



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MAY 3, 2010
2:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT: Mayor Bruce Lantz
Councillor Lori Ackerman
Councillor Trevor Bolin
Councillor Bruce Christensen
Councillor Dan Davies
Councillor Larry Evans

ALSO PRESENT: Dianne Hunter, City Manager
Janet Prestley, Director of Legislative and Administrative Services
Joanne Caldecott, Deputy City Clerk
Jim Rogers, Director of Protective Services
Victor Shopland, Director of Infrastructure and Capital Works
Laura Sanders, Director of Finance
Grace Fika, Manager of Human Resources
Sarah Cockerill, Director of Community Services
Deanna Hill, Visitor Services Coordinator

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

2. Notice of New Business:

None

3. Adoption of Agenda by Consensus:

The May 3, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting agenda was adopted by consensus.

4. Adoption of Minutes:

March 29, 2010 Open Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

MOVED/SECONDED

“THAT, minutes of the March 29, 2010 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adopted.”

CARRIED

5. **Business Arising Out of the Minutes:**

None

6. **Delegations:**

Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre

Presentation of Vision and Interim Business Plan for the Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre

Jerry Lemmon: EWD Consulting Corp

Garry Oker: Oker Consulting

The Mayor welcomed the delegation and invited Mr. Lemmon and Mr. Oker to make their presentation.

Mr. Lemmon explained the concept and origin of the name Saa Maa which means "Edge of the Sun" and Mr. Oker provided the Vision Statement of the Centre. Mr. Lemmon noted that several meetings were held with the community task force and also identified the many community collaboration partners who have contributed to the vision of the project. Mr. Oker highlighted the guiding principles used noting the focus on connection and inclusiveness. The goals of the project were reviewed which include the creation of a world class centre to provide a global perspective on the economic contribution made by the energy sector incorporating the innovative solutions being sought to address the environmental and social impacts of this sector. Mr. Oker highlighted the Cultural Interpretive Goals, explaining the importance of harnessing the synergy between cultures to build a sense of belonging in the community. Mr. Lemmon explained the goal is not only to create a treasured tourist destination but to provide a centre with the capacity to host outdoor cultural events, promote local and regional attractions and events, and assist local artisans in marketing unique products in the region. Mr. Lemmon also outlined the learning goals of the project which include offering professional development workshops, joint programs with School District 60, as well as providing a centre for dialogue to the energy sector while also promoting cultural expression.

The vision for the entrance to the centre was described which will lead into an Energy and Contemporary Arboretum setting highlighting wind, biomass, solar energy stories and displays as well as providing a location for education. The higher levels of the centre will highlight how technology connects research and innovation with a portal to the lower level/cave entrance connecting the future with the past and present. Possible outside exhibits and attractions including an amphitheatre were presented. Slides detailing space allocation were shown.

A breakdown of required funding indicated that \$17 million is required to complete the project. Schedules of revenue streams from 2012 to 2016 were shown indicating substantial revenues being generated from the proposed RV Park. Mr. Lemmon noted the importance of having the interpretive centre operationally sustainable. A schedule of expenses was shown indicating the surplus of \$67,910 in the year 2012 increasing to \$261,060 by 2016.

The delegation outlined the next steps and timeframes for the project noting the anticipation of securing final funding by September 20, 2010. Mr. Lemmon summarized the presentation and opened the floor to Council's questions. Mayor Lantz thanked the delegation for a detailed and clearly defined presentation.

Councillor Davies asked whether the City would be responsible for the operations of the centre or whether a society would be formed for this purpose. Mr. Lemmon confirmed that different options have been considered and are feasible. However, it is preferred that the City operate the centre with a foundation created to administer donations and provide an advisory capacity on funding management. He noted that success of the project requires both community input and strong administration.

6. **Delegations:**

Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre (Continued)

Presentation of Vision and Interim Business Plan for the Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre

Jerry Lemmon: EWD Consulting Corp

Garry Oker: Oker Consulting

Mr. Lemmon provided Council with clarification on the Federal and Provincial Governments funding contributions and indicated that every effort would be made to ensure every possible Provincial grant is accessed. He confirmed the significant contribution of \$1 million from the City as well as the commitment to provide land (including servicing) for the centre and stated that no additional funding would be sought from City. Mr. Lemmon indicated that the initial response from the oil and gas industry is that of keen interest; however the priority has been to fully engage the community and stakeholders during the vision process and finalizing the business plan is a critical step prior to being able to succeed in securing funds.

