

Mayor Brad West's Speech  
Inaugural Council Meeting – November 6, 2018

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Thank you members of Council for your words this evening. They demonstrate our community's wisdom in electing a Council that is dedicated to Port Coquitlam, first, last and always.

I want to begin this evening in offering my sincere thanks and appreciation to a number of special people. I firmly believe there is very little in life we accomplish on our own – and this is certainly true of an election campaign and a lesson I will return to over the next four years. It takes a team.

To my amazing wife and partner in everything, Blaire. Thank you for your love, support and guidance.

There is simply no way I could do any of this without you. I am so lucky to be by your side – and our special little guy is so lucky to have the best mom in the world.

Speaking of our little guy, one of the things I got used to during the campaign was people wanting to meet not me, but Liam. I joked that he was the star of the campaign.

He'll be asleep at home by now and I know he won't understand all of this for a number of years but I do want him to know this:

Being your dad is the greatest blessing I have ever known in my life. Many friends in this room told me how life-changing becoming a dad would be and after almost 22 months I know it's all of that and so much more. Not only has it made me a better person, but I believe it will also make me a better representative of our community.

In the 4 elections that my name has appeared on the ballot my number one supporters have always been my sister Brittney, who I've had a special bond with since we were little that remains just as strong today.

My brother-in-law Chris, my step-dad Brian, my grandma Shirley who's own story inspires me every day and of course my mom Kelly.

I can't thank them all enough for everything they have given me.

My mom is my hero and role model. She taught me and Brittney through her own quiet example the values of hard work, sacrifice, responsibility and family.

It's those values that she imparted to me that I take with me into this office and I will carry with me every single day.

I'm very proud to be a mama's boy.

To all my colleagues who were re-elected, Laura, Glenn, Darrell and Dean I offer my sincere congratulations. I look forward to continuing our work together for the community we all love.

It has truly been a pleasure to serve on Council together and I'm very proud of our accomplishments and excited for the work we still have to do.

You are all leaders who bring your own skills, knowledge, passion and dedication to Council. During our time together, I have learned from you, been challenged by you, definitely laughed with you and have always, always respected each of you. Your example has made me a better Council member and I hope in turn I have been able to assist you. That's what being a member of this team is all about.

I'm also very excited to welcome to "Team PoCo" Steve and Nancy....who I know will make positive contributions to our Council and community.

They are both passionate about this city and our residents and I'm looking forward to them joining us in the important work that lies ahead.

I also want to acknowledge that as far as we can tell this Council will be the first one in our city's history that has more than one woman serving on it. It is true that progress often comes too slow but I believe it does come and it has come this evening and we can celebrate that.

All of us have hit the ground running and our two new Councillors have been meeting, have been getting briefed and are already contributing.

I'm proud to say to our community this evening that I am confident that we have a strong Council team that will reflect the priorities of our residents and will get the job done on your behalf.

I do want to thank Mayor Greg Moore and his family for their significant service to Port Coquitlam and the impactful and positive legacy they've created. There is no doubt that Mayor Moore leaves big shoes to fill and I'm thankful that his counsel and advice will always be only a phone call away.

Now, I know it will take some time for you all to get used to a Mayor with a full head of hair. But I believe we can do this too, together.

The toughest part of elections is losing the best people and Mike Forrest is one of the best. Mike has been a mentor to me and a hugely important part of Council.

His voice on issues is respected, impactful and principled. Mike and Karen are Port Coquitlam through and through and you would be hard pressed to find someone more passionate about this community. But being on Council has only ever been one part of the Forrest family's involvement and service to this community and I know it will continue on.

Finally, I want to say thank you to all the residents of Port Coquitlam for giving me the honour of serving as this amazing city's next Mayor.

I have lived here all of my life and I've always felt that Port Coquitlam helped raise me and is imprinted on who am I as a person in so many different ways.

My story and my family's story of humble beginnings enriched by community, and friends and neighbours and improved by hard work and determination and depending on each other isn't possible in every part of the world.

But it is possible in Port Coquitlam and as your Mayor I feel duty bound to ensure that this remains a place where people of regular means can provide a better life for their family.

I approach this role with humility, seriousness and the upmost respect. You have placed your trust in me, and I will work each and every day to be worthy of it.

This will be a Council dedicated to improving the lives of our residents, guided by common sense and our shared community values of hard work, fairness and responsibility.

105 years ago this city was born through the vision and determination of people who did not shy away from challenges.

Back then the easy decision would have been to remain part of Coquitlam.

But by working together and with an eye on a better tomorrow, the people of Port Coquitlam came together and gave birth to our city. (Thank goodness)

A mere 7 years into the city's existence, a devastating fire ravaged what was then our city's downtown. In face of this ruin, the resolve of our people remained strong. And they rebuilt.

This is the true story of our city and our people. Every time our community has faced a setback, we work together and come back stronger. It's the story of our city's best known resident and hometown hero, Terry Fox and it's the story of so many of our residents who are lesser known, but who get up each day determined to make tomorrow just a little bit better for their families and each other.

This is what Port Coquitlam is known for: ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

I have always believed that every generation stands on the shoulders of those who came before them.

We live in an amazing city – in fact – the best in the province.

And we owe a debt of gratitude to our seniors and all of those who have played their part in the tremendous work that is required to build a community that you can be proud of.

Each Council takes their turn writing a chapter for Port Coquitlam and I'm excited for this chapter to begin.

I'm pleased to announce tonight that the first part of this work is going to be a restructuring of how City Council does its work.

