community gathering place, which in urban planning terms is referred to as "place-making". This concept focuses on creating public spaces as the heart of a community, contributing to the health, happiness and general well-being of a community. The Gibsons Public Market is such a place. Over the past several months I have observed how the Market has been able to bring together volunteers, donors, businesses and community organizations to contribute to and share in the use of this facility. The market reflects many of the attributes of place-making: community-driven; featuring function before form; inclusive; focussed on creating a destination; transformative; inspiring, and collaborative.

In the year ahead, as a community, we will have challenges and opportunities. The Town must of course focus on aspects of infrastructure such as roads, sewers and water. However, we must not lose sight of our social infrastructure – the patterns of our relationships with each other, which are enhanced by effective place-making. It is the quality of human interaction in our community that will determine the long term viability of our community. It takes a place to create a community, and it takes a community to create a place. I thank each of you who has helped contribute to such a place, in our Gibsons Public Market.