

UBCM DAILY NEWS

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FRIDAY RESOLUTION SESSION EXTENDED

The resolutions session on Friday will be extended by an additional half hour and will run from 8:00 – 10:45 am. Due to scheduling difficulties, a federal address will not be part of this year's Convention agenda.

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LEADING THROUGH CRISIS

Tuesday afternoon's plenary session on Leading through Crisis: Flooding and Fires on 2017, featured three local government leaders whose good judgement helped their communities come through one of the most difficult years in the history of BC emergency response.

Chair Al Richmond, Cariboo Regional District, Prince George Mayor Lyn Hall, and Mayor Colin Basran of the City of Kelowna were on the front lines of flood and wildfire response, evacuation orders and evacuee reception.

The three elected officials spoke to the importance of maintaining a visible, supportive, calming profile amidst an unfolding disaster, communicating clearly and consistently, and of the vital role played by their staffs.

"You need to trust and support your staff. Make your decisions based on reason, not emotion. You will not please everyone," observed Chair Richmond.

Presented with the unprecedented evacuation of Cariboo communities, south to Kamloops and north to Prince George, receiving communities did what needed to be done.

"We had a Quesnel-sized city within our city," said Mayor Hall. "If we had had to receive another 10,000 people, we would have," he said. "Understand that you will be faced and forced to provide the same services to the evacuees that you provide to your residents."



Effective communication is key and every available media channel should be used. Some takeaways shared by the panel: let people know what is happening; treat everyone fairly; do every interview you are asked to; be concise and consistent in all communications.

With this spring's floodwaters rising, Kelowna residents were not responding to the warnings as quickly as the city wanted. Mayor Basran personally took to social media, which effectively engaged residents and the broadcast media, who picked up the seriousness of his message.

The Cariboo Regional District used 30 second and one-minute video clips to provide information on region's wildfires because it was evident that longer

updates were not being watched.

The many agencies involved in an evacuation are key assets to navigating the crisis: the RCMP, the military, First Nations' liaison, Red Cross. A Cattlemen's Association representative, for example, was able to act as an advocate when criticism arose from ranchers.

"These disasters carried an enormous cost, both financially and emotionally," said Chair Richmond. Staff reminded him that while "we can manage a crisis, but we cannot manage a crisis continuously."

Evidence-based Policy for BC's Housing Affordability Crisis



UBCM delegates heard wide ranging expert perspectives on how to tackle the province-wide housing affordability crisis during a Monday policy session.

In a preliminary panel, presenters provided evidence demonstrating that the crisis is not a result of limited housing supply. Dr. Josh Gorcon, an Assistant Professor at SFU, emphasized that there is no evidence that efforts to boost supply would improve affordability, and such arguments only serve to deflect from the real need to address housing demand.

Both Dr. Gordon and Dr. David Ley of UBC, who has been researching the impacts of Asian capital on local housing markets for more than a decade, pointed towards evidence that taxation policy such as steep and progressive property transfer taxes are the most effective tools to blunting demand and improving affordability.

The need to address the housing crisis was made plainly clear by Andy Yan, Director of the City Program at SFU, in stating "Where does Vancouver sit? Its (housing) values are between Honolulu and San Francisco, at Halifax incomes". And while Metro Vancouver featured prominently in the discussion of the preliminary panel, presenters noted clear demonstrated spillover effects into other jurisdictions, a sentiment that was repeated by presenters in a second panel focusing on rural and northern BC.

Leading off the second panel, Marleen Morris of the Community Development Institute of UNBC, demonstrated that communities across the province face a lack of affordable housing, with the joint challenges of an aging housing stock, shrinking households that align poorly with the predominantly large housing available.

Armin Amrolia, Executive Director of Development Strategies at BC Housing, brought forward several examples of successful projects, emphasizing the collaborative roles of non-profit agencies and local governments. Jada Basi, CitySpace's Manager of Housing and Community Planning, presented a toolbox of policies that small communities could adopt to increase supply of affordable housing.

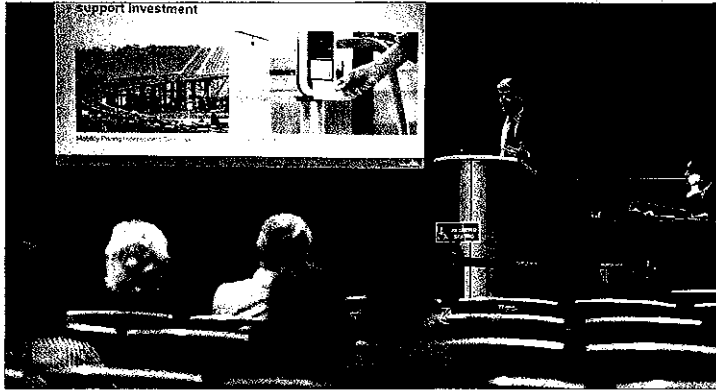
In concluding the session, Port Moody Mayor Mike Clay presented an overview of the work of the UBCM Special Committee on Housing, which will hold its next meeting in mid-October.

Green Party Address

UBCM is pleased to welcome Dr. Andrew Weaver, BC Green Party leader, who will address delegates at 10:45am today.



Forum Focus: Transit, Childcare



Delegates attending the Large Urban Communities Forum heard presentations on two key issues facing British Columbians: public transit and child and youth care.

