

GETTING THINGS DONE

By Mayor Tom Mrakas

This past week at General Committee, Council addressed the ongoing issue of the Skateboard park over at the AFLC.

Anyone that has followed the issue of the renovations and upgrades that started during the end of the 2010-2014 term and finished at the beginning of last term are fully aware that there were some serious issues with the construction of that facility. The project was not only delayed but there were multiple deficiencies and attendant legal issues as a consequence.

The skateboard park was, unfortunately, part of a mismanaged project.

Last term, we ? Council ? worked hard to ensure that this type of project mismanagement would not happen again. First, I brought forward a motion to ensure that, moving forward, liquidated damages (penalty clause) are part of every contract.

This is to ensure that there are penalties should a contractor not fulfill the contract.

Second, our new CAO was brought on board and organizational changes made to ensure that future projects would not face the same management issues. As part of the organizational changes, our new Director of Finance will be looking to make some changes to our procurement processes - as awarding contracts to the lowest bidder is not always the most cost-effective way to do it.

Third, we set a policy to have a project manager in place for all future capital projects.

Does this mean that there will never be an issue with a future project? No. Unforeseen issues can and do arise in any project. However, we ? Council and staff ? have put measures in place to limit the Town's ? and taxpayers' ? exposure to the risks that come from the deficiencies that arise due to mismanaged projects.

So, the bigger question then is, where does that leave the skate park? Well, the issues with the skate park began with a few concrete cracks (nothing serious). These cracks were identified and attended to. What no one knew about was what lay beneath the surface. After repeated attempts to fix the cracks, staff realized it was more than just expansion and contraction cracks. A hydrological test was done and it

was found that the sub flooring, gravel and prep work before the pouring was not done properly or missing altogether.

Now the Town is facing \$600K
in costs to fix the skateboard park!

I think I can speak for
everyone when I say we are all very angry about the current situation. Council
has asked the Town solicitor to look into what if anything can be done to
recover our costs.

So, what are our options
moving forward? Well, we have two options: repair a Town amenity that is highly
used by residents, or we could shut it down and not move forward in providing
this service for our residents.

My choice is to move forward
with providing this in-demand service, proceed to take whatever steps possible
to recover costs incurred and know that moving forward we have processes in
place to mitigate the impacts of any future occurrences.

Every member of Council works
to ensure that taxpayer money is spent responsibly.

We are building on the hard
work of our previous council that put a number of measures in place to make
sure that projects did not take a turn for the worse like the AFLC.

I believe that it isn't enough
to simply say you're 'looking out for the taxpayer's money?', frankly every
politician will tell you that. But if
you don't have anything to offer by way of a solution? Then it's just talk and
just talking about it won't get things done.

That is why this Council is
moving forward with new policies and new organizational changes to ensure that
taxpayer money is well looked after.

Council was provided with all
the information needed to make a decision.

And, as I said, the option at
this point was simple: Repair the park or close it down. The vote to repair the
Skate board park and continue to provide this high, in-demand service for our
youth was 6-1 with Councillor Gallo opposed.