

President Report - November 2018

Firstly I want to thank all those who attended the MOCA Annual General Meeting on October 16. I also want to congratulate all of the Directors were re-elected to the Board for another two year term, and of course the new Directors who put their name forward and were successful in their election to the Board. As I have mentioned before, the AGM is our opportunity as the MOCA Board, to be accountable to you the residents, and more specifically, to the membership. We presented our Annual Financial Report as well as we outlined many of the accomplishments of the past year, and a bit of a forecast as to what we have planned for the upcoming year, and beyond. Unfortunately because of publishing deadlines, I must write this in advance of the actual AGM so I will have more specifics in my Report next month.

On the issue of cannabis, it became legal to consume on October 17. I am sure that you are aware that the proposal to designate certain sites in Ward 9 including a site in Ogden, has been withdrawn. To clear, we at MOCA are not opposed to identifying and designating legal consumption sites, but we did take the position that the selection of a spot in the unmaintained field just below the Glenmore Inn Plaza, was a silly choice as there was just no logic to it. On a related subject, several applications were submitted to operate as retail cannabis outlets - a couple were approved, and a couple remain under review as I write this. For the retail stores that do open, we expect that they will operate in a professional manner, with quality products and excellent customer service, not unlike any other retail business that would expect to succeed.

I am not going to reprint the changes that are being proposed to the bus transit system that currently services our area but suffice to say, some changes will be coming, and they could happen reasonably soon in the weeks to follow. I did publish a complete list and description of the proposed changes in my September newsletter report which is still available on the MOCA website. Just to summarize though, there will be major changes to Routes 24. Routes 72 and 73 are being eliminated and replaced by Route 43. Routes 36 and 41 through the Ogden area will not change. There have been some concerns expressed about the proposed changes to Route 24 because it is planned to run up and down 18th Street to Quarry Park, with the travel down 20A Street, and 76th Avenue to South Hill being removed. But I am also aware that with respect to Route 24, that the Calgary Transit route planners were responding to requests from Ogden residents who were asking for better transit access to the Library and other facilities in Quarry Park. Overall, the changes to the transit routes throughout the City are all intended to provide more direct service for riders to their destination, reduce travel time, and increase the frequency of bus service. Hopefully that is what happens when the changes do come into effect.

We learned in late September that the Millican Ogden Area Redevelopment that has been in progress for about 3 years now, is being deferred for undetermined period of time as there are other related internal planning documents that the City is working on that that need to catch up before these long range local plans can be properly completed. We don't disagree with this delay other than the fact that some of us have already committed many hours to this project over the past three years. But, we have not been happy with the manner in which the public consultation process has been handled to date, and we would prefer to continue our conversations with the City planners to create a long range plan for the Ogden district that is both realistic and achievable for the community.

We further learned that the alignment of the Greenline LRT near Pop Davies Park is being looked at again. The question that is being considered is whether the alignment could run down the east side of Ogden Road and avoid the expense of a tunnel under the intersection of Ogden Road and 69th Avenue. There is some logic to this alternative if the planners can make it work. We are told that the location of the future LRT station would not change being adjacent to the parking lot at Ogden Road and Millican Road, but this plan would involve the creation of a level crossing of the LRT over Ogden Road to the east side.

A periodic disruption in traffic for sure, but it would be similar to the LRT crossing on Heritage Drive near the Heritage Station and several other locations. This option could eliminate the need for a parking lot on the south end of Pop Davies Park so no impact to green space. So there are a number of benefits to this option, but it does highlight the fact that retrofitting an older community like Ogden to accommodate a light rail transit system is complex. We will continue to work with the City planners to monitor the progress.

We continue to monitor the status of the traffic signals expected at 76th Avenue and Ogden Road. All that remains is for a wooden power pole to be removed and then the actual installation of the signals can occur and be activated. We expect that the delay is likely because Enmax is caught up in other work throughout the City and they just need to fit this relatively small job into their work program. We wish we could speed this up but we have no control over the Enmax work schedule.

Our planned Community Hall Expansion Project is still progressing but at this point, we have pretty much lost this year to begin construction. Unfortunately there have been so many delays caused by all the hoops that need to be jumped through that the difficult decision had to be made to delay construction until spring. However, this does take some of the pressure off and give us at MOCA a few extra months to deal with everything that the City requires for approval. It is a complex process and nothing seems to happen quickly. We want to this right so another short delay to have everything properly in place might be the best thing. Again, we are happy to provide any information, or answer any questions you might have, about this project.

Sunday, November 11 is Remembrance Day as you know, and C P Rail are once again planning to hold a Remembrance Day Ceremony at their Cenotaph just east of the tracks at 69th Avenue and Ogden Road. All residents are invited. The ceremony will start at 10:40 and conclude about 11:15. Once again, they will be opening the Royal Canadian Pacific Pavilion for refreshments and viewing of the heritage railway cars. This Ceremony has been well attended in the past and the C P Rail organizers do a great job. It is an outside event however so you will need to dress for the weather.

We have now heard from Alberta Gaming and our next casino has been assigned for Thursday January 3 and Friday January 4, 2019. Casino events are great fundraisers for us and in fact all not-for-profit organizations. The funds generated can be critical to finance some of the important projects that arise from time to time. Equally critical though is the need for volunteers as we will need to run a total of four shifts over the two days. For those who have never participated in a casino event, the work is not hard and it can be fun.

And of course, if you are planning a social event, ie, for your family, your business, or an organization, particularly as we approach the Christmas period, please give some thought to renting the MOCA Hall, - main hall upper floor, or lower level lounge. We would appreciate your business.

As always, if you have questions or concerns that you would like to direct to me, please either call into the MOCA office, or send me an e-mail at president@millicanogdencommunity.com.

Best wishes

Rick Smith , MOCA President