



City of White Rock
Office of Mayor

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City of White Rock State of the City Address
Hosted by the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce

5:30 p.m. | Thursday, October 27, 2016 | White Rock Community Centre

Welcome everyone.

I would like to begin by thanking Fortis for their sponsorship of the 2016 State of City Address and the South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce for organizing this event together with City Staff.

I want to acknowledge Council Members present tonight: Councillor Knight, Councillor Sinclair, and Councillor Fathers.

We are also honoured by having a number of former Mayors in attendance this evening – Hardy Staub, Mayor from 1994-2002; Judy Forster, Mayor from 2003-2008; and Catherine Ferguson, Mayor from 2008-2011. Former Mayors Gordon Hogg and Tom Kirstein are both travelling and unable to be with us tonight.

On behalf of Council and the community, I want to thank the Mayors, and their Council's, for their past stewardship and the many contributions that have helped make us what we are today.

Judy, I know that these are difficult times for you with the recent passing of Brad. Please accept our utmost condolences.

I would also like to recognize that we are on the traditional lands of the Semiahmoo First Nation and the Coast Salish People.

We are now at the midpoint of this Council's term of office. What I want to do tonight is to summarize what has been accomplished to date, what we want to accomplish in the balance of this term of office and then conclude with some remarks about building a community.

When people think about White Rock, the image that comes to mind is that of a City where people care about each other and work hard to make this a better place to live, work and play.

As a City we are at a point where we can take advantage of the opportunities we have, in a balanced manner.

We have to choose whether we want to build on the momentum we have generated and set ourselves up for continued success.

The reason I ran for Council in the first place was to make things better, not to preserve the status quo. So, that is what I'm going to be advocating for the balance of this term of office.

I understand that not everyone in the community agrees with that approach and that is okay because it is part of the democratic process.

As someone much wiser than I once noted:

There are two types of politicians. Those who get elected so that they could be something; and those who get elected so they can do something.

I believe members of Council fall into the latter category, and that is Council's prime motivator in setting its priorities and work plans for this term.

I would like to now take a few minutes to update you on the progress of Council's priorities.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Trains

The tragic and fatal accident that occurred in July 2013 resulted in the loss of our night-time whistling exemption that we have had since the 1990s.

To allow the City to once again enjoy a night time ban on whistling, we are required to install flashing lights and bells at the 8 crossings we have.

We are negotiating with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway to have this work done. Each crossing will cost about half a million dollars. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway is supposed to pay for a large share of the cost. Hence, the slow negotiation process which is heading into its third year.

In order to unblock the log jam, we need to get a Canadian Transportation Agency ruling on the cost sharing formula. Council has directed staff to get this underway as soon as possible. Money has been set aside in the financial plan to do two of these crossings per year, but if we get a favourable ruling on the cost sharing, we will accelerate things.

In the meantime, we can continue to advocate, in partnership with Surrey, to relocate the tracks from our waterfront.

The first step in this process is to complete a feasibility study in order to provide an economic case and a suggested rerouting. This case must then be taken to the Canadian Transportation Agency who will make a ruling. The cost of this study is estimated to be \$700,000 and, in conjunction with Surrey, we are making application to the provincial and federal governments for financial assistance.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Official Community Plan (OCP)

The Official Community Plan is fundamentally a guideline to land use, which should be revisited and reviewed every five years or so. It was last reviewed comprehensively in 2008.

This review is a large undertaking that is finally nearing completion. We expect that the final draft will be done by this Christmas, with final adoption by the spring of 2017. Between now and then there will be a concentrated period of public consultation with plenty of opportunity for input.

In the last little while we have had Official Community Plan "pop-up" engagement events on October 1, 2, 9, 18 and 26. Workshops also took place regarding the Official Community Plan on October 18 and 25.

Additionally, there are upcoming pop-ups and workshops on October 30, November 1 and November 3.

Finally, there is an online survey running from October 11 – November 13.

If you have not already done so, I urge you to participate and have your say in the future of our community.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Johnston Road "Gateway" Revitalization

The conceptual plan for the reconstruction of Johnston from North Bluff to Roper will shortly be going to the public for input and comment. That will lead to choice of the conceptual plan, which in turn will initiate the detailed engineering design, then tendering, and finally construction. There is an expectation that the work will be completed early 2018.

It is inevitable that during the construction phase there will be inconveniences to the public and to the businesses, but every effort will be made to minimize that.

