



2022 SILGA AGM AND CONFERENCE

COUNCILLOR CAROL ZANON

Councillors Findlater and Zanon attended the SILGA Annual Conference and AGM held in Salmon Arm at the Prestige Inn. Various tours, activities and study sessions preceded the opening ceremonies held on Wednesday, April 27. A variety of educational and informative sessions took place until the April 29 closing. A small, but energetic trade show showcased both familiar exhibitors (Telus, Lotto BC) and new participants (Dairy BC, BC Snowmobile Association). The atmosphere was casual and welcoming. For instance, an impromptu Wine and Cheese event was hosted by two exhibitors when they found themselves at adjoining tables.

There were about 40 resolutions presented for discussion and debate. Most were of more interest to rural communities, but several were of universal interest. Nominations from the floor ensured that an election would take place for a new slate. Table officers elected were:

- Karla Kozakovich, Naramata, Chair;
- Chair; Toni Boot, Summerland, Vice-Chair;
- Aimee Grace, Oliver, 2nd Vice-Chair.

There were opportunities to attend various speaker presentations and breakout sessions. Of special note were three that I attended. The speech by the Hon. Nathan Cullen, Minister of Municipal Affairs elicited an active question and answer session. Topics covered were:

- Property Taxes (not enough, need a healthier program);
- Justice in BC (do not have the right tools to keep prolific offenders off the street);
- Code of Conduct for Civic Officials;
- Approval on funded projects (speed up jurisdiction decisions).

The High Tech Economic Development Business Panel provided an interesting aspect on technology demands and education. School District 83 (Northern Okanagan-Shuswap), offers a "Gateway to Technology" program that brings technology firms into schools and offers development of core foundational skills.

The panel discussion, "Attainable Housing - The Missing Middle" had participants from BC Housing, a City Planner, an Industry Planner, BC Assessment and a Contractor. Three obstacles were discussed in detail: Taxation, Regulation and Supply.

It was interesting to listen to the different viewpoints, Predictably, the non-government participants were for eliminating public hearings when a proposal conforms to the OCP, more pre-zoning and upping the assist factor. On the other hand, the City Planner reminded participants that DCCs pay for critical infrastructure and are a reality of urban life.

The conference was well-attended, although some municipalities were conspicuously noticeable by their absence. My take from this year's SILGA Conference is that it offered education, professional development and networking opportunities in a cordial and collegial setting.