

# **TOWN OF SMITHERS**

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of Council held in Council Chambers, 1027 Aldous Street, Smithers, B.C., on Tuesday, January 5, 2010, at 6:00 p.m.

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## Council Present:

Cress Farrow, Mayor  
Norm Adomeit, Councillor  
Mark Bandstra, Councillor  
Lorne Benson, Councillor  
Jo Ann Groves, Councillor  
Charlie Northrup, Councillor  
Frank Wray, Councillor.

## Guests:

Doug Donaldson, MLA  
Julie Maitland, MLA Assistant  
Wally Bergen, Library Board  
Boyd Brown, Library Board  
Lorraine Doiron, Library Board  
Paul Parry, Library Board  
Tracey Therrien, Librarian  
Stan Granda, Legion  
Don McMillan, Legion  
Taylor Bachrach  
Roy Fowler  
Tracy Fowler  
Clinton Pidherny  
Gordon Williams Sr.  
Jason Konst  
Gord Cole  
Len Dohler  
Fred Tabert  
Dennis Lee  
Tom Havard  
Lloyd McKnight  
Wally Lesawich  
Rob Trampuh  
Kim Tran  
David Bobb.

## Staff Present:

Deborah Sargent, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mark Allen, Director of Development Services  
Janice McKay, Recording Secretary.

## Staff Excused:

Susan Bassett, Director of Corporate Services  
Leslie Ford, Director of Finance  
Andrew Hillaby, Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture  
Keith Stecko, Fire Chief  
Kelly Zacharias, Airport Manager/Deputy Fire Chief  
Wilf Taekema, Director of Works and Operations.

Media Present: Cameron Orr, The Interior News.

## 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Farrow called the meeting to order (6:00 p.m).

## 2. **CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

### 2-1 **Council Priorities - MLA**

D. Donaldson introduced Julie Maitland, Hazelton Constituency Office Assistant. Shelley Worthington, Smithers Constituency Office Assistant was unable to attend.

D. Donaldson advised Council of when the Legislature will be in session:

- February 9 (Throne Speech), 10 and 11
- Break for the Olympics
- Budget - March 2
- Break for the Paralympics
- End of March to first week of June.

D. Donaldson advised that he is using his time in the riding to meet with constituents. He advised that he met with C. Hikisch of Northern Health and will be attending the Smithers Public Library fundraiser. He will be attending the 2010 Roundup and Minerals North conferences.

Council members apprised D. Donaldson of their concerns and suggested areas where he could provide assistance, as follows:

- advise Council of new grant opportunities and important provincial government initiatives
- speak up regarding the hardship of municipalities having to provide matching funds when applying for grants
- work towards streamlining the mine approval process, while safeguarding the environment, to provide employment as quickly as possible
- encourage the creation of a smelter to minimize transportation costs of hauling to Endako
- work towards improving the provincial environmental assessment process, and consider supporting an amalgamation of the provincial and federal environmental processes, where possible
- continue to fight for fair treatment of rural areas by the Province, to get our fair share
- pull together First Nations and other partners to work together to get some projects off the ground, i.e. smelter
- assist in fast tracking the Highway 37 electrification project
- educate Victoria about the true economic conditions of communities within our region - the long-term downturn, the aging population, the decline in population, concerns regarding succession in our business sectors, the impending closure of Kemess
- assist Smithers in building a presence with the Federal Government, in order to receive more federal infrastructure funding
- continue to support the Smithers Regional Airport and the Smithers Multiplex
- bring the message to Victoria that centralization does not work - cities cannot handle the population growth, while rural areas are losing services and dying
- advise Victoria that deficit spending cannot continue
- encourage future economic development projects, especially the Highway 37 project - send the right message to investors
- advise Victoria to discontinue giving subsidy grants to organizations, unless there is a surplus budget
- bring the message to Victoria that RCMP costs are ever increasing, not sustainable, difficult to budget for and that local governments should be consulted and that proceeds from crime, as well as the Regional Districts' share for policing, should be put back into policing.

D. Donaldson offered to meet again with Council, if Council so wishes and advised that he will send D. Sargent notes from the fall session of the Legislature for Council's information.

2-2

New Library Project - Park Development Vision and Responsibilities

Groves/

THAT Report DEV 10-006 dated December 31, 2009, from M. Allen, Director of Development Services, presenting information regarding the Library project, be received.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council, members of the Library Board, and members of the Royal Canadian Legion discussed costs regarding site development, site services, and park development associated with the Library Project. Also discussed was the need to decide the fate of the existing Library.

