

## **President / Chairman's Report - AGM - October 17, 2017**

Welcome to the 61st Annual General Meeting of the Millican Ogden Community Association. This City has grown, and is growing, so quickly that many of the many Calgary communities have little in the way of a history or character. What I like about this community – Millican, Ogden Lynnwood – is that we have both. The community has an interesting history dating back to the days when it was a small village and connecting the district to primarily the C P Rail yards and its contribution to wartime efforts, but also to the former Imperial Oil Refinery operation. And the community has an interesting character and we are trying our best to maintain that small town feel. Many of us feel that this area is like a diamond in the rough, but on one hand we are moving into some very exciting times of redevelopment, but on the other, there is no doubt that we feeling the effects of being almost inner-city as we fall victim to the growth of the city.

Once again this past 12 month period has been an extremely exciting and productive year for the Board, our staff, and our volunteers.

By now I am sure you have all seen the new Community Entrance Sign located on 18<sup>th</sup> Street. We have had some very nice comments come in and I want to thank all of those who have expressed their comments directly and on social media. This was a major accomplishment for 2017 because it has been a long time coming. It was long-time resident, volunteer, and past Board member Larry Muraski who first raised the subject of a community entrance sign back in the late 1990's. Over the years Larry, and others, tried at various times to obtain the required approvals for the signs but constantly ran into roadblocks with various City Departments. It was a frustrating experience and over time people just moved on. About three years ago Vice President Ray Jasper took on the project. We had some City money left over in old community improvement account and we had to use that money or we would lose it, and it seemed like a good opportunity to resurrect the sign project. Through Ray's persistence, patience, [and sometimes impatience], he was able to successfully work through the issues with the City. Ray worked with a sign company that specializes in these monument type signs to create the design and arrange for the manufacture. Ray, along with help of a couple of other local volunteers, one being Bob Haslam, then worked with the City departments to identify a location and to complete the paperwork to get the approvals for the one sign that is now installed. In fact, there are two more signs very similar that are now sitting in storage. Ray is working with the City reps to confirm a location and obtain the approvals for a sign to be located on northbound Ogden Road somewhere in the proximity of the entrance to the Glenmore Inn. With any luck that sign could be installed as early as next year. A third sign is planned for Millican Road as you enter the community from Ogden Road but the City does have plans to do some road improvements to Millican Road in advance of the Greenline. Through that process though, the City reps will be working with Ray to identify a suitable location for the sign

so that the approval process can move quickly, but I suspect it will be a couple of years at least before we see that one installed. Anyway, I want to thank Larry Muraski for continuing to push for these community entrance signs, Bob Haslam for his help, and to Ray Jasper for his diligent work in making the project a reality.

I was lucky enough to represent the community at the grand opening of the new interchange a few months ago. There is no doubt it is a major improvement primarily to the east/west traffic flow, but the underpass connection of Ogden Road to 24<sup>th</sup> Street is pretty good too. I did a couple of TV and radio interviews that day and while we are grateful to see it become completed, I took the opportunity to explain a little background. It was back in approximately 1985 when I was MOCA's President for the first time, when the City held an Open House at the Glenmore Inn to outline the interchange / overpass that was being proposed. I am sure there were some design changes but what I remember is that it was somewhat similar to what has now been built. Anyway, what I remember is that they said at the time that it would be about 15 years before it would be happening. Well it has taken 30 years. We are still grateful but it has been a long wait.

By the way, have you had a chance to see the public artwork on the underside of the interchange. There are six mosaics located on the pillars in the underside of the interchange and I think they look quite attractive. They do reflect the history of the Ogden neighbourhood and C P Rail. There is quite a lot there but I believe it was designed so that you might see something different each time you drive through.

