

Mayor Ruimy Inaugural Address

November 1, 2022

Good evening.

I would like to thank the elders and leaders of the Katzie First Nation and Kwantlen First Nation for being here this evening and for your words of encouragement and advice as the seven of us begin our service to our citizens. As we move forward in the next four years, I want to publicly make the commitment to strengthening the relationship between our governments and our citizens.

We are committed to embrace your teachings to ensure that our words, work and actions honour the seven generations that will come after us and the seven generations that came before us. Your knowledge of this place is critical as we work together to create a place to raise our children and to live our best lives.

,Tonight we celebrate the beginning of a new council and mandate and I am excited at the diversity of views and the professional and life experience around our table.

I want to congratulate newly elected councillors, Korleen Carreras, Onyeka Dozie, Sunny Schiller, and Jenny Tan, and re-elected councillors Judy Dueck, and Ahmed Yousef. Your individual voices and perspectives are critical to us working together to serve the community.

Councillor Dueck brings a quarter-century of service on Maple Ridge Council and has consistently been one of the best prepared legislators to serve our community. She understands the local government and the intricacies of the meetings and processes to move an idea to a policy. Judy brings her professional experience and her perspective as a citizen who has raised a family in the community to the table for every meeting. Our citizens have recognized her passion and skills by returning her to the table for the next four years.

Councillor Yousef is now beginning his second term and over the last four years has proven himself to be a passionate advocate for all citizens in the community. He is a tireless volunteer and community builder. I know that he began his journey to the Council table coming to speak to Council and demanding action on the challenges facing our Cities, and cities around the region. Shortly thereafter, he found himself at the table he used to speak to, and over the last four years his passion to bring change remains unchained. Again, citizens recognized that passion and he is back for the next four years.

We have four new faces around the Council table. Over the last six months we have gotten to know each other as we developed our campaign platform, walked the streets talking to citizens, knocked on doors and attended candidate forums. As I noted during the campaign, while we ran together in the election, we are committed to act and vote as individuals, bringing our education, professional and life experience to the Council tables to serve ALL citizens of Maple Ridge, not just those who voted for us.

Jenny Tan is a force of nature. She does more in her spare time than most of us do at work. Jenny has a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from UBC. She is also a Hammond resident. I know that she's a passionate advocate for housing and transit, but she also brings a love of the arts to the table through

her participation in the Maple Ridge Choral Society. Jenny's energy is boundless, and we look forward to harnessing that energy and passion over the next four years to address the need for affordable housing in our community.

Onyeka Dozie came to Canada in 2001 with a dream to make a better life for his family. He moved to Maple Ridge in 2007 with his wife and three kids. He holds a B.Sc. in Estate Management (Urban Land Economics), M.Sc. in Construction Management and is a certified project management professional. He has been a community leader, and served as the president of the Port Coquitlam Business Improvement Association and the Port Coquitlam City Economic Council. He also retained a strong connection to Nigeria as president of the Nigeria-Canada Association of BC. Here in Maple Ridge he is a co-founder of the Afro Gala. As we campaigned together I have been struck by Dozie's commitment to public service, wanting to give back to the community that has helped his family achieve prosperity. It's quite inspiring.

Sunny Schiller is raising her family out in Whonnock and her volunteer work with the Maple Ridge Climate Hub and the Maple Ridge Repair Café signal her passion for the environment. Sunny used to work at the City of Maple Ridge as the Committee Clerk and in that role got to know so many citizens who are contributing to building our community. On the campaign trail Sunny's passion for the environment and message about working collaboratively really connected with people on the doorsteps. We are grateful that citizens have elected here to serve with us for the next four years.

Finally, rounding out the Council table for the next four years is Korleen Carreras. Korleen joins the Council table after serving two terms as a school trustee, the last four years as the School Board Chair. Korleen lives in Albion with her two children and husband. Korleen has served as a Ministerial Advisor to the Minister of Citizens' Services and Deputy House Leader, Lisa Beare. Korleen has also served as president of the Arts Council and was a Director of the 2020 Maple Ridge BC Summer Games. While she is new on Council, she has an incredible record of public service.

