

Speech

Inaugural Council, December 3, 2014

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to this Inaugural Celebration – the beginning of a new term and new time in our community. It is an honour to address you tonight as the mayor of Deep River.

I am humbled by the trust and confidence given me by of the people of Deep River. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Mayor.

Thanks also to all the candidates who participated in the municipal election. It takes courage and commitment to put your name on a ballot.

The excellent slate of candidates and the voter turnout confirmed the measure of interest and engagement of the people of Deep River in the events and decisions that shape our community

I want to take a moment and offer my personal congratulations to each member of the Town Council . Including myself, we have 4 new members and 3 returning councillors. Together we have a wonderful balance of experience, skills and understanding of this community that will serve us well in the governance of the municipality. I know all of you are looking forward to advancing the issues that are important to you, as well as working collectively on behalf of the broader community.

It is exciting for me, knowing that all Councillors and our Reeve shared a common platform and brings the views of this community fresh from the campaign trail.

Undoubtedly our term will be filled with challenges, which will require patience and appreciation for each other and our individual points of view and goals. I am confident we will always be thinking of the people who elected us and we will be making our decisions based on the needs our community.

This common ground is our strength and will bring focus to everything we do in carrying out our responsibilities. Together we will reach success.

I would also like to warmly welcome all of our family members and friends to tonight's special council meeting and celebration. Your support & understanding in the days ahead, are critical to our ability to serve as your Mayor and Council.

And personally I want to thank my family; my children Shannon & Will who have lived the political life with me through 15 years previously served and supported and delighted in my decision to run for Mayor of Deep River. I could not ask for more. My thanks to my daughter in law, Bridget for sharing her beautiful voice for this ceremony. My favourite and only brother Dan who was able to make the drive to DR to be with me, as he always is. Also with me are Lorna & Paul, part of my new family with Alan who gave help, advice and were part of the campaign from afar.

And of course, Alan Carmichael, my partner, my friend, my fiancé, who understood the importance of the decision we made to run in this election and now awaits the discovery of the future sharing a new way of life with the Mayor. Thank you for being there for me, supporting my decision to run, and embracing the future together.

In preparing for tonight's ceremony I reflected on the weeks & months ahead and it is apparent to me that the future is about our shared vision as a community and our priorities.

To the Citizens of Deep River:

You told us you want good governance and want the opportunity to participate.

We will do this, Council will be receiving a report through the Steering Committee, introducing the Standing Committees of Council, and putting in place the ability to establish advisories for housing, accessibility, economic growth.

We will need the participation to reach these objectives. You will be hearing more over the next few months and will be invited to contribute.

There will be forums for you to learn more about the governance decisions your council will be making and it is my intent to hold informal town hall get-togethers. Let's talk and continue the conversation started at the door.

You told us that you want housing choices and to have the ability to remain in your community. We are going to work with landowners, developers, and investors to aggressively pursue this. Several groups in the community have already been working on housing concerns and I have already been meeting with them. There is agreement to work together, pooling our knowledge and resources. I have heard from some of the builders of our community. They want to sit down to discuss ways of moving forward, and my door is open to these discussions. ,

You told us that we need to attract new residents and talent, and we can do this through new economic growth and employment opportunities; marketing our community and working with our business partners, including small businesses, the Military, CNL: Canadian Nuclear Laboratories and the selected consortium for the Go Co implementation. and small business growth.

Deep River is unique; being located in the heart of the Traditional Territory of the Algonquin People, along the mighty Kichissippi, Ottawa River. We are not isolated, but rather share a community of interest beyond our municipal boundaries. Partnerships with neighbouring municipalities are essential. Initial contact has already been made with neighbouring Mayors and Leaders. There is a common desire to achieve success and there is a recognition that together we can and will move forward in partnership, taking advantage of every opportunity.

We are a unique and a diverse community and you told us why you treasure this community and you want to protect those elements in a time of change. You want this community to have a financially sound plan for a vibrant and healthy future.

We will be confronted with difficult decisions and challenges in the days ahead. I want you to be part of the process and be informed about why and how we, as your council, are going to address this.

As a council, I believe we will need to approach our budget planning to ensure the long-term health of Deep River. We need to be mindful of our immediate needs, but also have a longer-term vision for managing our assets and remaining sustainable.

And we can do this.

But this council cannot do it alone. Through strategic planning, we will be setting out the goals for this Council Term, It will bring a vision to life that makes us feel good about who we are and where we live. Working collectively, we can ensure our decisions are the right ones and the best decisions for both the short and long term. \

This election saw the largest turnout of voters in many decades. You spoke loudly and clearly. As your Mayor, I want you to know that we still need your voice and your involvement.

In the days ahead, you will be invited to participate in a variety of ways. I am looking forward to working with you.

Yes, I am passionate about municipal government and the role it plays in the lives of our citizens.

Municipal government is the government closest to the people; municipalities are the economic engine of our country.

Focussing on the future of Deep River, plans are already underway for the first few months: there will be a council orientation, we will be meeting to do strategic planning so collectively we have set our goals and have clear directions for the next 4 years, there will be interviews for citizen participation and of course, most important of all will be the financial review and setting of our first budget.

I want you to feel that your voice has been heard, your council understands your position and that we will make decisions based on need and not necessarily be pursuing the popular vote.

It remains my pledge to you to keep people central to decisions and directions we take. As your Mayor, I will be working with your Council to protect what is important and special about life in Deep River and plan for our future.

In closing I want to thank our special guests, whose role contributed to the ceremony & celebration of this evening: the Honourable Justice Gilles Renaud, who travelled from Cornwall to join us. He and his family, Sharon & Landon travelled with Alan & I to El Salvador last year, joining in the Rotary house-building project; and my Minister Rev Paul Evans from the DR Community Church and Mahvash Khatamian; representing Unity in Diversity and to our Staff, all who so generously contributed to making this evening special for us all.

Thank you so much.

And next on the agenda....