The first panel saw the CEO of TransLink, Kevin Desmond, and the CEO of BC Transit, Manuel Achadinha joined on stage by Dr. Anthony Perl, Professor of Urban Studies and Political Science at Simon Fraser University to discuss the future of public transit in B.C.

Themes of changing rider demographics, increased ridership and environmental sustainability united the speakers, as did the topic of emerging technologies and their potential to revolutionize public transit and rider mobility. "Cities are the places where shifting travel away from carbon fuelled car travel is possible and will pay big dividends," said Dr. Perl. Desmond and Achadinha outlined their organizations' commitment to environmentally friendly fleets of electric buses and transit networks supported by LEED infrastructure. All three speakers stressed the importance of improving mobility and service delivery today, while also planning for the future needs of communities.

During the second panel, delegates heard from Dr. Bonnie Henry, Deputy Provincial Health Officer, Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care, Sharon Gregson from the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and Chris Bone, Manager of Social Planning at the City of Prince George.

Dr. Henry's presentation focused on a recent report titled, Is 'Good,' Good Enough: The Health and Well-Being of Children and Youth in BC. Dr. Henry informed the crowd that "overall, BC's children and youth are doing well, but there are some things that we must pay attention to, specifically how gender and geography result in substantial disparities in a child's health."

Ms. Gregson's presentation focused on advocacy for \$10 a day childcare in B.C. She painted a picture of the struggles faced by B.C. families due to the high costs of professional care and the lack of available spaces in regulated care facilities throughout the province. Gregson said that B.C. is in fact a "laggard" when it comes to innovative solutions for childcare, falling behind many European countries and Quebec. The solutions proposed by involve the establishment of new legislation, the Early Care and Learning Act, transferring childcare into the Ministry of Education, raising the wages of all Early Childhood Educators to \$25 per hour and establishing a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as the new educational standard for the sector. A \$10/day childcare system would not only create benefits for children, parents and educators, but also for the macro-economy, as it has the potential to create \$1.3 billion in revenues for the province.

Uncivil Civic Engagement

In a clinic Tuesday, presenter Kathleen Higgins highlighted recent legal issues aimed at addressing uncivil behaviour by members of the public. Ms. Higgins, partner with Norton Rose Fulbright LLP, noted that civic engagement has been on the rise at the local government level as citizens have a broader number of platforms with which to express their views on projects, policies, bylaws and other local matters.

The vexing question for local government elected officials and staff alike is 'where does civil discourse end and political incivility begin?'

Ms. Higgins observed that uncivil behaviour has risen since the 1970s with an increased polarization among political views coupled with major changes in the media environment. Social media provides individuals with uncivil behaviours with unprecedented capacity and opportunity for disseminating their views.

With the clinic focusing on the increase of disruptive behaviour by citizens towards local government council members and staff, Ms. Higgins provided some steps and options that could be taken to limit such conduct – including development of procedure bylaw or even legal actions dealing with defamation, restraining orders or other approaches.

Higgins provided examples of recent court cases where local governments commenced civil action against individuals due to behaviour that was disruptive to local government business.

Higgins spoke to the importance for civic leaders to model and foster civil behaviour, quoting Goethe, who said, "kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound".

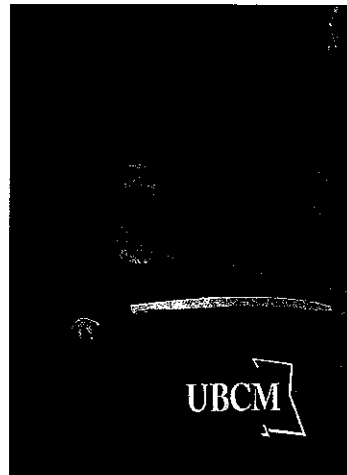
Moving Towards Zero Waste in BC

A clinic Tuesday explored resources for local governments to pursue zero waste. From the implementation of plastic bag bans to encouraging the construction industry to think upstream during procurement and purchasing, waste management was explored with an emphasis on reconsidering all steps in a product's life with the goal of reducing or eliminating waste.

Councillor Sue Maxwell of Whistler spoke on how the BC Intermunicipal Working Group on Zero Waste has submitted a Convention resolution calling for the Province of BC – one of only 2 provinces that have not done so yet – to implement a Zero Waste Strategy. Their recommendations include demonstrating the business case for industry and communities to pursue zero waste, and enhancing Extended Producer Responsibility programs that drive industry to move from a linear economy to a circular one, where reusable waste and recycling become primary resources for new production.

National Zero Waste Council Chair, Mayor Malcolm Brodie of Richmond, outlined how the Council collaborates with business, government and communities to act on national and international levels to drive waste prevention initiatives upstream. The Council works to enable cities and businesses to be competitive globally by illustrating the business case for preventing waste. Their two key strategies are to change how goods are designed and produced, and to drive behaviour change across all sectors. The Zero Waste Council's annual Convention will be held in Vancouver on November 1st.

Harvinder Aujja with the Recycling Council of BC described how RCBC evolved from a hotline, to a website and smartphone app to help people identify how to recycle almost everything. RC3C operates through partnerships and the sponsorship of a handful of municipalities who have embedded the RCBC widget online on how to recycle, which has reduced local governments' burden of responding to questions in-house.



In an address Tuesday, Federation of Canadian Municipalities President Jenny Gerbasi highlighted the organization's advocacy efforts with regard to the delivery of infrastructure investments contained in Federal Budget 2017. Ms. Gerbasi also referenced FCM's recent primer on cannabis legalization.