

Notes from the Thursday Evening Open Discussion Forum on Governance Issues

Advice/Observations for Prospective Candidates/Newly Elected

- Family 1st, Job 2nd, Council 3rd
- You have the ability to contribute to your community in a positive way
- Get involved and go to meetings before you run
- Prepare yourself for how people, especially friends, will see or treat you differently
- Prepare to have all social events turn into political debates
- You get voted in for your popularity and leave unpopular
- Expect things to be different when you get elected
- What you thought you could do may not be attainable
- Ask questions
- Develop trust with staff
- Stick with the policy level – not the staff/operation level
- Speak positively about staff and council
- Come and observe meetings or interview incumbents or CAO
- Read previous minutes, Community Charter, OCP/zoning, policy manual, bylaws, Roberts Rules
- You need to like people
- Recognize your constituents – engage the community
- Motivate and encourage
- Take issues seriously; but don't take yourself too seriously
- It's a calling – its NOT about the money
- Need to be comfortable with conflict
- You will find out who your true friends are
- Very large learning curve
- Take your time – read past reports, learn the Charter, etc.
- Time goes by quickly
- Trust your staff to know what they are doing
- Respect your home life – family, spouse – make time for them
- Run for the right reasons
- Your role on council can come between you and your friends – community relationships
- Pick/choose your battles
- Make a list of why you want to run
- It's not about you – contain your spirit
- You are going to lose once in a while

Positives About Being an Elected Official

- The campaign and getting elected
- Having a problem presented and getting it fixed
- The little stuff – getting a little something accomplished for many people
- You learn about yourself
- Always something happening
- Community engagement
- Little successes

Negatives About being an Elected Official

- Can't have a bad day
- Some like the problems more than the solutions
- Some problems you can't solve and they won't go away
- Elected work can cut into your "real work" or day job – you need an employer who understands
- Hard to recruit younger people to the job – needs a living wage\
- Can't share some things – isolation can be an issue

Examples of Accomplishments While Elected

- Staff report to public on what we planned vs what we got done – North Cowichan
- 5 elected officials working together in the same region – Columbia Valley
- Molson Brewery coming to Chilliwack
- First Nation collaboration on a roundabout with some beautiful art and writings – Chilliwack
- Working closer with our 2 First Nations Bands – Columbia Valley
- Working closer with our 5 First Nations Bands – Merritt
- Working with a green energy plant to get it running – Merritt
- Working with an arts council so that membership increased 7-fold in the last year – Merritt

Suggestions for Future LGLA Events

- LGLA should have role playing, Roberts Rules, put motions on the table, etc.
- Let new people know how long things take to get to the table
- Basic parliamentary procedures
- How to run a meeting
- Procedure for citizens to come forward with concerns
- Legal issues
- Self care – prepare families
- Powers and responsibilities of elected officials
- Prepare/review a yearly cycle/calendar
- Budget/financial training
- Acronyms!