

Mayor's Annual Address 2017

We are just slightly past the mid-point of this term of Saanich Council and I wanted to provide another update to the community.

2014-2018 is the first 4-year term of council as a result of changes to the legislation which govern when elections are to occur.

This has resulted in an extended opportunity to allow members of council to connect with the community on important issues and to develop the necessary partnerships that ultimately lead to success in decision making and the desirable outcomes that support our citizens.

At Saanich, we have had a long tradition of including members of our community as advisors to council and we have structured this approach through advisory committees that make recommendations to council.

It has also been our practice that Council makes the citizen appointments to each committee while the Mayor appoints council members to chair each committee.

At the mid-point of this term, I have decided shuffle the committee appointments to allow committee chairs to apply their skills to different subject areas as well as to expand the number of committees slightly to improve council's awareness of pressing issues.

First, I would like to announce the following appointments:

Councillor Brownoff will chair the Planning, Transportation & Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Councillor Wergeland will chair the Environment & Natural Areas Advisory Committee.

Councillor Derman will continue to chair the Bicycle & Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee.

Councillor Brice will chair the Arts, Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee.

Councillor Murdoch will chair the Parks, Trails & Recreation Advisory Committee, and

Councillor Plant will continue to chair the Healthy Saanich Advisory committee and the LGBTQ sub-committee attached to it.

I would like to thank all councillors for their committee work to date in this term and I would encourage committee chairs to continue to bring pressing issues from the community that are related to the mandate of each committee to the attention of each advisory committee.

Saanich will be posting summaries of committee accomplishments from the past two years to the Saanich website very shortly.

Now, upon reflecting on the past two years and looking ahead to the challenges facing our municipality, it is my belief that the community would be well served by two additional committees, one focused in financial areas and one separately focused on staffing and service matters.

I have appointed Councillor Sanders as chair of the Finance Standing Committee and Councillor Haynes as chair of the Personnel Standing Committee both supported by a committee membership consisting of appointed council members.

Both of these committees will make recommendations to council in order to plan and better position the municipality for the future in addition to providing the transparency, accountability and oversight that residents expect and deserve.

I am also announcing tonight the establishment of an Accessibility Standing Committee whose mandate will be to advise council on disability and barrier issues facing residents and visitors to our community. I believe that societies are judged by the level of inclusion and attention paid to the needs of persons challenged by physical and mental difficulties and we at Saanich will endeavour to understand and support their needs.

More information about this Committee will be released in the coming weeks after it has been constituted and establishes its terms of reference.

Finally, a talk about committees wouldn't be complete without mention of the Governance Review Citizen's Advisory Committee.

This is a Committee, unlike any other in Saanich made up entirely of citizens and directed by citizens. It was created as a result of the positive support for the ballot question from the 2014 election and the committee officially launched its outreach campaign two weeks ago.

This is direct democracy in action I wish to thank the members of the Governance Review and Citizen's Advisory Committee for advancing the work to this important stage.

Council and the community both look forward to the report from this committee in the fourth quarter of this calendar year and at that time council will begin the process of interpreting the data that was collected and then taking action based on the needs and desires of the community.

It continues to be my privilege to work with council members, Saanich staff and our community in the role of guiding and focusing Saanich Council on the priorities that will ensure that Saanich remains an attractive and prosperous place to live, work and play.

Feb 20, 2017

Richard Atwell
Mayor of Saanich