

INAUGURAL ADDRESS by MAYOR LOIS E. JACKSON

December 1, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen ... families and friends ... senior staff members ... welcome to the Inaugural Meeting of your new Council.

May I introduce, beginning on my far right, Councillor Scott Hamilton, Councillor Anne Peterson and Councillor George Hawksworth. On my immediate left Councillor Heather King, Councillor Robert Campbell, and Councillor Bruce McDonald. Thank you.

I would like to extend Council's thanks to Her Honour Judge Kimberley Arthur-Leung, Reverend Jim Short and Suzanne Norton, to Pipe Major Colin Abel and to the Police and Fire Honour Guards. Your participation here this evening is so much appreciated. Thank you.

Tonight is the first night of a three-year journey this Council and municipal staff will take together with the citizens of Delta to preserve and protect the quality of life in our beautiful municipality.

Many initiatives undertaken by the previous Council remain to be completed. And, of course, there are many initiatives which we will continue to work on.

We will continue to investigate new research and technology in order to identify innovative solutions to the emerging problems of climate change.

We will continue to work with other levels of government finding resolutions to existing and emerging issues.

And, we will continue to improve our community infrastructure replacement and renewal, traffic calming, bylaw enforcement, landscaping and the planting of trees.

We will continue to appreciate and work with the many organizations in our community who contribute so much energy to the benefit of our people. From business, commerce and industry initiatives, to sporting and music organizations, from Rotary and Lions Clubs to Scouts, Guides and Cadets ... all of these and so many more who serve our residents with heart and dedication ... ordinary people coming together to do their part to make Delta a better place.

In general, there are many challenges that lie ahead for us, many things that are beyond our direct control. Municipal government is the closest to the people. Often, there are issues which you feel we should and can solve. But the reality is, sometimes we can't. At the risk of repeating myself, sometimes things are beyond our jurisdiction and control.

What we can do, and what we promise we will do, is carry your wishes and concerns forward.

To provide opportunities for public input, I will be taking the Mayor's Task Force to our schools and neighbourhoods to discuss with you what's going right, what's not going right, and how, together, we can make our community a better place to live.

We will listen to you and we will act.

We will keep Delta's financial house in order.

We will continue to make improvements to keep our roads, streets and communities safe.

We will support our senior and CUPE staff along with fire, police and emergency workers.

And so together, we embark on the next three years. And before you, see the Council that will dedicate their time and effort to ensure good government in Delta.

We were elected as individuals, but I remind us that Council works as a whole, by majority vote.

While each member of Council can and will be available to you all, to listen to concerns and suggestions, only Council as a whole can act on your behalf to form policy, make changes to bylaws and zoning, or to approve projects.

I know you will agree with me when I say that Delta is one of the most beautiful places in the province.

We have worked hard to create that and when I say, we, I mean all of us – Council, staff and the people of Delta. We must continue that work, to preserve and protect our quality of life. That is the challenge for all of us in the three years ahead.

I have, this evening, spoken to you in general terms. Over the next month, I will be setting out specific visions and goals for this Council. Therefore, in January, I will be announcing our committees and committee chairs for the coming year.

Having just returned to Canada on a 15-hour flight from Istanbul, Turkey, I cannot help but note that our world in Delta looks very different.

It was astonishing to see police with sub-machine guns in the Istanbul Airport and heavy security in the hotel as a result of world conflict.

But on the other hand, I was also encouraged to find that in many developing and in fact developed countries, the local municipal governments from around the world are entrenching rights of local authority into the Constitutions of their central and federal governments.

Frankly, it was embarrassing to tell the 560 mayors from all over the world, that Canadian local councils are not recognized as a level of government in this country, but we simply sit at the pleasure of the provincial governments.

Our contingent of four locally elected representatives and four staff from Canada were received with enthusiasm from all corners of the globe. It is my continued and firm belief that local governments working together can make world changes for our peoples that the senior levels of government cannot.

To conclude, therefore, over the next month I will be formulating Council's direction for the future as we look forward to accomplishing much over the next three years.

On behalf of Council, I thank each of you for the support you've given in the past. I ask for that support again. I have said many times, I cannot do it alone. You cannot do it alone. But, by working together, we can achieve much.

Thank you.