The citizens of Maple Ridge, as they always do, have given us an incredible group of Councillors to serve for the next four years and continue the work of the outgoing Council.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the members of the outgoing Council for their work over the last four years. Councillor Duncan, Councillor Meadus, Councillor Svendsen and Councillor Robson along with Mayor Mike Morden have dedicated themselves to the work of Council over the last four years. They have served in a period when the world went through a global pandemic, and despite all the challenges that that it brought to our day-to-day life, they remained committed to delivering on the promises they made when they were elected four years ago.

The Chain of office is a reminder that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, a tangible reminder of the many generations who have delivered our City to this day. In fact, in 2024, during our term, Maple Ridge will celebrate its 150th year since incorporation. Given everything that's happened in the last couple of years, I think we are ready for a celebration.

I would be remiss if I didn't learn from the lesson of Canada's 150 celebration when the members of the Katzie First Nation came to the Canada Day event with t-shirts that said Canada 150, Katzie 10,000. That was a stark reminder to all of us that the Katzie first nation and the Kwantlen First nation have been here for thousands of years. As the City celebrates the milestone of incorporation, we will ensure that we take the opportunity to celebrate the history of the first people of this place at the same time.

In 2024 we will host the BC Summer games that were cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic. As I noted, Korleen was a director for the 2020 Games and they were ramping up to host athletes, coaches and officials from all around BC, and we will bring a team together to deliver a memorable Games.

This will be an opportunity to market our community to BC. This is an extraordinary place. We live between the Golden Ears Mountain and the Fraser River. In between we have the Alouette River and Kanaka Creek. The trails and parks in our community are incredible, and over the next four years we will work with our citizens, sports user groups and our staff to deliver the amenities we needed for this fast-growing community. All of us around the table will be advocating for investments from senior government, and I sincerely hope that the Katzie First Nation and Kwantlen First Nations will be part of this process as we create spaces for recreation, reflection and education.

The mountain view is obvious to anyone that travels through our community, but Maple Ridge's superpower is people.

In the audience tonight are representatives from SD42, the Maple Ridge BIA, The Chamber of Commerce, The Arts Council and a number of organizations that work everyday to build a great community.

Tonight is the culmination of the election process where citizens select the seven people that will be stewards of the community for the next four years. But it's also an opportunity for us to turn the page from the campaign and to rally everyone here, and people that could not be here tonight, to work together to build the community that we all want for today, and the community that our children's children will live in.

In the media and on social media we sometimes feel divided. I remember my time in Ottawa working on committees and having meetings with representatives from across the country and realizing that we are more alike than we are different. We have many shared values. What we see in Question Period on TV can be kind of shocking however, the reality is that behind the scenes, legislation was often crafted in a very collaborative way.

My hope is that we will be able to bring the creativity, skills, experience and passion of people of all backgrounds and political stripes to the table to forge the future.

Our City needs a strong and thriving local economy. We need to deliver the land for future employment growth. As the global economy changes, we need to make sure that Maple Ridge is positioned for the future and make sure that we are embracing that change.

The economy needs people that are trained in the skills that modern manufacturing and engineering require. Trades, technology, engineering... we need to attract these workers and to ensure that we have the educational institutes here in our community helping our kids acquire the skills and knowledge they need to thrive.

We need to continue to coordinate all of the resources and expertise in our community to address those who are dealing with addiction, mental health and homelessness. We need to be proactive and work with senior government to ensure that seniors, youth and young families are able to find affordable housing .

We need to address the challenges around transportation, our road network, transit, cycling and walking, so people can get from one point to another reliably and safely.

We need to ensure that our development is sustainable. Atmospheric rivers, heat domes, droughts and wind storms have become the norm. We need to be ready to meet the response for these incidents and make a plan to do our part and reduce our carbon footprint.

That is a big 'to-do list.'

And you know what the hardest part is going to be?

It's going to be the way that we meet these challenges and forge the future together.

Let's dedicate ourselves to debating issues and not people. The diversity of our community is our strength, and that diversity is represented at our Council table.

I'm looking forward to the next four years. Let's do this together – this amazing Council and all of you – lets make a better Maple Ridge.