

## **Social well-being**

### **1. What is the role of the municipal council in ensuring the social well-being of its citizens?**

For me, social well-being is about Red Deer people – our community, individuals and families. It's the importance of quality of life and to promote well-being, recognizing well-being is different for each individual. I see well-being as being as healthy as one can be – physically, mentally and emotionally. It's about the social connections and that Red Deer is a welcoming and inclusive community. Council's role is to recognize the pulse of our community, recognize needs, to respond as a City, to work collaboratively or in partnership with community agencies and the community as a whole, and to work with other orders of government - provincial and federal and relevant departments such as education, acute care health, mental health, senior care, social services and justice. It's about working together, sharing appropriate information and ideas, being bold and asking the tough questions, good planning and making improvements, accessible services and striving for best outcomes to improve quality of life for Red Deerians. During the past Council term, the City of Red Deer's Social Policy Framework provides a blueprint towards the goals of community social well-being.

### **2. What is the role of the municipal council in addressing social issues and fostering a positive, inclusive and barrier-free community?**

This is a challenging question to answer in a few sentences on some complex issues. Council's role of addressing social issues, fostering a positive, inclusive and barrier-free community includes leadership, communication and engagement with the community, hearing feedback, providing information, appropriate budget allocation resources, council and staff working with people, agencies, stakeholders in the community on these priorities and actions. Individual councillor education, community awareness and education, monitoring progress and making progress, with evaluation, and communicating this to the citizens is a key goal.

### **3. How will you address the barriers affecting citizens who are socially isolated?**

Who are the socially isolated in our community? They can be seniors, newcomers, youth and students, stay at home parents, young to old, those with mental health or physical health challenges, those with disability or mobility challenges, or introverts. Some ideas:

- Community initiatives such as provincial coordinated health and social care systems are important so conversations with our MLA's on their awareness of the community needs
- Awareness and education on our own self care; finding ways to have these community conversations.
- Community groups such as Central Alberta Refugee Effort (CARE) and Central Alberta Immigrant Women's' Association (CAWIA) can offer outreach and programs that bring newcomers together.
- Isolation may be because of English as a second language, so working with levels of government to ensure adequate resources for community agency supports for needs is important.

- Do we know our neighbors? Local neighborhood networks are important for providing community support, such as the Great Neighbors and block party initiatives that have brought neighbors connecting with each other.
- The City could look at opportunities to connect citizens with support organizations such as the Golden Circle, or schedule special events at recreation centres providing low cost swimming or recreation use at non-peak times. The same could be provided for family swim times, such as the toonie swim times which are currently provided.
- Community conversations and sessions, through organizations such as the Primary Care Network who may be able to provide mental health conversations to assist with mitigating mental health problems in groups who are vulnerable.

**4. How will you deliver on the City's Social Policy Framework?**

It's important to me that "we" – Council and city staff throughout the organization, understand what social well-being means, and how it connects to each of our role's through our day to day interactions with Red Deer citizens through the delivery of public services. The Framework's principles include: community cohesion and engagement educational opportunity and attainment, equitable services and access, health and basic needs, housing, jobs and wages, poverty prevention and reduction, resilience, safety, and social and cultural diversity. I am reminded of the words of the African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child", the words, "if you want to go fast go alone if you want to go far, go together", and the words "ubuntu" that is translated as "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity".

A City Council of nine cannot deliver on the City's Social Policy Framework alone. Yes, we provide the leadership and our City as a whole must walk the talk. Council should deliver a report to the community on how we are advancing the community goals of the Social Policy Framework, as well as the gaps and work ahead. Ultimately, we must all work together in our Red Deer community.