The goal of this project will be to create a more inviting and safe streetscape that will enhance the livability of the City Centre and improve the business environment. We look forward to its conclusion.

Council's Corporate Priorities: East Beach Waterfront Plan

The ambitious East Beach Waterfront project has two main goals:

1. climate proof the east end of the promenade which is now regularly damaged by winter storms; and,
2. to enhance the attractiveness and the attractions of the East Beach area.

This will be done by raising the elevation of the eastern end of the promenade, and creating more dry land that will permit the promenade to be widened, and provide room for picnicking, and space for an all abilities, all ages playground.

We would also use the opportunity to provide more all ability access points to the beach.

This project could possibly be combined with dredging at the pier, so we can use the dredged materials for fills instead of barging it to some offloading point and then trucking it to a landfill.

We are presently working on a joint design and approval process with the Ministry of Environment. There will also be consultation with the Semiahmoo First Nation, the public, as well as approvals from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway required before we proceed.

Realistically, the earliest start date will be 2018, and, of course, it is all contingent on the availability of funds, most of which are expected to come from development.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Memorial Park

The continued success of our waterfront events over the past couple years prompted Council to reactivate the Spirit Square project that was shelved in 2009, and make it a priority.

The design for this project is presently in the public consultation phase, and assuming the requisite Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway approvals are received in a reasonable period of time, it could be built in 2017, perhaps by the summer – in time for the Canada 150 Celebrations.

An integral part of this project will be the reconstruction of the pier washrooms, and the potential relocation of the tourism kiosk.

Again, the bulk of the financing for this project will come from developers' amenity contributions, not your taxes.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Parking Plan

In conjunction with the Memorial Park project, we will be building a tiered parking structure on our land at the corner of Vidal and Victoria.

Additional land to the north was recently purchased, and when finished there will be sufficient parking for up to three hundred cars.

This project should be carried out by the middle of 2018, and will mean a huge increase in the amount of visitor parking for the waterfront.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Special Events, Festivals, and the Arts

A continuing priority for Council is the promotion of the arts, and of special events and festivals.

Some absolutely amazing events were held this past year:

- Canada Day;
- TD Concerts on the Pier Series;
- Tour de White Rock;
- White Rock Sea Festival;
- Christmas on the Peninsula Celebration;
- Festival of Lights – Diwali Integration; and the,
- Month Long Irish Festival, to name but a few.

All have drawn residents and visitors alike to experience and enjoy them, and have promoted the family – friendly, inclusive community culture that exists here in White Rock.

We are presently nearing the end of our two month long Fall Festival of the Arts.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Special Events, Festivals and the Arts

This event is largely pulled together by staff and the list of events includes: plays, music, art shows, and of course Diwali Integration.

At the beginning of 2016, the City found itself with a vacant storefront on Johnston Road still with one year on its lease. Staff came up with the concept of a Pop-up Art Studio.

The space was made available at no cost to groups of artists in the community in one month segments. The groups have included: Semiahmoo Arts, the Semiahmoo First Nation, and the International Artists Day group, who are about to wrap up their month.

Six groups have so far benefitted from the availability of this space, and by all accounts it has been phenomenally successful and really has done a lot for the promotion of art in the City.

We will see whether the concept can be continued for the future.

Finally, just a reminder that in 2017 we will be celebrating the City's 60th Birthday, and Canada's 150th Birthday.

There are some exciting plans being made and much work being carried out to prepare for these two events, so please stay tuned.

Council's Corporate Priorities: Water Utility and Quality

The largest single project the City has taken on is the purchase of the privately owned water utility from EPCOR White Rock Water Services.

The water utility was privately owned from its inception in 1912, and was regulated by the province and the health authority.

In 2005 it was purchased by EPCOR, and in 2010 we had the infamous pigeon contamination and boil water order that prompted Fraser Health to issue the order that the water must be chlorinated before the end of 2016.

This order, in turn, forced EPCOR to carry out a thorough engineering evaluation of the system which resulted in the Total Water Quality Management Plan (or referred to as the TWQMP).

The Total Water Quality Management Plan was a massive, multi-million dollar infrastructure improvement plan for the utility, which provided for the chlorination of the water as well as the replacement of old reservoirs, and the addition of new ones to allow for the ultimate expected population of the City.

The province had given EPCOR the right to get financial returns on investment of 10.25%. This meant the more they invested, the more they could charge White Rock residents and the greater their profit, which was projected to be up to \$1 million annually.

