

# **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, September 21, 2010, at 6:00 p.m.

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## Council Present:

Cress Farrow, Mayor  
Norm Adomeit, Councillor  
Mark Bandstra, Councillor  
Frank Wray, Councillor (6:44 p.m.).

## Council Excused:

Lorne Benson, Councillor  
Jo Ann Groves, Councillor  
Charlie Northrup, Councillor.

## Staff Present:

Deborah Sargent, Chief Administrative Officer  
Susan Bassett, Director of Corporate Services  
Leslie Ford, Director of Finance  
Mark Allen, Director of Development Services  
Andrew Hillaby, Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture  
Wilf Taekema, Director of Works and Operations  
Alison Walker, Planner  
Penny Goodacre, Recording Secretary.

## Staff Excused:

Keith Stecko, Fire Chief.

Media Present: M. Dekkema, The Peak.

## 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

Mayor Farrow explained the absences of both Deputy Mayor Groves and Councillor Northrup and stated that Councillor Wray was expected to join the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Until then an informal discussion would take place, while waiting for the quorum.

## 2. **CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

### 2-1 **Town-owned Buildings – Informal Discussion:**

Council had requested a “Building and Facility Maintenance Plan for Town-owned Buildings” be compiled. Council will use the Plan to assist decision making during budget deliberations and prioritizing maintenance schedules. Council has created a “Maintenance Reserve Fund”. The Plan includes such things as heating, lighting, roofs, boiler systems, mechanical systems, and recommended upgrades. The Plan can assist in reporting the Town’s greenhouse gas emissions for the BC Smart Tool Project. Staff is working on obtaining grants for “Solar Energy Upgrades” in municipally owned buildings.

2-2 Central Park Plan – Informal Discussion:

A. Walker, Planner, reviewed the history of Central Park (from 2000 to 2010), which included: a) two concept plans; b) land exchange this year; c) existing users; d) existing facilities on location; e) Official Community Plan designation; f) zoning designations: P1A Public Utility Zone, P1 Public Amenity Zone and R1 Single Family Residential; and g) adjacent lands owned by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Future considerations for Central Park include how to: a) balance Park use by both visitors and residents; b) maximize year round use; c) have higher density and mixed usage; d) revise access, egress and circulation of site; and e) incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. Council discussed the need to review the existing Central Park Plans and update them into an action plan, through either a Committee or a Design Charette.

Council acquired the residential property located at 3885 Sixth Avenue in a land exchange earlier this year. Council is considering the best use of the property, and how to incorporate the land into Central Park using it for park or cultural purposes; such as the museum, library, chamber of commerce, or a bandstand.

(Councillor Wray joined the meeting at 6:44 p.m. and formed the quorum.)

D. Sargent, Chief Administrative Officer, summarized the discussion as follows: a) it is time to start the process; b) it was agreed that the Design Charette process is a good way to proceed; c) the “Design Exercise” should be placed in the 2011 budget; and d) apply for grants for the exercise.

Adomeit/

THAT Council approves the agenda.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2-1 Town-owned Buildings

Wray/

THAT Report DEV 10-093 dated September 15, 2010, from M. Allen, Director of Development Services, presenting a Building and Facility Maintenance Plan for Town-owned buildings, be received (5210-30).

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2-2 Central Park Plan

Bandstra/

THAT Report DEV 10-092 dated September 15, 2010, from A. Walker, Planner, regarding Central Park, be received (6140-20).

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2-3 Old St. James Anglican Church Lease (permitted use, property taxes, provision to sublet)

Adomeit/

THAT the following correspondence be received:

- 2-3.a) Lease Agreement between the Town of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society for the Old Church Hall.
- 2-3.b) Excerpt from the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting (regarding Permissive Tax Exemptions) held June 23, 2010.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion:

D. Sargent reminded Council they requested at the June 23, 2010, Committee of the Whole meeting, a meeting with the Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society (Museum) to discuss the Old St. James Anglican Church (Old Church) Lease; in particular the sublet of the building, permitted use, and tax exemption status,

The Museum suggested that the wording of the lease be updated to reflect the current use of the Old Church. The Museum does not sublet the Old Church; they rent it out by the hour, as a revenue generator for the Museum.

Council expressed concerns over: a) Old Church rental being in direct competition with other taxpaying venues; b) Old Church making a profit on rentals; and c) Old Church providing rentals at subsidized rates as a result of their tax exempt status.

The Museum responded that the Old Church is rented out and is a revenue generator for the Museum. The Museum would consider cancelling their lease agreement if they were not permitted to rent out the building, as it takes a lot of Staff time to administer. In 2004, the original purpose of the Old Church was to provide a place for local artists and non-profits to use at a lower cost than other venues.

If the Old Church were to pay property taxes, the rental fees could be increased to offset this cost. The Old Church currently has tax exempt status for all taxes collected by the Municipality. If Council were to remove the tax exempt status, perhaps the Museum would approach the Town for a larger annual "Grant-in-Aid" request.

If the Museum decided not to renew the Old Church lease, the Town could take over the operations. It could be administered as a "Recreation Facility" using the "Class Registration System" and be an additional revenue generator for the Town.

Adomeit/

THAT the lease agreement between the Town of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society for the Old Church Hall be reworded as follows: a) Clause 6 – strikeout “not for profit”; b) Clause 4.b. – remove “to pay taxes as required”; and c) keep the “tax exempt status”.

**OPPOSED: COUNCILLOR BANDSTRA.**

**CARRIED.**

Councillor Bandstra expressed concern over this motion and suggested the “Permissive Tax Exemption” portion should be debated at the October 12, 2010, Regular Council Meeting, when all Councillors would be present.

3. **OTHER BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

None.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Bandstra/

THAT the meeting be adjourned (7:54 p.m.).

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Certified Correct:

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Cress Farrow  
Mayor

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Deborah Sargent  
Corporate Administrator/CAO

SB/plg

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**Certified a True and Correct Copy** of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on Tuesday, September 21, 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