

Anmore Advisor

SPRING 2020



Council Update

- MAYOR JOHN McEWEN

NOW FOR SOME GOOD NEWS...

It's been tough to find good news in recent months as the world struggles with the traumatic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. So if there was ever a time we needed to hear some good news, it's now. And here it is: Financial Sustainability.

We are very pleased to announce that Anmore has achieved its target to build the reserves it needs to repair and replace existing infrastructure as well as meet our service commitments. We are currently setting aside \$1,122,400 each year, which includes a conservative amount to replace the future Anmore Civic Building.

This incredibly important milestone seemed out of reach just six years ago when Council made the decision to take action to deal with the significant financial, safety and service risks we faced as a community if we did not generate the funds needed to replace our infrastructure.

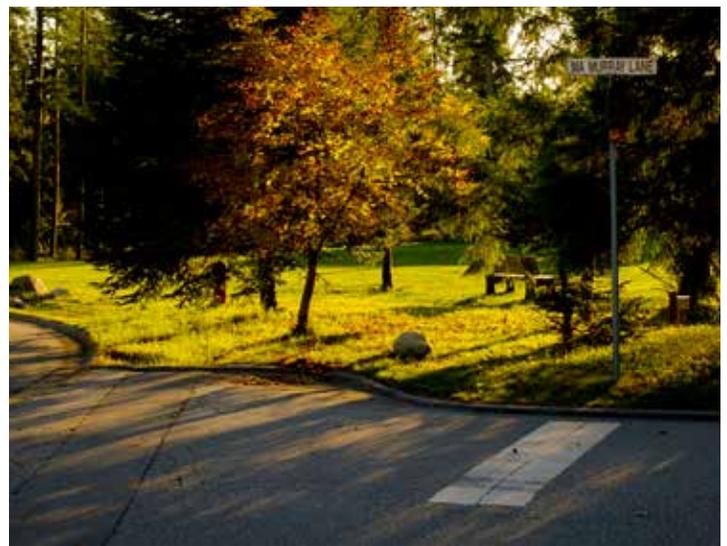
Council was first made aware of the infrastructure funding gap more than 10 years ago, when a well-respected resident pushed for the need to address this risk. The issue was brought to the forefront for Council to deal with in 2013. Since then, Council has had to make tough decisions regarding tax increases and has sought outside expertise to identify how we can bridge the gap between aging infrastructure needs and a serious lack of funds to deal with them.

The Village engaged Vann Struth Consulting to develop a Financial Sustainability Plan in 2013, and the report confirmed what some members on Council knew to be a bleak outlook for our future financial viability as a small municipality.

“The most important conclusion from the analysis is that regardless of the density of new housing development or the rate of growth, the Village has insufficient revenues to simultaneously maintain existing services, to pay off the existing backlog of infrastructure replacement costs, and to save for the replacement of all of the new infrastructure that will be built over the next 20 years.”

- Village of Anmore Financial Sustainability Plan, 2013,
Vann Struth Consulting Group Inc.

The report indicated that we had a \$9 million deficit in our infrastructure replacement reserves. We were not sustainable without some drastic changes in our approach to taxation and development, including diversifying the tax base to be less reliant on residential taxation only. So we took action.



Presenting the Anmore Advisor – our newly named newsletter.

Congratulations to Gina Vinter who submitted the name and won our community contest.

COVID-19 Safety Reminders

In order to protect their safety, please don't approach staff or contractors who are working throughout the Village. If you do want to communicate, stay back at least two metres.

Please note that the Village Hall is currently closed to the public in order to protect staff safety and do our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Check our anmore.com/COVID-19 webpage for important information, links to the support available to residents and how best to contact Village staff while the Hall is closed. Staff continue to work on a rotational basis in the Hall and from home.

Eliminating Our Deficit and Building Reserves

For the past six years, our Council has approved tax increases of upwards of 10% per year in order to allow the Village to set aside money to eliminate our deficit and replace our aging infrastructure, some of which was at dire risk of failure, including Sunnyside Road. As well, funding was needed to construct a civic building to replace the house that had been used as a Village Hall since our incorporation in 1987 as that building had significant structural issues and was not designed to function as a Village Hall. When you break down the annual property tax increases during this period, an average of 2% was for annual operational increases and the remaining 8% was used to start building our reserves.

Additional Prudent Financial Decisions

These tax increases were paired with prudent financial decisions to reduce expenses and streamline operations. This included approving in-house staff for building inspections, bylaw enforcement and development services. These positions were previously contracted out at a much higher hourly rate. Further, when the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) was hired in 2015, we selected a candidate who could perform the function of both CAO and Chief Financial Officer, where previously we had two positions on payroll for these important functions.

