

## **Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Parks and Leisure Services Commission**

### ***Introduction***

Thank you for your interest in serving on the Parks and Leisure Services Commission! This can be a very rewarding experience in terms of contributing to the quality of life in your community. This volunteer job description is offered to provide a basic description of the kind of work involved and the time commitment required when considering applying for the Commission.

The Parks and Leisure Services Commission has been established with three members of both Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Councils (including both Mayors) as well as three members of the School Board (including the Chair) and six Citizens at Large (four from Maple Ridge and two from Pitt Meadows).

The Commission's role is to set the direction and policies for the use of Parks and Recreation resources in the two communities. The Commission operates within a budget established for that purpose by both Municipal Councils at the beginning of each year and within the guidelines established in the Commission Bylaw and the Joint Parks and Leisure Services Agreement between Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows (both attached). The Commission exercises considerable independence but defers to each of the Municipal Councils in some areas such as budget finalization.

### ***Term***

Citizen at Large (CAL) members are appointed for a term of three years unless filling a position vacated by another member mid term. Appointments of Citizen At Large members are made by the Municipal Council of the community in which the appointee resides. There are two CAL members from Pitt Meadows and four CAL members from Maple Ridge.

### ***Citizen At Large Commission Member Job Description***

#### **Scope of Work**

The benefit of this system is enhanced to the extent that the Citizen At Large members are well informed and connected in the community, and have knowledge of the Department and the many non profit organizations and agencies which serve to provide important recreation services to the citizens. One of the key roles of serving as a Citizen At Large member is that of researching community needs by contacting assigned groups and citizens in general. This knowledge can prove invaluable when difficult choices must be made about how to best utilize limited resources.

The Commission addresses a variety of issues and is involved in making recommendations on many subjects over the course of a year. The range of involvement includes everything from recommending policy changes to budget priorities. Members are involved in long range planning through their work on such critical documents as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan. They are also involved in more immediate short term planning through the development and review of an annual business plan.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Members are responsible for:

- actively participating in the discussion at meetings and asking questions to obtain as much information as possible and to ensure as many perspectives as possible are considered in advance of voting on an item before the Commission.
- attending meetings once each month and participating to the extent possible in subcommittees and workshops which may arise from time to time.
- reviewing agenda materials in advance
- acting in a liaison capacity to assigned community groups by making contact with each group at least once per year.
- considering the best interests of the entire community when participating in debates
- declaring themselves in conflict should they have a pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda or a non pecuniary conflict through involvement on the Board of Directors of an organization which might benefit from the Commission's decision
- contacting the General Manager with any complaints or suggestions they receive which require follow up by staff.
- reporting on the status and needs of the organizations for which they are assigned a liaison function.
- notifying the General Manager or Chair if attendance at a specific meeting is not possible (to ensure the meeting can proceed with a quorum) or an extended absence is required beyond two consecutive meetings.
- maintaining confidentiality with respect to those items which are dealt with in closed meetings (primarily issues related to personnel, land acquisition or legal matters for which open discussion would compromise the Commission's position in negotiations or violate legislated privacy requirements)

### **Staff Support**

Staff prepares agendas and reports on a wide variety of subjects and circulates them in advance of meetings along with appropriate information items and minutes. Staff also carries out research as requested by the Commission within the limits of available resources. They implement the approved business plan in accordance with Commission policies through the operation of facilities, parks and programs and through their work on special projects. Staff and particularly the General Manager make themselves available to answer questions as they arise.

## **Time Commitment**

The time commitment involved in participating on the Commission varies depending upon the level of liaison involvement. At a base level Commission members should anticipate four hours of preparation and meeting time each month. Liaison responsibilities can increase that commitment depending upon the specific circumstances and timing of issues which are being addressed.

## **Preferred background/ Qualification**

No specific qualification is required. The Commission looks for as wide a representation as possible when filling the Citizen at Large positions on the Commission. Representation from all age ranges, social circumstances, recreational interests and cultural backgrounds is preferred. Most importantly the Commission looks for candidates who wish to contribute positively to the betterment of the overall community through positive parks and recreation services. Special Interest representation is not generally sought since to ensure all interests are formally represented would increase the size of the group beyond a manageable level. Instead each member is asked to liaise with a variety of groups to obtain their perspectives.

## **Process of Appointment**

Each year vacant positions are advertised and applications are sought from qualified candidates. The only qualifications are enthusiasm and residency, since the Commission contains two positions for Pitt Meadows residents and four positions for Maple Ridge residents (to reflect their relative populations). A position is considered vacant even if the incumbent applies to continue for another term, to ensure there is an opportunity for as many citizens as possible to participate. Although the incumbent may be reappointed it may be that the Council involved in the selection feels a new candidate will round out the Commission's representation of the entire community.

A Citizen At Large member may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms (nine years).

## ***For further information contact:***

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