Our Board found itself in position this past spring of having to make a major decision with respect to the Outdoor Swimming Pool. MOCA has been the operator of that pool for, give or take, 20 years. The history as I recall, is that City Council was concerned about the operating losses that they were experiencing in the City budget deliberations, and subsequently created the Calgary Outdoor Swimming Pool Association {COSPA} to become the manager of the outdoor pools. I think there are 8 in the City. COSPA then approached the various community associations to become the operators as it was believed that the communities could operate them more cost effectively which was no doubt a fact. The MOCA Board at the time jumped at the opportunity because, as we all know, the outdoor pool is a valuable asset to the families in the community, and this Board believes that too. But about three years ago, we upgraded our accounting system which gave us a much more accurate picture of our profit/loss number of our various operating areas, and it was clear that the pool was experiencing an operating loss each and every year – to various degrees of course as weather is certainly a factor- but MOCA was in fact subsidizing the operations of the outdoor pool. In itself this was not a problem because it is important to the community but the degree of subsidy varied for a variety of reasons, and was somewhat dependent on the salary grant that we had to

apply for each year and without that, our operating losses would have been significant. The point is that as a community association, we have very few options to generate revenue and we simply do not have the resources to subsidize the pool operations over the long term. We are not looking to make money with the pool, but nor can we afford to lose money -- so we approached COSPA with the request that they agree to reimburse our losses in operating expenses. They declined, leaving us with very little alternatives. COSPA did agree to take over the operating of the outdoor pool ensuring that it would remain available to residents so that was good. We have no idea how they made out financially but the pool was well used over the summer.

Another accomplishment over this past year was a review of MOCA's Bylaws. There were a number of areas within the current Bylaws that needed some tweaking but whenever you do a Bylaw review it turns into quite a job, and there is a process that needs to be followed. We will be dealing with the proposed amendments later in this Agenda and requesting your approval so they can be submitted to the Province for their approval.

I am sure you have seen the upgrades that the City is doing with baseball diamond next to us here. They are doing quite a job. But they are installing an outfield fence, and that fence encroaches into the boundaries of our Lease that we hold with the City, and this requires an amendment to the boundary outline. On the surface this is not a big thing but the City won't do a simple amendment – they require an entire new lease document. This becomes a major project and we expect will be a two year ordeal.

But on top of that, we also lease the area on the west side of the arena where the Calgary Stampeders Bantam Football Club have their clubhouse. When we did our mechanical upgrades to the arena a couple of years ago, the arena equipment reduced the amount of storage space that was available to them on the cement pad, and this year the pad was made larger to address their storage problem. The new pad now extends outside the existing boundary of that lease, so it too will have to be rewritten at the same time. Then we will have to do a new sublease with the football club making sure that the terms of the sub-lease follow form with the City's primary lease.

I wish that I had more to report on the prospect of seniors housing in the neighbourhood. This has been an ongoing issue for many years as you know, but it is extremely complex. It would be so much simpler if a private developer would come along, but even that is not happening. This Board, previous Boards, and I am sure future Boards, will continue to support the need for seniors housing, but speaking for this Board, we continue to try to move this idea forward, but we are not developers. We do not have the resources to buy up property and arrange for the construction of a

seniors housing complex. All we have work with is to try to find a suitable location on City owned land, and then work with the City to get the approvals for development, and then to find a developer who will handle the project. But understandably, suggesting that any publicly owned open space be developed, is a very controversial subject, even for a good project like seniors housing. And so, please be assured that this Board will continue to work on the goal of having seniors housing in the Ogden area, but there are no magical solutions.

And, just to update you on a few other outstanding matters that I know are of interest to all residents.

- **Lynnview Ridge** – We were hoping to see the area open up this year but that did not happen. The reason is that it has been such a dry summer that the new grass did not progress as well as expected and Parks has not signed off to accept the site. When this happens, the current chain link fence will come down and a post & cable fence will be installed. The good news is that the end is in sight and we can soon begin to have meaningful discussions about how the site can be used.
- **Refinery Park** – It is difficult to see the improvements that have been made this year but I am told that they have made significant progress with installation of new pathways, new top soil in the bare areas with seeding, and the planting of approximately 5000 new trees and shrubs. All good news as this will complete the physical construction of the reclamation. The park will remain closed for another full year to allow time for the new plantings to catch. Then the same process will occur with Parks needing to accept the area before it can be officially opened up.
- **Traffic Signals for 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Ogden Road** – As you will recall, your MOCA Board has lobbied the city for some time now to have traffic signals installed at this location to improve the management of traffic at this intersection, particularly for left turning vehicles. I have been assured that these traffic signals are in the City budget for Q4 of 2017. Construction is scheduled to start the week of December 4 with completion not expected until mid-January, depending on the weather of course.

