

# it's your City!

## It's All About Water and Irrigation!

Many Canadian municipalities have adopted water efficiency programs. Because no one program suits every municipality, Parksville's program is tailor made for our community. Conservation is a priority and the City is proactive in implementing conservation initiatives that often set the standard for other Vancouver Island municipalities. Water is no longer "turned on," it is a precise system and we hope this issue of *It's Your City* will help explain our irrigation practices.

The City's irrigation specialists are hard working, well trained and passionate about water conservation. The City seeks out state of the art irrigation practices and employs new technology to effectively manage our irrigation systems.

### It's all about the system

The installation of the Sentinel system as the central computer based irrigation control system has allowed for an improved, more efficient system than either battery operated or stand alone controllers. Parksville was the first municipality on Vancouver Island to use this system and now more than 75% of the City's irrigation is controlled this way. It was upgraded this year to further maximize conservation.

Weather monitors are set at specific levels for different soil types and plant materials which allow different areas within parks to shut off at varying rainfall levels. Over two years, water savings of 14% were realized with weather monitors alone. The City also has the capability to program the system to evapotranspiration based watering (amount of water a plant is able to take out of the ground and use). This is done by programming in soil types, plant material and water needs for individual plants, allowing for precise irrigation.

Daytime water occurs for many reasons - primarily for ongoing maintenance and repairs. Vandalism is an ongoing challenge for staff; damaged irrigation heads must be repaired and tested.



Kevin Campbell and Kim Basara, irrigation specialists

### Saving our water

Irrigation personnel often work outside usual operating hours to increase efficiency and minimize public disturbance and complaints. Here are a number of ways that water is conserved:

- Retrofit of old systems to new matched precipitation rotator (MPR) heads and nozzles. Heads have lower precipitation rates to reduce run off, uniformity, wind resistance and reduced misting at higher pressures.
- With the new fencing at the Community Park sports field, the water system was retrofitted with MPR heads and check valves, saving 117,553 US gallons of water (45% savings).
- Auditing water use and checking distribution patterns. Along with maintenance (coring, raising heads and adjusting nozzles), watering is minimized and water goes where it should.
- Using soak and cycle method to reduce water runoff. Rather than traditional watering of a zone for 30 minutes, the area is watered for 15 minutes, allowing water to infiltrate the ground; then the system runs again.
- Installation of master valves where possible and on all new installations. The system shuts off if a break occurs in the line, preventing water loss.
- Installation of wireless rain sensors to our outer parks which shut the system off after a set amount of rain.
- The kite field in the Community Park is no longer watered above stage 1 water restrictions.
- Where possible, drought tolerant plants are used relative to the site; often planted in a dry area of the bed rather than modifying the whole area.
- Micro irrigation of specific trees without watering a large area.
- New irrigation systems with MPR heads with nozzles installed at Martindale, Rushton, Sylvan and Train Station.
- Use of flow meters in such areas as Community Park, sports fields, highway boulevard and the PCTC. With these installations, water use is monitored; the meter recognizes this and then shuts off to protect against leakage and vandalism.

### State of the art

Following the upgrade of the Alberni Highway two years ago, a wireless unit was developed. Parksville is the first municipality in North America to use wireless, which is of interest to many other municipalities. As well, rather than the City computer going directly to satellites, cutting edge technology was developed to expand this system.

### The future

As technology improves, the City will add parks to the Sentinel system, making inefficient controllers redundant. Continued training courses in irrigation auditing and water conservation will assist in providing effective use of resources. Ongoing maintenance is a priority with an aging system where older valves wear out. There are also plans to install pressure compensation devices to decrease misting and eliminate waste. Future water conservation plans include replacing inefficient, outdated heads with improved heads with check valves and master valves.

The irrigation department's wish list includes a cistern in the Community Park; a way to reclaim the water from the water park for irrigation. About 30,000 gallons are used each day in the summer. The project is estimated to cost about \$40,000. Springwood field could be a similar project.

*Our crews are always willing to answer questions from the public about irrigation practices and water conservation. We encourage you to speak with them when you see them out working.*



Watch the City's website for information from our irrigation team - things you can do to conserve water.

## Around the City



Beyond Composting zerowaste

### The Green Bins are coming!

The new RDN green bins and kitchen catchers scheduled for delivery in September are now on display at City Hall. The RDN Beyond Composting team will be at Kids Fest on August 22 to answer your questions and we have scheduled an information session for September 23 in the Forum at City Hall. More information available soon.



### OCP Advisory Committee

Because the deadline for applications was extended to August 10, selection of the committee members will be made by Council in September.

## Mayor's Charity Golf Classic

Looking for golfers for the second annual tournament to be held on September 8 at Morningstar Golf Club. Tournament information is on the City's website. This year's benefactors are C-Zone: Construction Zone - Building Learning Together, the Vancouver Island German Jujutsu Foundation and the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness.

## It's Parky de Ville!

Parky de Ville was chosen as the name for the floral peacock at Pym Street and the Island Highway. By process of elimination, starting with 214 names, the parks department and public works crews used their lunch time on August 9 (hard at work in photo) to most democratically, choose the name. They were provided with the suggested names and reasons and the group of about twenty, narrowed it down to 18, then to five and then to Parky de Ville. The winner turned out to be Fred Collins. In addition to the notoriety that Fred now enjoys, he will receive a gift certificate from a local establishment and a City ball cap and T-shirt.

Once again we say thank you to everyone who took the time to enter the contest. Some amazing suggestions and even more amazing reasons were submitted. Thanks!

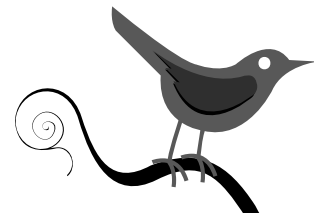


## City Dates

August 16	Council and Committee of the Whole
August 19	Advisory Planning Commission
September 6	Office closed for Labour Day
September 8	Council and COTW (postponed to Sept.13)
September 8	Mayor's Golf Classic
September 9	Advisory Design Panel
September 13	Council and COTW
September 16	Advisory Planning Commission
September 20	Council and COTW
September 23	Green Bin Information Sessions

\* please check the website to confirm times

The public is encouraged to attend Council and Committee of the Whole meetings held on the first and third Mondays of the month, beginning at 6 pm. If Monday is a holiday, meetings are scheduled to Wednesday. Please check the City's website to confirm times and dates.



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## How to Reach Council

### MAYOR

Ed Mayne .....250 954-4661

### COUNCILLORS

Chris R Burger .....250 240-8255  
 Al Greir .....250 248-1285  
 Marc Lefebvre .....250 248-2292  
 Teresa C Patterson .....250 954-9488  
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We welcome your comments on this issue of *It's Your City*:  
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September 14 - next issue

You will find *It's Your City* in the PQB News on the second Tuesday of the month with a copy provided on the City's website. We are committed to improving communications with our residents and you can help by providing feedback, comments or suggestions.