In light of this information, Council decided to purchase the utility rather than have that money leave the community and go to Edmonton.

It was believed to be better to use that profit margin to pay off the debt incurred to purchase the utility. Then once the debt is paid off, in 20 years, the water rates can be reduced accordingly.

The City assumed ownership of the utility a year ago, and took over all the Total Water Quality Management Plan infrastructure contracts that were underway at the time.

One of the biggest benefits of being the owner / operator of the city's water utility is that we now have control of our water quality.

Our water supply comes from an aquifer where we have naturally occurring arsenic and manganese.

Make no mistake – our water meets Canadian Drinking Water Guideline standards but as with any good water utility operator we are committed towards improving our water quality.

The city has commenced the evaluation and design of treatment processes to reduce the levels of those elements down to levels well below those required by the Canadian Drinking Water Standards and took immediate steps to do so.

This was initiated without the urging of Fraser Health.

In this respect we are significantly ahead of where we would have been had EPCOR continued to own the utility. In fact, even with the debt repayment included, our rates are lower than they would have been had the utility still been owned by EPCOR.

Moreover, since the cost of treatment is expected to be in the range of \$14.5m, the city has made application for senior government grants – something EPCOR would not have been able to do because the grants are not available to the private sector.

Preliminary discussions look very favourable, and it is entirely possible that as much as \$12m in grants could be received by the city.

We are expediting this process as quickly as possible and expect to have the water fully treated by the end of 2018 – years before EPCOR would have done and at a fraction of the cost to you, the ratepayers.

I am also pleased to share with you that the city has been working hard at increasing the city's water capacity.

When the city purchased the water utility, the total available water storage was 4.50 million liters.

Since that time, the city has constructed a new water reservoir and a second one will be completed in January of 2017.

This means the city's total available storage by January 2017 will be 6.05 million liters, which is 1.55 million liters more than when the city purchased the utility.

An old EPCOR report had essentially said that blending was impossible. Well, I'm here tonight to say that it is possible and we are doing it!

I will not go into details about this evening on the process but if you would like more information about our blending process please visit the city's My Water FAQ page.

Community Builders:

So now let me talk about community.

Over the past two years we certainly have had no problem hearing dissenting points of view (as you may have noticed).

We hear different viewpoints from the community on a regular basis and as leaders it is our job to listen and take into consideration those viewpoints with the end goal of making decisions that are in the best interest of all the residents of White Rock.

All this to say, let us be defined by people who have contributed to this community in positive ways.

People who I would refer to as 'community builders.'

These are the people I want to be defined by.

These are the people our City Council wants to be defined by.

These are the people our community deserves to be defined by.

There are many, many community builders and what unites us, is infinitely greater than what divides us. Think of all the service clubs, the youth organizations, the social support groups, the festival committees – all of whom do so very much for our community.

They quietly go about their business making this a better place to live without any expectation of receiving recognition.

For them it is simply the right thing to do.

Although time does not allow recognition of the hundreds of community builders in this great city of ours, I would like to introduce you to a few of them.

Community Builders: Lorraine Ellenwood

Lorraine Ellenwood has long been identified as one of our custodians of White Rock's history. Lorraine's first published book, years of promise, which is a history of White Rock from 1858 up until a year after its incorporation in 1957, is a wonderful piece of work. We hope to see volume 2, which will bring us up to present times soon.

But Lorraine's real claim to fame was that she held things together for the museum and archives almost single handedly in the 1990s. The federal building on Marine Drive, the top two floors of which had been the home to the museum for many years was sold to private interests leaving the museum with no space whatsoever.

The station was occupied by local arts groups and was not available to the museum. Fortunately, the city was able to make arrangements with what was then Don Carr Motors at 5 corners for the museum to store their materials and to begin to catalogue and cull them – something which had not really been completed in its former location.

Without display space, the volunteers grew discouraged, and many left the organization.

The only reason the society kept together was the presence of Lorraine Ellenwood who simply would not give up.

After several years, the city was able to secure space for the potters and the paint club in the old Semiahmoo High School and Lorraine triumphantly oversaw the occupation of the station by the museum and the return of the volunteers.

Lorraine was recognized by the city as an outstanding Canadian on the peninsula in 2005.

Community Builders: Ellen Kennett

Ellen Kennett has an outstanding long history of community involvement.

