

CITY HALL TIMES

June 2016



FROM COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Original peaceful living.

NATURAL AREAS

The Johnson Flats Wetland Natural Area is one of many significant sensitive ecosystems across the City. In addition to its natural beauty and quality habitat for rare and endangered wildlife, this wetland provides services to the City including passive recreation, flood control, water filtration, climate regulation, pollination, and biodiversity support. The City owns most of this wetland and is proposing to create a new zone and dedicate these City-owned parcels as a “Protected Natural Area.” Appropriate uses of protected natural areas include biodiversity conservation, habitat restoration, research, nature appreciation, and passive recreation where appropriate. A number of City-owned parcels will be evaluated for re-zoning to Protected Natural Area in the coming year.

Perley Elementary teacher Sharon Peron has frequented the area with her primary class. “I took my class, of 21 grade ones, to the wetland area... We had a great time observing and recording the wetland habitat. Over 10 turtles sunning on a log, a perfect snake skin and a complete leaf skeleton to name 3 highlights! Thanks for working to protect this area... Fits right in with my school outside philosophy.”

SMALL HOMES, CLUSTER HOUSING, AND ECO HOMES

Council directed staff to research and report back on options for supporting small homes, cluster developments, and eco homes. This will include the review of zones and areas under consideration, identification of elements of form and character for small home and cluster development, input from developers and investors that may be interested and the views and comments of the public regarding pursuing innovative housing.

TAXES AND REBATES

PROPERTY TAXES AND THE HOME OWNER GRANT

Please make sure we have received your property taxes on or before July 4 or you will be assessed a (10%) ten percent penalty. Payments can be made by mail, in person, by using the drop box at City Hall, Interac e-transfer, through most financial institutions, or through a pre-authorized payment plan (Please call City Hall for information).

Remember to claim your Home Owner Grant (HOG) by July 4 to avoid penalty. Residents must claim their grant before the deadline even if they aren't making a payment on their taxes or the bank pays the taxes. The grant can be claimed by mail, in person, or online at <http://www.grandforks.ca>.

NEW BANK PAYMENT OPTIONS

The City is streamlining its utility and tax payment processing through electronic data interchange (EDI) processing which is a computer to computer exchange of business transactions between partners. As a result of this, we are now partners with the Toronto Dominion Bank. Utility and property tax customers who bank with TD can now pay their City accounts online through their banker.

Remember payments can be made to the City online through any financial institution using Interac e-Transfer®. Contact City Hall for more information.

JULY 1 2016 SUMMARY RESIDENTIAL (ONLY) UTILITY RATES

\$ 37.16	Electrical Basic Fee + GST
\$ 0.11679/kWh	Electrical Consumption Rate + GST
\$ 20.00	Garbage & Recycling Fee
\$ 72.66	Total Water Rates
\$ 78.30	Total Sewer Rates
\$ 208.12	Total Fixed Charges On Bimonthly Billing



Getting public input at the SCP Open House.

GRAND FORKS TAX SALE INFORMATION

Each September, the City holds a Tax Sale for properties that have become delinquent in the current year. The 2016 Tax Sale will be held 10 am on September 26, 2016 in Council Chambers, 7217 4th St., Grand Forks. Properties available for sale will be advertised on the City website and in the Grand Forks Gazette on September 14 and 21, 2016.

In 2016, the May billing is considered current, unpaid 2015 taxes and utilities are considered arrears, and 2014 unpaid taxes and utilities are considered delinquent. In September 2016 any properties that have taxes or utilities owing from 2014 will be considered delinquent and included in the 2016 annual Tax Sale.

FEES AND CHARGES

Fee for reprinting tax notices and utility bills is \$10.00. Save and bring your copy.



Cutting the ribbon at the Rotary Spray Park opening.



