

COUNCILLOR'S CORNER



This might take many back but I certainly remember watching Fantasy Island and at the beginning of the episode signaling new guests, would be Tatoo who would shout out “de plane -de plane”. The Town has “the plan the plan”. In a figure of speaking of course.

There is much that goes into to planning for a municipality. Administration and Council utilize master planning which are foundational documents that assist in building direction and understanding. The Municipal Sustainability Plan, the Intermunicipal Development Plan are two key, overarching plans that greatly assist the Municipality in meeting objectives long term development of the Community. There are certainly additional planning documents that include more detail and are utilized to

establish projects and determine budget implications.

There are several ways these plans become supported including that of a census which allows us the Municipality determine where we are at and assists in providing a projection of the future population. Many of our planning processes include a “needs assessment” which garners input from the public on specific planning initiatives. This provides the public a voice in these matters and helps ensure that the Town’s direction generally meets the desire of the populous. Needs Assessments can take place in a number of manners including through that of open houses, public surveys or other methods available. I have heard it said that to not have a plan is like sailing a ship without a sail. The Town has incorporated good planning and implemented good strategies.

One strategy we have implemented is to buy low. The Town has been able to save considerable money on projects for just this reason. Strategy number two, is combining projects together or tendering projects at the same time to take advantage of anticipated cost savings. Strategy number three is to look at building timing taking advantage of grant offering by Provincial and Federal governments. While we do not see the 90% funding some recreation projects are receiving in Eastern Canada, we would be remiss to not seek project funding when the offering aligns with the timing of the project.

Strategy four is to partner in joint use agreements, look for sponsors and ultimately have fees that have a percentage of cost recovery built in. Strategy five is to buy land and sell for cost offsets to a project. This happened for example with the Abbey center and the Protective services building. The Town’s planning processes leads into effective budgeting, which then relates into providing the services and amenities expected of the public. The municipal budget is made up of two key components; one being the Operational Budget, which is the costs to undertake the day to day operations over a specific period of time which is normally one year. The other component is that of the Capital Budget which is the budget for major purchases or to fund projects. The Town utilizes a 10 Year Capital Plan which provides foresight in our capital works program and in most cases responds to recommendations that are derived from our planning processes.

The operating portion for Blackfalds is done well and is done so with less employees than other municipalities our size representing a responsible management. The capital plan addresses many aspects of capital needs that is always required as capital works/ facilities continue to age or the Community continues to grow requiring additional capital infrastructure.

When looking at our Municipality’s financial health a good indicator is our debt ratio. Even with our ongoing capital projects and other financial factors that comes with growth our Town is in very good financial shape. In many instances we retire debt on some projects as we implement another. A good example would be the Civic Centre that: was totally paid off in 2020.

In looking to the future I would offer my perspective. We are looking to be 20,000 in population sooner than it took us to grow to 10000 in the year 2001. Why do I say that? We have population projections that support this. I can see the large number of children in our Community and if only 50% make this their home that will translate into a lot of homes . I came here in 1986 and now have 15 family members, not including my wife, calling Blackfalds home. Blackfalds is not the hard sell it was back then mainly I feel is because of the preferred location. Blackfalds is like a good book it just keeps getting better. The increase in population will not only support more business it will give the Town capacity to do things like covering in the pool. We will see more businesses, and all of this requires the work of the planning department, administration, Council and input from our community. The one thing that will become a concern as we get close to the 20,000 will be another access to Highway 2. The plans are for today and for our future neighbors who will call Blackfalds home. I am proud to be one of them sharing our great Town with you and am so proud of this community.

Thank you for sharing your time with me.

Yours Truly,

Will Taylor

Blackfalds Councillor - 403.598.3149

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Regular Meetings

March 9 | 7:00 p.m.

March 23 | 7:00 p.m.

Standing Committee

March 15 | 7:00 p.m.

Regular Council (RCC) and Standing Committee meetings (SCC) are closed to the public until further notice.

Never miss a Council meeting! Watch live on the Town’s YouTube channel.

*All meetings are held in Council Chambers
Civic & Culture Centre
5018 Waghorn St.*



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