



REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE: June 17, 2013

REPORT: PR 13-11

FROM: Andrew Hillaby,
Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture

FILE: 8100-01

SUBJECT: Fairgrounds Business and Land Use Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receives Report PR 13-11 for information.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Smithers has retained the services of Yates, Thorn and Associates to complete the Fairgrounds Business and Land Use Plan. The study began in mid-May with the consultant undertaking meetings with local user groups, Town staff and Mayor and Council. A preliminary letter of introduction was provided to the groups (see Appendix A). The consultant met with groups between May 27 and May 30, 2013, at various locations throughout Smithers. The consultant met with 17 not-for-profit groups and 3 public agencies (see Appendix B).

DISCUSSION:

The consultant has received background information regarding budgets, historical documents, utilities, fees and charges, and past reports. The consultant will be contacting groups throughout the process as information is required.

At its June 6, 2013 meeting, the Fall Fair Management Committee received, as a supplemental, the update from Yates, Thorn and Associates.

The final report is scheduled for late November, 2013.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The Town of Smithers has appropriate funds in its 2013 Operating Budget.

Respectfully submitted by:

Approved for submission by:

Andrew Hillaby
Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture

Deborah Sargent
Chief Administrative Officer

CAO	≡	Dir/DS	≡	Dir/Fin	≡	Agen Date June 25, 2013
Dir/CS	≡	Dir/WO	≡	Bldg Ins	≡	In-Cam Date:
CAA	≡	Fire	≡	Planner	≡	Agenda Placement: 'B'
Dir /Rec	≡	Air/Mgr	≡	PCSO	≡	Other:

The Town of Smithers and the Fall Fair Management Committee have been working toward this process for some time and I know that you will provide Mr Yates with all the help that he needs to prepare his report, which we have asked him to have ready for review by Town Council in this coming Fall.

Sincerely

Andrew Hillaby
Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture
Town of Smithers
250-847-1600

- Smithers Rodeo Club
- Smithers Rotary Club
- Three in One Breed and Open Horse Show

Public Agencies (or their Smithers representatives)

- NW Community College
- Town of Smithers, staff and Councillors
- Bulkley Valley Regional District

I have asked several groups to provide me with additional information, in particular details of their business operations (as required in my terms of reference). And I have several more avenues of inquiry to undertake, such as reviewing the organizational and financial models used in other Fairgrounds. As I noted to everyone that I met with, I shall be back in September to share what I have heard and learned.

At this stage, I only have one observation... and I think it is a most important one as it runs through most of the structures, systems and legal documentation. There are two distinct activities that seem to be enmeshed together.

- The first is the Fall Fair. This is a few weeks of intense activity in the summer, a business endeavor, and a wonderful community festival. It is organized and coordinated, as it has been for 94 years, by the BVAIA, previously I think known as the BC Exhibition Board; and it is contributed to by many other community organizations in Smithers and from across the Bulkley Valley – the NSC, the Rodeo Society, the WI, etc.
- The second is the management of the Fairgrounds. This is a year round activity, involves many community organizations, is coordinated by the BVAIA, has a complex set of approval processes which include Council and the Fall Fair Management Committee, has money and work in kind passing back and forth between organizations, and is the focus of the scope of work that I have been asked to complete (Business Plan and Land Use Plan).

My initial observation would be that there needs to be a greater separation between these two activities, as the lack of clarity between them – and the lack of transparency in their operations – leads to confusion...which is never good.

Yates, Thorn & Associates Inc.
50 Beach Drive
Victoria BC
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Tel. (250) 598-3525

E-mail: bob@yatesthorn.com

To Andrew Hillaby
From Bob Yates
Date 6/17/2013
Re Initial Comments from Consultations in Smithers re Fairgrounds

Andrew – you asked that I provide you with a brief outline of my consultations in Smithers with groups and individuals and to add, if possible, any initial observations. I understand that you will be sharing this memo with the Fall Fair Management Committee at their meeting on June 6.

Firstly, between 3.00pm Monday May 27 and Thursday May 30, I met with representatives of many groups – most were face to face interviews, several were group discussions, and a couple were telephone interviews. We chatted over coffees, and I shared in a Lions Supper – I must comment on the great hospitality of Smithereens! I have a few more leads to follow up (people who were out of town), but I think I heard from pretty much all the concerned groups.

The groups I met with are as follows:

Not-for-profit Groups

- Bulkley Valley Agricultural and Industrial Association (BV Exhibition)
- Bulkley Valley Bowmen
- Bulkley Valley Cattleman Association
- Bulkley Valley District 4-H Council
- Bulkley Valley Folk Music Society
- GlenwoodsWomens Institute
- Heavy Horse/ Glenn Stewart Horsemanship Clinic
- Northern BC Poultry and Small Animal Sale
- Northern Saddle Club
- Royal Canadian Legion
- Smithers Access Committee/ Measuring Up the North
- Smithers Farmers Institute
- Smithers Lions Society
- Smithers Rodeo Club

- Smithers Rotary Club
- Three in One Breed and Open Horse Show

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For instance, the meeting on June 6 is of the Fall Fair Management Committee (see <http://www.smithers.ca/municipal-hall/committees>)...yet as far as I can see, it would be better known as the Fairgrounds Management Committee.

But this isn't just about changing a few names. The confusion is historic and the legal linkage of the two roles is a reflection of the transfer of land ownership in the 1970s, and the indebtedness of the then Council to the magnanimity of the then BVAIA for their cooperation and community spirit. I say 'then BVAIA' because that organization, like every community organization, is really just 'the community'...as are the members of the other community organizations (NSC, Rodeo, etc).

I think it would be in the interest of the community – the Town, BVAIA, NSC, etc - if there were a greater degree of separation in these two roles.

As I say these are my very early observations, but you are welcome to share them with the FFMC in its June 6 meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Yates

Principal

Yates, Thorn & Associates