PUBLIC WORKS MAY AND JUNE PROGRAM

With Summer quickly approaching the Public Works Department is in full swing with the regular maintenance schedule including:

- Hanging baskets and planters placed throughout town
- Mowing numerous parks and green spaces
- Turning on and repairing the irrigation in parks grounds and boulevards
- In ground bed preparation and planting
- Pot hole patching and repaving
- Concrete sidewalk replacement due to water meter installs
- Flail moving boulevards and road edges
- Alley repairs and dust control
- Tree pruning throughout the city
- Street sweeping on Fridays

Some of the projects that have been outside of our regular maintenance schedule include:

- The Spray Park completion for the grand opening
- The 3rd Street water main repair and storm drain repair



We also facilitate many events throughout the city - some small some very large - all very important in support of a thriving and vibrant community. These Events happen throughout the year however the month of May seems to be the kick off for a very busy 4 month schedule of activities like charity functions, family gatherings and sporting events to mention just a few.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE AWARENESS

YOU CAN HELP

- Signal, pull over to the nearest edge of the road on the approach of an emergency vehicle and stop.
- In an intersection, move out of the intersection if it is safe to do so, and then stop at the edge of the road until the emergency vehicle has passed.
- Check for additional emergency vehicles before pulling back out onto the roadway.
- Use your rear view mirrors frequently to monitor for emergency vehicles approaching from the rear.
- You may see emergency vehicles before you hear them. Be attentive to the flashing lights. It will give you more time to select a safe place to pull over.

The Benefits

- Emergency responders will be able to arrive on scene sooner to help those in need faster.
- Cooperating drivers on the highway help to lessen the stress encountered by emergency vehicle operators during an emergency response.
- Drivers avoid prosecution for 'failing to yield to an emergency vehicle'.
- Provide for a safer response for the crews on the emergency vehicle and the public.

"WE CAN'T HELP YOU IF WE CAN'T GET THERE"

MORE [GREEN] NEWS

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PLAN

Forty-two residents came out to the Wooden Spoon Bistro on June 16 for the first Open House of the Sustainable Community Plan (SCP) Update. The goal was to share information about the SCP Update and to gather ideas from the public regarding environmental sustainability. Participants were asked to provide feedback on forms and by placing stickers and notes on maps to identify key values, for example, biodiversity, food security, or significant ecosystem sites.

This Open House was the first of a series of public consultation events and online surveys taking place between now and the end of 2017. Five themes have been identified as part of the review: Environmental Sustainability; Affordable Housing; Development Permit Area Review – Form and Character; Asset Management, Transportation, and Infrastructure; and Implementation and Administration. The SCP is intended to serve for up to 20 years with a suggested review every five years.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ENERGY AND EMISSIONS PLAN

Council voted to incorporate the Sustainable Community Energy and Emissions Plan into the City policy framework to support the community in reducing emissions. Staff was directed to proceed with implementation of high priority actions through planning processes and community partnerships. By incorporating SCEEP actions into the City policy framework and supporting the community in reducing emissions, the City will continue to deepen its leadership on climate action while enhancing community resilience, managing future risks, and driving economic development.

MUNICIPAL NATURAL CAPITAL INITIATIVE

The Municipal Natural Capital Initiative (MNCI) is a partnership program dedicated to supporting municipalities in recognizing, measuring and managing the contribution natural systems make to people and municipal service delivery, using municipal asset management business processes. The MNCI will be providing extensive support to partnering municipalities, including detailed guidance and support documents, an on-site workshop, 'help-desk' functions, webinar check-ins to learn about progress and provide support for next steps, and project monitoring and evaluations.

5TH STREET WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT

Work is starting on the replacement of the 5th Street water main across the Kettle River with a new water main on the Darrell J. Priede Memorial Bridge and multi-use pathway. The same level of fire protection and water supply will be provided to the Ruckle area as with the current water main design but the new location will take advantage of the bridge crossing and utility right of way. Some trees along the multi-use pathway will need to be removed from the bridge to 66th Avenue to install the new pipe. The project is being funded by the Federal Gas Tax Fund and the project is in line with the Sustainable Community Plan's guiding principle of ensuring a long-term sustainable foundation of municipal infrastructure.

NEW BYLAW SERVICES SEASONAL POSITION

The new bylaw officer will help community members in finding solutions to comply with the City's bylaws. This will assist with addressing many of the complaints the City receives annually, and with the delivery of Building Inspection Services during the peak seasons. Typical complaints that require follow up from the City are unsightly properties, watering restrictions, unlicensed vehicles parked on the City's boulevards, and the frequent repeat offenders that set up camps along our rivers in the City.



GET IN TOUCH

We love to hear from you! Send us an email (info@grandforks.ca), Facebook message (facebook.com/CityOfGrandForksBC), or give us a call (250) 442-8266.