It was noted that gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, landscaping, sewer and water hookup, street closure, and paved parking lot and alleys, have not yet been fully addressed. It was further noted that there are a number of exclusions listed in the final architect's report such as GST and professional, legal, accounting, administration, and permit fees that should be taken into account. Furnishings are not included in cost estimates. As well, Peace Arch relocation and Cenotaph relocation and/or reconstruction have not been fully considered. The consensus was that it would be prudent to have a 'total project' cost, particularly when applying for grant funding.

Council advised that one of the goals of the meeting is to find solutions on project delays and to discuss how we can handle this development compared to other developments within the Town. Council requires a clearer understanding of what the actual park plan is versus the architect's rendition. It was emphasized that Council's role is to achieve fiscal responsibility, without overburdening the taxpayer, and that now is the time to minimize surprises and unknowns.

The Library Board indicated that they need a better understanding of Council's commitment to the project and added that a volunteer board should not be considered to be a developer, but a partner with the Town to build a Town facility. The Board's volunteerism is in relation to libraries.

The Legion confirmed that there is no national standard for cenotaphs and that it is up to the community to decide what it wants. The Legion will pursue funding to build a new cenotaph.

D. Sargent advised that staff could provide a report addressing the actual costs of the missing items.

It was agreed to continue discussion on whether the library building should stay or be demolished at the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for January 7, 2010.

2-3 Development Procedures and Security Deposits

Bandstra/

THAT Report DEV 10-005 dated December 30, 2009, from M. Allen, Director of Development Services, presenting Town documents and provincial legislation relevant to Town development procedures and requirements, be received.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Farrow advised the developers that Council would like to improve and streamline development processes, while maintaining standards, and welcomed their input now and any time in the future.

The developers made the following comments:

- the requirement to provide security deposits for paving and sidewalks is not mentioned on the Town's website
- a complete listing of the requirements should be available at the start of the process
- the security deposit process should be completely transparent and address the questions: When are the deposits, or portions of, returned to the applicant? How are they returned? How is the amount decided? How can it be bypassed? How long can deposits be held?
- developers want to see consistency in how applications are treated
- the Town asks for security deposits in November for a spring project
- it is a hardship for developers to come up with security deposits and putting up a bond would be preferred - the financial institution does not care that the security deposit is 100% refundable, including the interest accrued
- developers are concerned about appropriate orientation for the new building inspector with Town regulations
- accommodating wheelchair access should be mandatory
- it is important for developers to build a good working relationship with Town staff
- the development process should not be cost prohibitive
- these meetings should take place once or twice per year
- footing elevations should be addressed in each application
- the subdivision of lots for a duplex was difficult the first time around
- developers should not have to spend their time looking for loopholes in the system (i.e. buying parking spaces from the Town to avoid having to pave parking lots) - developers are looking for guidance from staff
- there are drainage issues in the Hill Section on the other side of Main Street

Council's comments were as follows:

- consistency is important, but there are times when Council must review on a case-per-case basis
- differences in interpretation can sometimes pose problems
- a knowledge of the Zoning and OCP Bylaws is beneficial to developers
- developers are encouraged to submit proposals to Council for the top half of the Old Highways Yard, currently zoned R-1.

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Staff advised that:

- legislation enables local governments to require security deposits
- the Town's Subdivision Servicing Bylaw states that 120% of the construction value, for all off-site works, is required as deposit
- for on-site works the industry standard is used (100% of actual construction value)
- it is doubtful whether or not local governments could charge the developer on their property tax notices for work that the developer did not complete, as it would have to be specifically permitted in the *Local Government Act*, as in the case of unsightly premises
- departments are working on improving the detailed information on the Town's website to better serve the needs of the public
- Council should refer people to staff to have their detailed development regulation questions answered
- the Town is actively trying to recruit a new building inspector. The successful candidate will be encouraged to attend Advisory Planning Commission meetings and meet with developers
- what may appear to be an inconsistency can actually be the use of Council discretion which may go against the policy
- in the case of Development Permits, the security is in place for two full years
- use and density cannot be varied
- the Town does not impose development cost charges as many other municipalities do
- regarding footings elevation, subdivision applications do require them
- the new OCP will allow building owners to fix up facades (under \$75,000) without having to go through the Development Permit steps and the Development Permit area is being expanded to include multi-family development
- the South Trunk Storm Sewer project will empty into Dahlie Creek instead of Chicken Creek
- a Local Area Service project could be a way of dealing with the Hill Section drainage problem.

Mayor Farrow thanked the developers for attending the meeting and for their input.

3. **OTHER BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

None.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Groves/  
THAT the meeting be adjourned (8:40 p.m.).

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Certified Correct:

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Cress Farrow  
Mayor

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Deborah Sargent  
Corporate Administrator/CAO

SB/jm

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**Certified a True and Correct Copy** of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on Tuesday, January 5, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at 1027 Aldous Street, Smithers, B.C.

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Deborah Sargent  
Corporate Administrator/CAO