I will attempt to do justice to her history with an abbreviated list of her numerous accomplishments.

Ellen was the first woman Chair of the Hospital Board, the first Chair of the Hospital Foundation, and the President of the Hospital Auxiliary - all concurrently.

In addition, she was:

- Founding member of the Seniors Come Share Society;
- President of the Peninsula Arts Foundation;
- Treasurer of the White Rock Historical Society;

- President of the White Rock Elementary PTA;
- Treasurer of the Council of Women;
- Member of the White Rock Heritage Advisory Committee;
- 1990 Semiahmoo Citizen of the Year;
- 2011 named Outstanding Canadian on the Peninsula; and
- 2012 recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee medal.

In her spare time, Ellen is studying to be a brain surgeon.

Community Builders: Vin Coyne

Vin Coyne has been known variously as a Baseball Coach, Newspaperman, Public Relations Professional for one of B.C.'s largest companies, Finning Tractor, Historian, City Councillor, and a hospital advocate.

In his role as a Newspaperman, Vin reported in the White Rock Sun Newspaper (Formerly the Semiahmoo Sun & White Rock Weekly) on the creation of the City of White Rock and was one of two people still with us (the other is Howard Kennett) who was in attendance at the inaugural meeting of Council in April, 1957.

By 1958, Vin, at the age of 19, became the youngest Newspaper Editor in Canada.

In terms of civic service, Vin also served as President of Little League Baseball, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and member of the Hospital Board.

As an amateur historian, Vin was able to enthrall readers of the Peace Arch News as a columnist with his stories about people and events.

His collection of articles and historical White Rock information was the stuff legends are made of. The amazing thing was that Vin seemed to remember it all and could launch into a relevant recollection at the drop of a hat.

Then there was that Council thing. Vin served as a member of White Rock council from 1968-1969 and 1975-1996 - a total of 24 years. The longest serving member of council ever.

Much of Vin's service as member of council was done in two year stints. In 1996, Vin was made Freeman of the City – the only person ever afforded that honour.

Community Builders: Terry Ross

Terry Ross has lived in White Rock since 1954, and is a graduate of Semiahmoo Secondary. He currently is the Chairman of the school's alumni organization.

For 47 years, Terry was a fixture at central plaza as manager of Reid's Foto Source. He retired in 2014 when the store closed.

Terry has been on the executive of the South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce since 2011, and was President of the Chamber in 2013/2014. He continues to be a member of the executive as Past President.

Terry has also been a member of the BIA Board of Directors for the past two years and was on the City's Tourism Task Force.

In addition to his business dealings, Terry was a White Rock volunteer firefighter for 32 years, and served as President of the White Rock Auxiliary Firefighters Association.

Community Builders: Michael Mackay-Dunn

Michael Mackay-Dunn teaches at Earl Marriott, but is one of those teachers who works well beyond the job description.

He initiated the football program at the school from scratch, and as head coach in a few short years he developed teams that started winning divisional provincial championships.

More than that though, over a decade ago, he took over as principal organizer and sponsor of Earl Marriott's First Nations program.

This program promotes cultural awareness, pride and accomplishments among the First Nation youth in the school. Part of the program is the annual pow-wow a celebration of First Nation art and culture over a weekend of festivities.

Michael was also instrumental in fundraising and commissioning local Semiahmoo First Nation artist Leonard Wells to carve two welcoming totems for the entry foyer of the school. Leonard set up shop at the school for several months where the students could watch and learn about the process and talk with him to get a better understanding and appreciation of the culture of the Coast Salish people.

In March 2014, the Quen'Alien project was completed and the poles were raised in place with the full traditional ceremony of a pole-raising that the students could watch - truly a dramatic and proud occasion.

It is safe to say, I believe, that without Michael's leadership and enthusiasm, none of this would have happened.

Community Builders: Barbara Cooper

Since very early in her career, Barbara Cooper has been a resident of White Rock and a teacher/librarian in the school system. She developed an event in the schools that integrated First Nations art and culture into such diverse subjects as chemistry and computer studies.

For this, and other similar initiatives she was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence.

After retirement, Barbara got deeply involved with the local art scene, and she joined the Board of Directors of Semiahmoo Arts and eventually became president for three years.

Barbara has also donated her time to various civic committees: Cultural Committee, Uptown Design Charrette; Arts Economic Task Force; and currently, the Cultural Advisory Committee as well as the Public Arts Advisory Committee.

