



Distribution of this newsletter

This newsletter is intended for residents of Ward 4, as shown on the map above. To economize, it is being distributed according to delivery zones of Canada Post, which do not coincide with ward boundaries. As a result, a limited number of households in Ward 2 may receive a copy. If so, please enjoy the information and note that the councillor for Ward 2 is Roxanne Carr, 780-464-8002.

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Strathcona County

www.strathcona.ca

Ward 4 April 2010 update

From your councillor



Councillor Peter Wlodarczak

Hello to all residents

Winter has come and gone and we certainly do welcome the warmer weather. Though we had a lot of snow before January, Mother Nature was kind to us after that and gave us some pretty good weather.

This year, I received very few calls over snow removal issues and the Priority 4 snow clearing of the residential streets certainly did help. Also, I think our changing the policy on collector roads within the subdivision really helped this year. There is nothing of course like warmer weather and the sun to keep the streets clean and we were certainly blessed with an abundance of that in the New Year. Now all we need are the streets swept.

It has been a very busy winter for me on a number of fronts. For some reason, my work on the Capital Region Board has been fairly hectic as of late and I have attended many meetings and

other ancillary responsibilities. At the end of March, the Province announced that they had accepted the final plan. Now, the Board will be in the process of implementing what was planned. If you want to read about what the Board has done, please visit their web site at www.capitalregionboard.ab.ca. I should warn you though that the reports are very big and it is a lot of reading.

All in all, I am most pleased with how the County has fared as a result of that process. It is my belief that throughout the process, the County has been recognized as a leader and our policies put us in good stead to face the future. Clearly, our Municipal Development Plan was highly regarded by the Board and we are well situated to move the County forward.

This is the last year of the term and the municipal election will be held in October. As a result, this will be my last newsletter to you. In election years, at a certain time, Council stops doing newsletters and newspaper articles. The reason for this is to ensure a level of fairness and equity during the election process.

I am always here to serve you and I look forward to hearing from you on any matters of concern. I consider service to the Ward residents my highest priority. May God bless each and every one of you and may He bless Strathcona County. My warmest wishes and have a safe and wonderful summer.

Ward 4 update

Proposed high voltage transmission lines

Since my last newsletter on this, the preferred route for the new transmission line has been selected and it is the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC), directly adjacent to the west side of Sherwood Park. The alternate route is the TUC on the west side of Edmonton. For construction to commence on such a line, the companies involved now have to take it to the Alberta Utilities Commission for a hearing. That hearing will determine if it will be built, if a portion will go underground etc.

Quite some time ago, Council passed a motion asking that the line be placed underground if it were to go through the County by schools or populated areas. The County website has detailed information on what is happening and what the County will be doing in relation to the proposed line. If you go to the County site at www.strathcona.ca, click on Departments, then click on Utilities then scroll down the page and on the left-hand side under Utilities you will see sub categories. Then click on Proposed Powerlines and you will get the detailed information referenced above.

The resident group RETA (Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans) is still very active in this area and you can get further information from their website as well, at www.reta.ca.



Budget 2010

Our budget process is now complete and this year there will be a zero per cent tax increase. Even so there are some nuances as to how property tax is collected, and I hope the attached from our web site will lend some insight into this issue.

A Property's Share of Tax changes each year, for a combination of two reasons:

There is a change in annual budget requirements for municipal operating, library operating, Seniors Management Services requisition and education requisition.

A particular property assessment (market value) changed more or less than the average. In the case of residential properties, average residential market values decreased by approximately 10 per cent (July 1, 2008 to July 1, 2009).

If your assessment decreased more than 10 per cent, you will generally have

a total 2010 tax increase less than the average. If your assessment decreased less than 10 per cent, or increased, you will generally have a total 2010 tax increase more than the average.

As you know, property tax is just one component of your tax bill. A significant portion of the tax we collect is the education tax for the province. We are required by law to collect it and pass it on. There will be an increase on your share of the education tax again this year.

The province has indicated that the requisition from all the municipalities in Alberta this year will be \$1.7916 billion. This is up \$69 million from last year, an increase of four per cent. Therefore, your property tax bill will increase this year solely based on the education tax. At this time, we do not know exactly what the cost will be to each property owner.

Highway 21 update

Highway 21 is now open, but there is still work to be done. The approaches on Baseline Road to 21 on both east and west sides are pretty bad. The province will have crews in here this coming construction season to finish off the work. They will also be doing their plantings in the right of way. The provincial engineer responsible

for the project has assured me that the province will be doing another noise study. He is not exactly sure of the timeline of that study and he has indicated it will likely be done sometimes this summer, after the completion of the work. Please be assured that as soon as I am aware of that information, I will relay it to you.

Communities in Bloom

The Communities in Bloom program is looking for volunteers. Volunteers maintain plantings in public areas throughout the County. If you are interested, please call Cliff Lacey at home: 780-417-6661 or on his cell: 780-893-6663

Hospital

I still have no further news on the hospital. We are still told that there is \$44 million in the provincial budget to commence construction this spring and we are told it is going to start. We have also been told that the first phase of the construction will see an emergency room-style facility built, much like the North East Health Centre in Edmonton. Further phases will be built in coming years, to make it a fully built out hospital. As it stands now, we have to take them at their word and wait and see what happens.

Paid parking in Strathcona County

With the coming of the Community Centre, there will be underground parking. There is a plan to implement a cost for that parking for employees, as well as residents or visitors who use the facility.

This is a first for the County to charge for parking and it might cause some consternation amongst our residents. The County has prepared an information package, which is on our website, outlining what the cost will be and explaining why we are charging — go to www.strathcona.ca/parkingmanagement.