We have spoken a lot over the past couple of years about our plans to expand and modernize this community hall. As discussed many times, this building is not getting any younger and it would be irresponsible of us to not recognize the need to put this building in a condition that would allow it to be available for residents for the next 30 or 40 years. It is in dire need of some lifecycle mechanical improvements, but to deal with that alone still leaves us with an old building. We need to look to the future and not just

upgrade, but to modernize. You will remember that the seed money for this project came from the former Ogden Legion Branch 154. The expansion project is still progressing and we do now have our Development Permit from the City, and with any luck, construction will start in the spring. More information will follow as we know it.

I am sure you are aware of the two long range planning documents that are currently underway. The Millican Ogden Area Redevelopment Plan, and the South Hill Station Area Plan. Your Civic Affairs Committee made up of some Board members and some local volunteers have spent countless hours working with City planners over the past several months with respect to the future vision of the community that is outlined in these documents. Unfortunately we have not been pleased with the public consultation process and there are several sections within these planning documents where we have concerns and we do not agree with the vision of the planners. There are areas where we feel that the vision outlined is not realistic, or achievable, in an already existing and well established neighbourhood. Both of these documents are now scheduled to go to City Council for approval in the fall but in the meantime, the City is now trying to establish a new review committee which I sincerely hope is not an attempt by the City to find a new group of individuals who will be more accepting of the vision they propose.

The new season is opening real well at the arena. We have a new arena manager who has shown herself to be quite capable and we promoted one of our arena attendants to the position of Assistant Manager. They are supported by other staff and the year looks good. The prime time ice is fully rented out and they are looking at opportunities to make better use of the non-prime time ice availability. Jack Setters Arena has a reputation of having one of the best ice surfaces compared to other arenas in the City, and we want to maintain that reputation.

The Southeast Calgary Community Resource Centre for which MOCA is the official agent and operator, continues to be an area of operations that we are very proud of. Yes, it is an agency that provides a number of programs and services to that area of the population that require higher needs. It serves not only the Ogden area, but well beyond, and in fact the entire service area includes about 40 communities in the southeast corner of the city. The programs are funded by the United Way, Child and Area Family Services, and FCSS- Family and Community Support Services. You will see a lot more detail in a few minutes when there will be a presentation to explain more about what actually happens at the Resource Centre

You have heard me say before, that one of my favourite sayings from my days with the City is this “for as big as this City is – it will never be this small again! “I say this because as this City grows, and it is growing, we become more and more considered to be inner-city, and more and more affected by that growth, by non-local traffic. Effectively, we are a victim of the growth of the City. I have heard people say “Why

can't Ogden go back to the way it used to be?" Well that is not going to happen – so the question then becomes – How do we deal with it and how can we benefit by it?

That is exactly what your Board is primarily working on at this point. We know that the Greenline, being the future LRT system, is going to run through our community. It has to run through our community in order to get to the points south where they really need it, to get drivers into public transit. We expect that we will have access to three LRT Stations when the project proceeds – Lynnwood Station being Ogden Road and Millican Road, Ogden Station being at 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and South Hill Station being just south of Glenmore Trail. The future LRT alignments are now pretty much in place and there is still some planning work to be done particularly around the stations themselves. We are hoping for what the City calls Transit Oriented Development, or TOD around the 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Station which it is anticipated there should be some 3 and 4 storey buildings for office, commercial and apartment style residential, creating the beginning of a village style district along Ogden Road. Aside from simple access to the LRT, it could redefine our community for generations to come and really allow the Millican Ogden Lynnwood community to become attractive to younger families. As we all have said, Ogden is a bit of diamond in the rough, and while we have an awful lot to offer residents, we have to get those younger folks in here, to give us a look. With the new business development in Quarry Park, there has to be a lot of people who might like to live closer to where they work and we would like to see those people give this community some consideration.

As I have explained in the newsletter, there are a few Greenline related projects that will need some preliminary work and some of that may start fairly soon – possible as early as this fall. By preliminary work, I mean utility work and other related stuff. As the construction season nears an end, it is difficult to determine what, if any, activity we will see this year, but we were told that some work could start as early as this fall. The following is a brief outline of the projects that could see some preliminary work.