Additionally, for years she has organized the Southland Summit of Secondary School Bands, the open mic sessions at Pelican Rouge, and the Writers' Series bringing renowned Canadian writers such as Joy Kogawa to the City.

Barbara is also one of the driving forces behind the Irish Festival in White Rock.

In 2013, in recognition of her many contributions to art and culture in the community, Barbara was named as one of our Outstanding Canadians on the Peninsula.

Community Builders: Joe O'Malley

Joe O'Malley taught for 35 years at White Rock Elementary School.

More than that – Mr. O, as he is known, was a fervent supporter and promoter of school sports. White Rock was known throughout the Surrey School District as a powerhouse in volleyball, basketball, cross country and track – mainly through the efforts of Mr. O.

The district elementary school track meets were colossally successful. The total number of participants was in the thousands. White Rock Elementary alone would have over a hundred kids involved. Mr. O was the principal organizer of the whole series of events.

In an unprecedented move, when the school was rebuilt, the gym was named after him.

In 2011, the City selected him as one of the Outstanding Canadians on the Peninsula.

After his retirement in 2004 Joe kept up his involvement and even today helps organize south end cross country meets, and continues to be a main organizer for the White Rock Elementary Track Program.

30 years ago, Mr. O coached my son in cross country and track. The last photo shows my grandson running completing the cross country race with Joe watching on Tuesday. The circle of life goes on.

Community Builders: Tom Kirstein and Chip Barrett

Tom Kirstein and Chip Barrett, known as the "Dynamic Duo" were the creators of the Canadian Open Sandcastle Contest which ran from 1980 to 1987 and was instrumental in putting White Rock on the map. At its peak, in excess of 100,000 people were on the beach on the Sunday of the competition.

Tom, as a founding partner of the accounting firm Kirstein Neidig and Vance, was an Alderman of the City before becoming its sixth Mayor in 1979. He also served as a Director and President of the Peace Arch Curling Club, a Director and Hhairman of the Hospital Board, Chairman of the Hospital and Community Health Foundation's Partners in Caring Campaign, and chairman of what is now Coast Capital Savings.

Chip Barrett, as an architect has designed a number of multifamily and public buildings in the City and in South Surrey. For years he has also donated significant amounts of his time to the City most notably, as an architectural representative to the Advisory Design Panel.

In addition, he is one of the founders of the Annual United Church Community Christmas Dinner, and continues to be one of the organizers of this event, which for over 30 years has been serving a Christmas dinner, on Christmas Day, to hundreds of people who are less fortunate.

In 2008, Tom and Chip were both recognized by the City as Outstanding Canadians on the Peninsula.

Community Builders: “Bob”

Not everyone can start up a sandcastle competition, but most people have their own way of giving back to the community that is nonetheless just as significant.

In singling out our final honoree for today, I am going to use the example of a gentleman I will call “Bob.” Bob does not want to be in the public eye and as he did not want to be recognized this evening, I am just going to tell you a story about him.

My daughter lives near Bob. She sees him frequently as she walks her children to school in the mornings. She often talks with him as he rides his bike past, with a bag on the back filled with recyclable bottles and cans he has collected from curbside recycling bins.

One day, he confided in her with a little smile: “People who see me probably think I am collecting these to supplement my pension money, but that is not the case. Before she died, my mother told me that I must always help those less fortunate. So, I collect these bottles and cans and take them to the recycling depot. Then, I take all the money and every week I donate it all to the Hospital Foundation to make things better for the patients there.”

Bob has been doing this for more than 20 years.

To date, his contributions have provided for the purchase of: scopes for the surgical department, specialty mattresses for the sickest patients in the ICU, I.V. monitors for the emergency ward; and portable ultrasounds for medical imaging.

Sometimes it is the small things that count the most. Sometimes a whole lot of “small things” add up to something much greater.

And that ladies and gentlemen, is exactly what the “Bobs” of our community do, and that is why they are community builders.

In conclusion, I am pleased to have been able to share with you the progress on achieving Council’s Priorities for this term of office.

I am also honoured to have been able to share stories with you about some of the people who have given in many positive ways to make White Rock the connected, caring and diversified City it is today.

They are our community builders. They have gotten us to where we will be able to celebrate our City’s 60th birthday and Canada’s 150th with extreme pride.

We thank them for their contributions, and we salute them.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W Baldwin", followed by a period.

Mayor Wayne Baldwin
City of White Rock