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Rivercorp wraps up – Fresh start for economic development and tourism in 2016

Changes to economic development and tourism services are moving ahead in Campbell River, with support from the economic development board and City Council.

“As of Dec. 31, all the economic development board members have finished their time in this volunteer role, and Rivercorp has been dissolved,” says Mayor Andy Adams. *“Council extends sincere thanks to the board members for their contribution to the community through the work they have done.”*

Commencing Jan. 1, 2016, Freeman Mary Ashley will act as a trustee of the Economic Development Corporation, by Council appointment, for a term of up to 12 months.

This short-term trustee appointment meets legal requirements to keep the corporation structure in place, enabling economic development and tourism operations to continue until a new structure is implemented.

“This is a key step and a must-do to keep our options open for future service delivery,” says Mayor Adams. *“We are grateful to Freeman Ashley for taking on this role in the public trust.”*

Next steps for economic development and tourism

The City has begun work to recruit an economic development officer, who will report to the city manager. It is expected to be six months before this position is filled and the economic development function is fully integrated into City operations.

In the interim, economic development and tourism staff will continue to carry out community economic development initiatives and perform key services such as responding to enquiries, keeping printed materials and the website current with economic and investment information, developing and distributing tourism materials for 2016 and assisting with the operation of the Visitor Information Centre.

“We greatly appreciate the continued efforts of economic development and tourism staff during this transition,” the Mayor emphasizes.

The City has also requested proposals from tourism specialists to help determine the best model to promote tourism in Campbell River in an effective, strategic and accountable manner. This will include pursuit of provincial approval for municipal and regional district tax implementation (a local hotel tax) that will fund expanded tourism marketing.

“Developing the tourism plan during the economic development transition will better position Campbell River to take full advantage of opportunities,” the Mayor adds. *“Council recognizes tourism as a vital economic driver in Campbell River, and we are looking for input from industry professionals to create the best structure for tourism services in our community and region.”*

Once the new economic development structure is in place and functioning, tourism will be the next key focus for Council.

After a review of Campbell River’s economic development function, Council and the economic development board determined that bringing the economic development role into City operations could offer a more efficient and coordinated effort for community development.

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