We also commissioned additional reports to help us determine how much we needed to be putting aside each year to replace our infrastructure assets like roads, parks, trails and stormwater systems. Part of that analysis involved determining the condition of those assets. We undertook a Parks Master Plan (2014), Water Utility Master Plan (2015), Roads Condition Assessment (2016) and a Stormwater Master Plan (2019). The information collected through these reports was collated into an all-encompassing Asset Management Plan, originally completed in 2017 and updated in 2019 with the stormwater information. The Asset Management Plan showed us that as of 2019, we are now putting enough funds aside each year



(Fixed Asset Levy) to replace our current infrastructure, and it includes a conservative amount expected for the replacement of a new Civic Building. These reports are all available on our website at anmore.com/village-hall/municipal-reports.

The early identification of the financial issue we faced over ten years ago, and the subsequent action taken, has put our Village in a position unmatched throughout the Province. Most local governments across Canada – and around the world – are still struggling to address their infrastructure funding shortfalls, Anmore is now among the very few that can claim that they have achieved this level of financial sustainability.

Reaching our goal

Thanks to reaching our goal, we are in a much different place this year when it comes to our 2020 budget discussions. I'm happy to share that we have been able to significantly lower the tax increase for this year.

We are now only increasing our Fixed Asset Levy by an inflationary amount. We will continue to collect data and update our plans, making adjustments as time goes on as better information is available, but for now we are in great shape. At the end of 2019, we have \$10,995,000 in reserves – more than triple our annual operating budget of \$3 million. We are also debt free and have the ability, if needed, to borrow up to \$20 million.

This financial security could not have come at a better time. As we all deal with the new reality that we are facing as a society since COVID-19 struck, it has been even more apparent that sound financial planning practices are critical to supporting our community in a crisis. It has given us some room to extend the utility bill payment deadline to help residents who are dealing with job loss or other financial impacts, and ensures we can continue to deliver core services to our community.

I am proud of the work Council has done to get us here, and their unwavering resolve to stay the course because it was the right thing to do. But I am also very aware that our success is based on our residents paying their taxes each year, understanding that the need to be financially sustainable is an imperative for our future success. We thank you for your support and patience as we worked through these financial challenges.

Now that we have a strong fiscal foundation, we are looking towards next steps to ensure our continued financial sustainability and provide opportunities for alternative housing options for current and potential residents. To accomplish this, we are reviewing all development opportunities and considering alternative forms of housing and commercial components with each application. Our strategic goal is to have a complete community; one where you do not have to get in your car and drive to the next town to buy your essentials, and with housing options that offer young families a more affordable home and long-time residents an opportunity to downsize while staying in the Village they love.

2020/2021 Capital Project

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Village has secured grants from TransLink to provide safer connections and paths for pedestrians and bicycles as well as road condition improvements along our Major Road Network (East Road and Sunnyside Road).

Under the funding program, TransLink covers 75% of the costs and the Village contributes 25%. As a small community, Anmore benefits from a much better cost-sharing agreement compared to larger neighbouring municipalities who have to contribute 50% of the costs.

The two-year construction plan will involve extensive upgrades to the sidewalks and pathways along Sunnyside from First Avenue to Buntzen Lake as well as from the intersection of Sunnyside Road along East Road to the Mossom Creek crossing. We will also be incorporating separated bike lanes north and south along Sunnyside Road from First Avenue.



Getting Ready for Spring

HEADING INTO THE SPRING FRESHET SEASON

We are lucky to have natural watercourses that weave their way through our Village. These watercourses are a natural component of our storm water management system, as they convey water from all our homes and roadways.

As an essential component of our conveyance system, we need to be diligent over debris buildup in these watercourses, as a restricted watercourse can cause severe flooding damage to properties. If you believe you have a buildup on or near your property, please reach out to Village as it is important to remember that watercourses are protected under Federal and Provincial regulations, and the Village can provide guidance on appropriate maintenance.

AGE SEWER PROJECT UPDATE

We anticipate receiving provincial government approval to become a member of the Greater Vancouver Sewerage & Drainage District in the coming weeks.

This is one of the last steps in formalizing our ability to connect to the regional sewer system. The Village and City of Port Moody have now entered into a sewer servicing agreement for the conveyance of sewage from the new sewer connections.

Discussions are still taking place between Anmore Green Estates strata and School District No. 43 regarding routing options; however, at this time it is still expected that a physical connection will be constructed by the end of summer.



Join us for our first Community Wildfire Prevention Information Session on May 7 at 7:00 p.m. If you haven't already registered, please do so by emailing karen.elrick@anmore.com. This session will be run virtually via GoTo Meeting.



VILLAGE OF ANMORE

REMINDER

Utility bills are due July 24, 2020. Payments should be made online or by cheque through the Village Hall mail slot when possible. If you prefer to make the payment in cash or by debit (no credit cards accepted), you will need to make an appointment by emailing village.hall@anmore.com.

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