- Reconfiguration of the north ball diamond at Pop Davies Park to accommodate the proposed parking lot upgrades.
- Improvements to the grade on Millican Road to reduce the slope of the road. I am guessing but I am thinking that because the LRT tracks at that point will be a level crossing, the road will need to be built up to meet the level of the LRT tracks. Actual road improvements will likely happen next year but you might see some utility work this fall.
- Preparation for a new parking lot at the south end of Pop Davies Park to support the sports fields on the south end of the Park. The area along Ogden Road where the players now park will not be available to them once the track construction starts.
- Utility replacement on 78<sup>th</sup> Avenue east of Ogden Road. C P Rail wants to close the level crossing at 69<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a new access road through to Ogden Dale

Road becomes necessary. The obvious choice was 78<sup>th</sup> Avenue for a variety of reasons. The proposed road improvements will involve a new underpass that will go under the railway tracks and under the future LRT tracks. The City promises several information sessions to explain to residents, particularly those living close by, what is going to happen and why.

- Preparation for a new road – 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue - along the extreme south side of the South Hill Mobile Home Park. This new road will eventually become the new east/west connection between Shepard Road and 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Again some preliminary work could begin this fall with the majority of construction in 2018 with new entrance ways to the mobile home park.

And so it begins!! The actual Greenline LRT is still a long way off, but because of where our community is located, a lot of retrofitting must occur to allow the LRT to happen. This is going to be difficult for all of us over the next few years but there is not much we can do about it. Like it or not, we are a victim of the growth of the City, but at the end of the day we expect there will be benefits. We will have direct access to the LRT and hopefully some new development along Ogden Road. Unfortunately, the end of the day is several years away.

We are still selling the book the Ogden Whistle which many of you will remember a book describing the history of the community from 1875 to 1975. It was written by Walter Boote who owned Ogden Service Station and that business is still carrying on under different ownership of course. Walter went on to become a City Alderman. Many small towns will create a history book to outline the early days of the district and the people that built it, but to my knowledge the Ogden Whistle is the only history book that is written about a district within the City of Calgary, and might be the only history book written about a district with a major city anywhere. Anyway, as part of our Anniversary Celebrations last yera, the Board determined that there was still some interest in the book and so with the financial help of C P Rail, we proceeded with a reprint and these books are still available at a small cost of \$ 35.00. It does only describe the period up to 1975 but it does a great job of describing the area as it developed over the early years and the relationship with C P Rail. .

The Community Association hosts a number of social events including the Summer Carnival that we spoke about, the Community Clean-up which again was very successful, Jelly Bean Dances, the Lego Contest, the Winter Carnival, and others. All great events that we intend to continue with. But for all of these events, they rely on the support of sponsors, and of course volunteers. Our staff do a great job co-ordinating these events, which we believe are essential to the fabric of the community.

Going forward - The primary focus for the upcoming year will be to continue our operation with the arena and the Resource Centre, but also to continue our work with the City planners on the Geenline issues, the Millican Ogden Area Redevelopment Plan, and the South Hill Station Area Plan, as well the many other community issues that come up from time to time through our Civic Affairs Committee. And of course to keep the Community Hall Expansion project moving forward.

So in closing, as you might know, MOCA, by default, is essentially a facility operator. And as such, we own and operate the Community Hall and lower level Lounge, and Jack Setters Arena. And we operate the South East Calgary Community Resource Centre – formally known as the Family Resource Centre. And of course we are actively involved in the quality of life issues that like traffic, community planning, Bylaw enforcement issues, and others, Purchasing and maintaining a membership in MOCA not just allows a member to vote at this meeting, but shows in a small way the support for the good work done by the volunteers and staff on behalf of the residents.

And so in closing, I want to explain that I have been so fortunate over the past four years to have a great group of Board members. As I have said many times – when you surround yourself with good people, good things happen. I want express my personal thanks to each and every one of the current Board members for their dedication to the community, for their various contributions, and specifically for their commitment to the Millican Ogden Community Association.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention a vote of gratitude to the families of the Board members and volunteers, and even the staff. Board members and volunteers often spend time away from the home for meetings, or projects, and sometimes they are even working on community matters while at home. Without the support of the families, the commitment of giving back to the community may not be possible. Thank you to the families.

Again, it has been my pleasure to serve on MOCA's Board, and particularly to have served as your Chairman over the past three years. There is much yet to do and I look forward to the upcoming year.

Thank you.

Rick Smith // Chairman/President