



## **Inaugural Address – Mayor Maja Tait November 5, 2018**

Family and friends, good evening and welcome. Thank you for joining us tonight.

I'd like to acknowledge the T'Souke Nation, upon whose ancestral lands we are gathered tonight. Thank you to Chief Planes and Elder Shirley Alphonse of the T'Sou-ke Nation for offering a blessing tonight. We look forward to a continued positive relationship.

Other dignitaries in attendance tonight include:

- On behalf of our MLA and Premier John Horgan: Bruce Fogg and Hans Frederickson
- From School District 62, Trustees Elect: Margot Swinburnson, Bob Phillips and Allison Watson
- MP Randall Garrison has sent his regrets and best wishes to all of us.
- Local elected officials who have served previously:
  - John Farmer, Marcus Farmer and our former Regional Director Diane Bernard

I'd also like to acknowledge our historian Elida Peers who has graciously witnessed all inaugurations, including our 7<sup>th</sup> tonight!

Thank you also to Sooke Fire & Rescue – both career staff and volunteers, our local RCMP detachment and its members, District of Sooke staff and volunteers for their dedication and efforts.

I wish to thank and acknowledge all candidates, families, friends, campaign teams, community organizations, media, election staff and voters for participating in the 2018 local election!

Thank members of our outgoing Council for their service and contributions:

- Bev Berger, 3 terms for 10 years
- Rick Kasper, 3 terms, for 10 years
- Kevin Pearson, 2 terms, for 7 years
- Kerrie Reay, 2 terms for 7 years

Finally, thank you everyone for the privilege to serve a second term as your Mayor! I'm excited and ready for the years ahead and am truly grateful for this honour.

Let's also take a moment to celebrate our new and returning Councillors!

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Term - Ebony Logins
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Term – Brenda Parkinson

Experience, talent – all things bright and beautiful, I know you will continue to serve and represent our community well and support and mentor our new Councillors.

Joining us for their first terms of service:

- Jeff Bateman
- Al Beddows
- Megan McMath
- Tony St Pierre



Each of you has worked hard and gained the confidence of the electorate. There is something unique and wonderful about each of you. The number of votes each of us received mattered only on election night, from tonight and onwards, we are all here as equals. You've had the support of voters to get here, but now as we take office our role is to listen to and represent our community with fairness and dignity.

Are you beholden to anyone? Yes – yourselves! Only you truly know your efforts, preparedness and level of active listening. Be true to yourself and you'll always sleep well.

Impactful decisions await us, including:

- Hiring of a new CAO to lead and direct our municipal operations – starting the search for a qualified individual with a firm and guiding hand
- Managing the impact of growth:
  - Roads, traffic, enforcement, maintenance, sidewalks, lighting
  - Infrastructure: Sewer, water lines, parks and trails, playground equipment
- Compliance issues
- Long range planning:
  - Transportation, Official Community Plan
- Bylaws and policies – all need to be refreshed and in some cases thrown out and replaced
- Relationships:
  - T'Sou-ke nation – leaders in land stewardship and climate change
  - Provincial Government:
    - Health care: we expect an announcement on improvements to local health care by the end of this year
    - Hwy 14 – Sooke River Road intersection to start shortly, more improvements to come
  - Federal Government:
    - Fisheries, salmon enhancement, cannabis opportunities
  - SD62 Trustees – school expansions
- Library and seniors centre
- Emergency Services – ability to meet and exceed expectations
- Necessary and thorough public engagement (new ideas to connect and gather input)

These tasks will take all of us working together: Respecting our history and planning together so our grandchildren and their grandchildren are also proud Sooke residents.

Sooke is at an exceptional time in our history:

- In 2019 we will celebrate our first 20 years as a municipality and look forward to a bright future.
- We have incredible volunteers, a thriving arts and culture scene, and ever-increasing opportunities for sport.

It is timely now to take charge of our future as we come of age. We are breaking new ground, completing exciting and hard work, and realizing the potential we know that Sooke has.

It is also an exceptional time to shift how we operate in local government. Municipal services will continue to evolve as we strive for service excellence to our residents, with our contractors and



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developers. How we govern as a Council will shape the tone of the municipality. We want our employees to be excited about the work they do, and we want the District of Sooke to be recognized as a place where people want to work, contribute, mentor, retire, and then come back to consult!

Council will be busy. We have regional and local orientation sessions starting shortly, a full day introduction to our departments followed with field work – getting hands on, touring our community and our facilities together.

We'll be starting our CAO hiring process immediately, a strategic planning and service review process, establishing committees and regular community engagement.

Together, with courage and determination we can step forward and boldly go where no Sooke Council has gone before!

We look forward to sharing stories of our journey with all of you. Thank you for your support.