Over the next week I will be laying out changes to our structure that I believe will make us work smarter, more efficiently and in a way that is more focused on city priorities.

Not change just for change's sake. But change because I believe there is a better way.

Change because it's not good enough to say well we've always done it this way.

Nothing is more important than ensuring that Council's work and priorities are reflective of what our residents' priorities are. We work for you. It really is that simple to me.

That's why I'm very proud to announce the creation of a Mayor's Citizen Advisory Roundtable so that there is a direct link between City Hall and the people we work for.

As I look ahead over the next four years, I'm excited about the opportunities we have to make Port Coquitlam an even better place to call home. In fact, rarely has a Council been given the fortune to make such a big mark on our future. It's an awesome responsibility and I know two things:

- 1) this Council takes it seriously; and
- 2) we are up for the job.

Chief among these responsibilities is the delivery of our new 205,000 sq foot community recreation complex that not only brings much needed services to a growing community, but I believe can also serve as a catalyst to positive transformation in our downtown.

By early fall of 2019, the first facilities will open including the library, two ice sheets, games room, lounge, kitchen and multipurpose rooms.

The year after, we'll see the opening of the pool and fitness centre and finally in 2021: we will complete a third ice sheet, gym, childminding area, large multipurpose rooms, underground parking and a magnificent outdoor plaza.

Not only am I proud of the project, but I'm also proud that our Council said if we're spending PoCo taxpayer dollars on a project we want to see as much of that as possible going to employ PoCo residents and purchasing goods and materials from PoCo businesses.

I've also heard clearly from the community that our city needs to get the basics right. We need lines that are painted, roads that are repaired, sidewalks and crossings and lighting that makes sense and enhances safety, parks & playgrounds that are places for families to connect and a city that is clean and inviting.

And we need relief to those neighbourhoods that are bearing the heaviest burden of traffic and speeding and development.

This is a core responsibility of the city and one that we cannot and will not skip over in search of something flashier or more news worthy.

I am proud to report to our community that over the next two years this Council will be making an unprecedented investment of nearly \$87 million dollars in capital works to address these issues and to meet our most basic responsibilities to our residents.

I also want to speak to our community about our downtown. We are blessed with a unique and compact downtown that has always been a grounding and a centering force in our city.

It is home to a number of vibrant businesses that contribute so much to the life of this city. But I believe it has even more potential and I also believe in being honest with our residents. And honestly: too many people have told me stories of not feeling safe or comfortable in downtown. Our job as Council isn't to spin that away. Our job is to address it.

This Council will build upon the work that the previous Council started with the downtown action plan and begin the important work of bringing that plan to life.

So what does that vision look like?

Here's my answer: I see a downtown that is vibrant, clean and welcoming.

- A place where our longstanding businesses are complimented by new ones that give residents more reason to come downtown and stay downtown.
- A place where during the summer you can enjoy dinner on a sidewalk patio.
- A place where families bring the little ones to burn off some energy and meet other families.
- A place where strollers meet walkers. Where live music can be heard and the arts and culture animate the streets.
- A downtown connected to our new community recreation complex and other sports amenities that allow us to take our place as the leading sports City in the province.
- A place that's safe.
- A place that is unique and in a Lower Mainland that is increasingly dominated by concrete hi-rises where community connectivity is limited, homes are beyond the means of most people and only chain stores can afford exorbitant rents, I see downtown Port Coquitlam standing out on its own as a place that we all can be proud of.

That's our opportunity and in the next four years - my commitment to you is that we will seize it and do this together.

Earlier this evening, I thanked important people in my life who are largely responsible for my being here this evening. One person who isn't here with us, but who I know is looking down is my grandpa.

After we lost my dad, my grandpa (along with my grandma) stepped into my life in an even bigger way. A way that most grandparents wouldn't have to.

But he did and over the next 8 years until we lost him he imparted lessons and a working class wisdom to me that I carry with me every single day.

My strongest memory of him is driving me to hockey, tying my skates and giving me a tap on the shoulder pads before I hit the ice. But it's the lessons that mean the most.

My grandpa believed in the dignity and value of work. And he worked hard every day as an Electrician and a proud member of IBEW Local 213 to provide for his family.

I've seen in my own life the power of a good job to transform lives, the source of pride people have when they can take care of their family.

That's why I am committing tonight to make Port Coquitlam the easiest place in the province of British Columbia to create well-paying, family supporting jobs and will be reviewing our regulations and bylaws with a fine tooth comb to ensure we support and not stifle employment.

Over the next four years our community is going to see tremendous growth in our industrial lands and you have my word that in every meeting I take as Mayor I'll be advocating to create more opportunity for our people to go to work right here in Port Coquitlam.

Now I can spend even more time discussing the many issues before us but I've been reminded of two things: **1)** We only have the theatre until 9; and **2)** Everyone gets to hear from me for the next four years.

So let me close with this:

This city means more to me than I will ever be able to convey in words.

So learning again from my grandpa I know that the best way I can demonstrate how much this honour means is not through words, but through actions.

So here is my pledge to you:

I will work every day, alongside this dedicated and talented Council and the city's amazing staff from the Chief Administrative Officer to the person who cleans City Hall to make this city an even better place to call home.

And here's my request to you: Join us in this work.

Every person in this room and the people outside it have a role to play.

Our history as a community has never been written by one person, by one Mayor or by one Council.

This is a city that was forged through challenges by working together. And it's together that we can ensure that our best days are still to come. Thank you for being here. Thank you for this incredible honour and let's get started.