I would really like to hear back from you on your views on this new proposal. There are some attachments in the site you will have to open to see why we are doing it and the fees that will be charged. There are a couple of things to keep in mind: the cost of the parkade construction was \$28 million, and there will be ongoing maintenance costs to keep the parkade operational. I would see the fees from the parking charges being applied to the maintenance costs. Your feedback on this issue is most important to me and I look forward to hearing from you.

Outdoor ice rink in McGhan Park

In previous e-mails, I have informed of you of the plans to build an outdoor rink in McGhan Park. This will be a boarded and screened rink, fully lighted. The lights will be hooded, to prevent light spilling into any residential areas in close proximity.

Just recently, a significant portion of Clarkdale Meadows was invited to an open house held March 24th at County Hall. About 40 residents attended and gave some very valuable input to administration on three options presented, and also provided some very good suggestions.

The first option was to put the rink at the west end of the park, directly below the toboggan hill. That option was not well received by residents in attendance, owing to the chance of conflict with the boards and youth sliding down the hill. I think it is safe

to say that that option is out. The other two options placed the rink on the east end of the park. One spot was directly west of the basketball/volleyball courts and the other was where the snow bank rink was this year, right near the fence and just east of the ball diamond.

County staff will now review the comments provided and make a final decision on the rink's location. Bear in mind, the placement of a rink in McGhan Park was always in the ultimate build out of the park. Residents attending asked to be informed of the final choice and Engineering and Environmental Planning will inform them of that choice in the same way they were notified of the open house - through a mail out. On the whole, residents attending were pleased that a rink is coming and saw many advantages to having one.

Strathcona Christmas bird count

A ward resident is very active in the annual Bird Count Day. He provided me some very interesting statistics which I thought you might like to see. Somewhat of a change from the normal news you might see and I thought it might be an interesting and refreshing change.

The count was done on December 27th in the entire County by a large group of volunteers. In all, 5,990 birds, from 34 different species were identified. Each year there are changes in the winter bird population for a variety of reasons, such as change in habitat, food supplies and weather.

This year, most species' populations stayed the same as past year's with a few exceptions. Some of the highlights are:

- Pheasant and Gray Partridge – once common – have not been seen in the past three years.
- Owls were almost absent on count day, with only two Great Horned Owls recorded.

- A Northern Shrike, an uncommon predator, was counted once, hunting House Sparrows at local feeders.
- Conversely, the House Finch, which only two years ago was a rare bird, seemed well habituated with 29 counted.
- Woodpeckers remained constant at 223 and that highlights the steady increase to triple those of 10 years ago.

Some of the more unusual sightings were two robins and three Northern Cardinals.

Strathcona County continues to have a very strongly supported Christmas Bird Count. The data is entered into the National Audubon Society database and this and all other data has become a crucial part of Canada's bird monitoring system. If you are interested in the whole report, let me know and I will send it to you.

Traffic analysis Clarkdale Meadows

In my April 2009 Newsletter, I reported on a traffic analysis to be done in Clarkdale Meadows. That study was postponed to this spring, when they decided that the pending opening of the Lakeland Drive /Highway 21 connection might change traffic patterns. As I write this newsletter, they are conducting traffic counts.

ISL Engineering has been retained to conduct a study of the collector roads in the subdivision - Clarkdale Boulevard, Primrose Boulevard, Meadowview Drive, Clarkdale Drive and Davenport Drive. ISL's plan will culminate with an open house from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 6th, at the Moravian Church on Primrose Boulevard.

Strathcona County has also purchased driver speed feedback signs. Built-in radar is used to determine the speed of an oncoming vehicle which is then displayed on a lighted board. Only vehicle speeds between a site specific minimum and maximum limit will be displayed.

Signs will be placed mid-block on a collector road in each urban ward for a period of eight weeks. The first two weeks the sign will be in stealth mode. It will appear that the sign is not working when in fact it is gathering speed data on passing cars. For weeks three to six, the display will be activated. During the final two weeks, the sign will once again be programmed to stealth mode. This will give traffic engineers information on

whether the speed being displayed makes a difference to drivers' speeds. Signs will also be placed in school and playground zones.

In April and May, residents of Clarkdale Meadows will also be asked for their thoughts on traffic in their community. Over the next few weeks, please take a moment to think about the traffic on collector roads named above.

Look for more information in the local newspaper for how you can participate. Residents are encouraged to drop in at the open house, and I would encourage as many of you as possible to attend. More information on the signs can be found on the County's website www.strathcona.ca.



For the first time ever, Strathcona County firefighters camped on top of Fire Station #1 to raise awareness and donations for Muscular Dystrophy Canada. Thank you to everyone who supported this campaign, which raised more than \$35,000. I'm the "firefighter" in the middle of the back row.

Strathcona County Transit wants to hear from you

Strathcona County Transit is asking the community for feedback to help guide the future growth of transit services in the County. As part of its Transit Master Plan, the County is encouraging both riders and non riders, from urban and rural areas, to participate in an online questionnaire. An open house will also be held on May 5, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Coast Edmonton East Hotel on Premier Way.

The goal is to ensure Strathcona County Transit provides appropriate service to the County and to clearly understand community expectations and needs. The Transit Master Plan will help Strathcona County identify the rationale for transit services, set strategic direction and guiding principles, define appropriate service levels, service design, operating and capital costs, and develop an implementation strategy.

Draft recommendations are expected in late 2010. The online questionnaire is available at www.strathcona.ca/transit; residents can also request a hard copy of the survey by calling 780-464-RIDE.