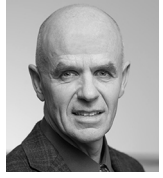




Evolving Our Opinions is Key to Quesnel's Future



As the saying goes, people are entitled to their opinions. The challenge for those elected to lead our City, or our Province, or our Country is to figure out how to mesh the differing opinions of citizens into a coherent vision or strategy that the majority of people can support.

This is not an easy challenge, as all too often people form opinions based on limited and/or outdated information, misinformation, or even disinformation. Sometimes people's opinions are so biased or so entrenched that no amount of facts or data will ever change them. This makes it difficult for elected leaders to develop agendas and strategies that do not attract strong opposition, regardless of how often and deeply they may consult or communicate with citizens.

Even the very essence of our democracy, the role of elected representatives, is the subject of strong opinions. Some believe that once elected, representatives should merely "serve" the majority opinion (or even just the opinions of individual voters!). Others are of the opinion that we elect people to "lead;" that the role of elected officials is to act on the basis of the best available information and in the best interests of the public writ large, even if the actions taken may be contrary to the majority opinion, or the strong opinion of a vocal minority.

This makes democracy a messy, and often noisy, form of government.

The reality is that we live in complicated times and, as such, there are no easy decisions and no way for politicians to make every person happy with every decisions they make. However, too often people take this to mean that their opinion or position on a particular subject wasn't "heard" or taken into account.

But, listening to and hearing people's opinions doesn't mean political leaders have to agree with them or act on them. At the end of the day, the role of elected officials is to balance the needs and rights of the present generation with the needs and rights of future generations based on fact and the best available information.

Over the coming months the citizens of Quesnel will have some real opportunities to engage in consultation initiatives that will reset the foundation of our community. Specifically, we are in the midst a rebranding initiative and we're commencing a comprehensive review of the City's Official Community Plan (OCP). These are ideal opportunities for everyone to reframe their "opinion" of our fair City based on the most up-to-date information available and to engage with Council in a re-visioning of our community at the deepest level.

It is my hope that we can all engage in these processes with open minds and a willingness to open up our held beliefs and opinions about our City and its priorities to self-examination based on fact and current information. As a community in transition we need fresh thinking, refreshed opinions, and a spirit of compromise and understanding in order to envision our future together. We all need to be willing to evolve our opinions in order to evolve our community.

If you want to stay informed about these processes and engage in our consultation processes please stay connected to the City through the:

City Website: quesnel.ca

City Facebook: [facebook/cityofquesnel](https://facebook.com/cityofquesnel)

City Twitter: [@cityofquesnel](https://twitter.com/cityofquesnel)

City News Releases/Council Clippings: email cityhall@quesnel.ca to join the mailing list.

Mayor Bob Simpson
bsimpson@quesnel.ca