

Federation of Canadian Municipalities President Somerville reviews 2016

By: Dawn Brown

For Regional Councillor Clark Somerville, these past six months as president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) have passed by in a whirlwind of incredible experiences and opportunities he couldn't have imagined as a boy growing up on a dairy farm in the town of Acton.

Somerville was elected to President a little more than six months ago, but has been involved with FCM since 2007, first as committee member, then a board member before being elected as third vice president. He also acted as Vice-Chair on the Rural Forum—the first time the position had been held by someone who wasn't from Western Canada—Chair of the Housing Subcommittee, and the Lead on the fundraising for a scholarship to increase women's participation in municipal government.

As the national voice for Canada's communities, cities, and towns, FCM provides advocacy with the Federal Government on behalf municipalities for items that are in the federal jurisdiction for municipalities. With 2000 members, FCM is the only national organization to have members in every federal riding—the smallest is a town in Saskatchewan with a population of only 11 and the largest the City of Toronto.

As president, one of the more positive aspects for Somerville is the Federal Government's willingness to work with FCM and municipalities.

"The amazing thing that's happened is that the Federal Government has been really reaching out to consult with municipalities on a variety of their policies," Somerville said. "Housing, for example, pipelines,

energy—transitioning to a low carbon economy—climate change adaptation. So they know that they can work with us. We're a trusted partner." Somerville added that the Federal Government has entrusted FCM with this budget with a fund for climate change litigation, as well as asset management for municipalities.

In the Federal Government's budget there are significant funds going toward infrastructure, with dedicated funds for small, rural northern communities; like the clean water and waste water fund, and a fund for rural broadband. A subject Somerville is asked about more frequently than any other.

"Whether I'm in Sobeys here or Sobeys in Nova Scotia, I get asked about rural broadband," Somerville said.

Presently, FCM has seven international projects under way with the Federal Government, for which Halton Hills and Halton Region are a member of one in Peru—building capacities for local government.

Somerville also had the honour of being part Team Canada in Ecuador, where he presented the first copy of a housing submission for the National Housing Strategy to Minister Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Recently, Somerville attended a dinner in Ottawa where he met and spoke to the Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden. It was the first time anyone from the FCM had been invited to an official dinner in Ottawa.

"Municipalities in Canada have direct or indirect control to about 60 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions," Somerville said, when asked how a Trump Government could

impact municipalities. "There are still people out there who don't believe the science, but we all signed the Paris Agreement in good faith. I'm hoping President Trump, once he really starts and digs into it, realizes we have to get on a better path."

For 2017, there are big things on the horizon for Somerville. The first is the comprehensive housing strategy, ensuring that there is money available for social housing, affordable housing and homelessness. "All the social aspects that we, as a country as rich as Canada, should really not have."

The second item is phase two of the infrastructure funding for the infrastructure program, and making sure that it fits for communities of all size and that the province is engaged and contributing.

"If it's not with the province as a partner, municipalities won't be able to afford it," Somerville explained.



FCM President Clark Somerville

HILLSVIEW REPORT

By: Julie Conroy

Happy New Year. I hope everyone had a great Christmas and New Year.

I must start by apologising to Sylvia Mitchell for not giving the *New Tanner* the correct spelling of her name when she was pictured with Santa in the *New Tanner* a couple of weeks ago at our annual Christmas dinner. Sorry Sylvia.

Due to deadlines for last week's *Tanner*, I was unable to put the December 22 Bid Euchre winners in the paper so here they are. Cheryl Savage and Cathy Forbes both had mooners. Congratulations ladies

The next social dinner will be on Monday, January 16. We will be enjoying Chicken Pot Pie and our entertainment will be Jamie Todd. Tickets are available at the reception desk.

The first in the nutrition series with Nutritionist Amanda Li is today January 5 and session two will be on Thursday, January 12 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The topic will be "Making the most of what you eat". If you are interested there is a sign up sheet at the reception desk. Please pay when you sign up.

Florence Riehl asked me to mention that she is planning an Acton and Georgetown joint trip to Ottawa from Thursday, June 29 – Sunday, July 2 to celebrate Canada's 150

birthday. It should be quite a celebration. If you are interested, contact Florence at 905-873-1210 for more information. You must act quickly to reserve a spot.

If your birthday is in either November, December or January you should receive a phone call inviting you and a guest to the Birthday Tea on Tuesday, January 10.

On Saturday, March 25 I am planning a *Gals on the Go* day trip to the Toronto St. Lawrence Market and on the way home stopping at the Dixie Mall. We would leave at 8:30 a.m. If you are interested, please add your name and phone number to the sign up sheet.

Friday's lunch on January 13 will be stew and dessert. I understand that the Christmas lunch on Friday, December 23 was delicious. Helen with her helpers Joyce, Joan, Sharon and Eileen cooked a traditional turkey lunch for 55 people. Lunch was followed by fruit cake, squares and cookies. Two happy elves named Dave and Dave helped with the serving and clearing away. Six people were lucky enough to win poinsettias to take home.

There was no winner on December 23 and no draw between Christmas and the New Year. The next weekly 50/50 draw will take place this Friday, January 6.



HOLIDAY CONCERT: Limehouse public school held a concert prior to Christmas showcasing the talent of the students. - Les Schmidt photo



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