Councillor Bolin thanked the delegation for their detailed presentation and the comprehensive information provided and asked Mr. Lemmon for clarification on the \$2.2 million allocation for the design. Mr. Lemmon explained that the proposed design would appeal and draw a broad array of visitors to the centre.

Councillor Christensen suggested that the income indicated for the RV Park was extremely ambitious and asked for clarification on how these figures were arrived at - especially the winter season revenues. Mr. Lemmon noted the potential in learning from other centers and indicated that if good winterized services are made available, there is a certain demand for winter RV sites which provides the opportunity to develop a truly unique RV park which will be open year round. He noted the 'Fam Tours' planned for the end of May providing Council a great opportunity to become fully engaged with the process and asked Council to appoint a representative and approve related travel expenses for this purpose.

Mr. Lemmon clarified that the admittance fee is currently estimated at \$7.00 with residents in the area having the option to purchase an annual family pass for an estimated \$100.00.

Council debated the outcomes if the required funding levels are not reached. Mr. Lemmon stated that the Business Plan proposes the most sustainable option from a revenue perspective and every effort had been made to present a realistic forecast. He noted that there are always ways to cut back should this become necessary and indicated that the business plan would be reviewed if a capital shortfall arises.

Councillor Evans asked for confirmation on the size of land required for the centre if it included the RV Park and Mr. Lemmon confirmed that a parcel of 8 acres would suffice the plan as shown with sufficient parking provided. He also provided clarification on the involvement from the Peace River Regional District and confirmed their participation through the initial planning process.

Councillor Ackerman stated she was aware that certain RV Parks are open for use year round and confirmed that the Regional District as well as other rural residents did take part in the round table discussions.

Mayor Lantz pointed out that it was unlikely that RV Park revenues would be higher in the winter than in summer and suggested this income be revised in the Business Plan. He indicated that the annual operating income for the first year is ambitious and asked what will happen in the event of a revenue shortfall in any given year. Mr. Lemmon noted the inclusion of legacy funds in the initial operating income which may provide a cushion in the first year of operations. He noted the primary component of expenses relates to salaries and wages and initial staffing levels may need to be adjusted.

6. Delegations:

Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre (Continued)

Presentation of Vision and Interim Business Plan for the Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre

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The City Manager commended the delegation for their hard work to present the interim plan noting that further progress is required before the plan is finalized. She agreed that the 'Fam Tours' require Council's representation to both learn about Visitor Centre best practices and to assist in presenting the business plan. She requested Council confirm their support and approve at least one Council member to travel with Messrs. Lemmon and Oker on their tours to other Interpretive Centers to maintain the City's strong connection with the project.

The City Manager indicated that the business plan and financial numbers are "work in progress" and will take time to refine. She applauded the delegation for their excellent job in providing a very thorough and detailed plan showing the initial scope and size of the project as well as key areas which will contribute to the overall success of the project. She asked Council to indicate their support in continuing with the Saa Maa business case and to start look at potential funding sources. She noted that the timeline for grant funding is now very tight which adds a source of pressure to this project.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1
MOVED/SECONDED

"THAT, it be recommended to Council that Council endorses the Saa Maa (Energy Interpretive) Centre Vision and Business Plan in principle;
AND FURTHER THAT, Councillor Christensen and one staff member be authorized to attend the FAM tour with the associated travel expenses to be allocated from the City Manager's Contingency Account."

CARRIED

7. Correspondence:

None

8. Reports from City Manager and Administration:

None

9. New Business:

None

10. Resolution to Move to Closed Committee of the Whole Meeting

MOVED/SECONDED

"THAT, Council Move to the Closed Committee of the Whole meeting for the purpose of discussing matters that pertains to

- 1(e) The acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, if the Council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interest of the municipality."

CARRIED

11. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Confirmed by Council this 10th day of May, 2010

**CERTIFIED CORRECT IN ACCORDANCE
WITH SECTION 124 OF THE COMMUNITY CHARTER**

BRUCE LANTZ, MAYOR

JANET PRESTLEY, DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE
AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES