

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the **DISTRICT OF MISSION COUNCIL** held in the Gymnasium of the Leisure Centre at 7650 Grand Street, Mission, British Columbia, on Thursday, March 3, 2011 commencing at 7:00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Mayor James Atebe
Councillor Paul Horn
Councillor Danny Plecas
Councillor Mike Scudder

Committee Members Absent: Councillor Terry Gidda
Councillor Jenny Stevens
Councillor Heather Stewart

Staff Members Present: Paul Gipps, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ken Bjorgaard, Director of Finance
Rick Bomhof, Director of Engineering & Public Works
Sharon Fletcher, Director of Planning
Ray Herman, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture
Inspector Walsh, RCMP
Debi Decker, Administrative Assistant

Mayor Atebe called the meeting to order.

1. Community Amenities

Mayor's Welcoming Remarks

S2011/019
MAR 3/11

The Mayor welcomed the public to this meeting and advised that the following Councillors send their regrets as they all have the flu and are unable to attend this evening, Stewart, Stevens, and Gidda. The Mayor continued by explaining the process for the evening's meeting.

- He stressed the important of planning and putting funds aside for community amenity projects.
- Some grant funds that are provided by the senior levels of governments require projects to be "shovel ready" and have matching funds available.
- Projects need to align with the vision or the views of the leaders of governments providing the grants.
- The process for moving the community amenity projects forward include:
 - Council prioritizing the list of amenities and approving the list going forward from the comments from the various feedback;
 - Staff having discussions with the development community and focus groups; and
 - A final opportunity for the public to provide comments on community amenity projects.
- Council will, after all the public feedback has been received, move forward with the policy that will provide the framework as to how the District can collect the amenity contributions from the development community.

The Mayor introduced the Director of Planning who was giving the presentation of the proposed community amenity program.

S2011/020
MAR 3/11

Staff PowerPoint Presentation

The Director of Planning noted that this is the first of three input opportunities for Council to receive comments for the proposed update to the community amenity program.

The following are the highlights from the presentation:

- Community amenities are generally capital facilities or improvements that are needed to serve a growing population and to create a more complete community.
- Development brings growth and growth increases the need for more amenity capacity.
- As part of a new development developers volunteer a community amenity contribution or they build an amenity.
- A process was developed to review the projects and for an implementation strategy to implement the updated policy.
- Each project was analyzed to determine estimated cost, when construction would start, whether the project would be an expansion or new facility, and a location of the project.
- Cost estimates for each project are subject to change because of different factors such as:
 - facility design, the design may increase or decrease the cost,
 - the scope or size of the project may increase or decrease affecting the cost,
 - prevailing construction and economic environment always affects the cost of projects based on the availability of trades and materials.
 - private partnership opportunities and other relevant factors affect funding models significantly.
- The timing of the project is based on:
 - actual versus estimated population growth,
 - changing project priorities, and/or
 - available funding, including grants, private partnership opportunities and/or community group fundraising
- Community amenity projects have been separated into two lists:
 - List A - identified by council as having in their opinion, the highest priority.
 - List B - these projects are also important, but will only be considered when alternative funding becomes available or the need becomes greater than initially determined and may be moved to List A.
- Each project has an estimated contribution amount that the developer and the taxpayer would pay based on the percentage of the cost allocated to new development.
- Identifying future needs enables the District to plan ahead and to save for the costs in advance of construction of the facilities. By anticipating needs the requirements for borrowing could be removed or reduced and therefore reduce the overall costs of a project significantly.

- Council will review the list from time to time and will consider the projects on List B if funding opportunities arrive.
- Based on the estimated costs of the projects on List A the increase in the community amenity contribution amount is proposed from \$2,680 to \$6,200. List B estimated costs are not included in the community amenity contribution amount.
- Once a new policy document is in place the new amount will be applied to new applications only.

The Director of Planning thanked the audience for their time and advised that a questionnaire was available for comments and that a box for completed forms was located at the back of the room.

S2011/021
MAR 3/11

Councillors' Comments

Councillor Horn commented that the community amenity program is very complex for both the public and Council but that it is very important to communicate this issue and to receive public feedback/comments. He noted that it is not a matter of "if" but "when" amenities are needed and that we need to answer the questions, where, how much, who should pay (division between developer and taxpayer), when can we afford it and when do we need it? He pointed out that amenities are not strictly a "Mission issue", but common amongst all municipalities. The only variable is how each municipality collects community amenity contributions or provides for amenities to be constructed. He asked the audience to provide comment on whether or not a specific amenity was needed and when was it needed. That the community was playing "catch-up" but that a balance needed to be met as well that didn't deter development. Council is trying to avoid borrowing funds and paying interest (debt) costs, which is also part of the balancing act.

Councillor Plecas stated that he had four points to bring up.

1. Communication. It is very important to have a discussion with the community and that the storyboards tell what is important.
2. Process. The process we are following is responsible as it sets the tone for future development and coincides with the Official Community Plan. It is important to show that the community is planning ahead.
3. Partnership. It would be beneficial if the District could partner with the Provincial or Federal governments for grants or with other groups.
4. Financially responsible. It helps if the District does not have to borrow money to fund the amenities, to be able to avoid the borrowing costs.

Councillor Plecas closed by saying he is looking forward to hearing from the public.

Councillor Scudder commented that it had been a long road since he was sitting in the audience and that Council were still trying to find the balance from people in the community and the development community. That enough revenue needed to be collected so the amenities could be built without borrowing, but not so much that the development community stops investing in our municipality. That the projects listed were fluid, as Councils and community groups change as well as their priorities. He noted that Council

needed a good dialogue with the community to find out what is needed/wanted and to confirm whether or not an amenity was missing from the proposed list. He concluded by saying that this process has to be fluid and will only evolve to a good place if we get good input from everyone.

Mayor Atebe stated that this has been a visioning exercise, with staff checking with other communities to see how they are approaching community amenities, as this is not unique to Mission. That the District had fallen behind in collecting amenity contributions and planning ahead for new amenity projects and had to borrow funds to build the leisure centre and we don't want to put the future community in that situation. The District is capable of planning and needs to come up with a plan for the future with input from the community. The Mayor informed the audience that he is looking forward to constructive comments and wants to hear if any amenities are missing from these lists.

The Mayor asked for the first person to step forward to give their comments.

S2011/022
MAR 3/11

Public Comments

Judith Ray, President of the Mission Association of Seniors' Housing:

- Concerned about the amenity contribution amount when developing affordable senior housing now and in the future, as well as the percentages attributable, i.e. 80%, to new growth and the developer community.
- 70% of Mission residents commute out of the community for work, and that the projects listed are not big employer activities so they wouldn't be assisting with keeping people in the community.
- Believes that a referendum should be held for the projects even if borrowing is not an issue.
- Concerned that community amenity contributions are described as voluntary when in fact if they are not paid your rezoning application may not be approved.
- Doesn't want to see additional barriers put in place to deter/defer the hoped for development.

The Mayor responded by saying that the percentages attributable to new growth are proposed and can be adjusted, that the District would have to go to referendum if they were borrowing funds that would take longer than five years to repay and the District is trying to avoid borrowing and the associated servicing costs. In regard to the voluntary contribution, the *Community Charter* states that Council can determine if a development is premature or not, and can therefore not approve an application.

Councillor Horn responded that Council would be open to negotiate with not-for-profit organizations or other developers, who are developing something that would benefit the community such as a senior complex/housing, or including space for public art and/or recreation space for not-for-profit groups within their development. He noted that these are valid comments and need to be integrated into the policy. He commented that this is a perfect example of how the contribution is voluntary.

The Director of Finance confirmed that if the District is borrowing funds over five years, legislatively there needs to be either a referendum or a counter petition (where 10% of the electorate can sign a petition if they object to borrowing funds). If no borrowing is involved, there doesn't have to be a public process, but Council can choose to do so.

Councillor Plecas responded that if an organization has shown that they could provide a community need, then Council would look at the contribution and could negotiate with the developer. With regards to the percentages attributable, some projects have a lesser percentage and this is tied to the specific amenity and growth in the community.

Councillor Scudder responded that the taxpayers' portion is just as important as the developer amenity contribution amount and this shows the complexity of these discussions. We need to focus on what projects to have on the list and collecting amenity contributions. Once the District gets to the point of building projects, where and how to fund will be a huge part of the discussions.

Shelley Clarkson:

Has come with questions and solutions and believes two things are missing, a permanent home for the soap box derby and exhibition grounds. It would be nice to have a show barn amenity that we could build on ALR lands. She questioned when does a park become a civic complex? She was specifically asking about the Fraser River Heritage Park, a centre where most community events take place, there is a recreational area and walking trails. The new trail bridge is beautiful, except when people get there and realize they need to use the washroom, they have to go back to the main entrance.

She noted that with the possible future Parr Avenue development, the new shopping area at 11th Avenue and Stave Lake Street, and the in-fill in the neighbouring community, the park is experiencing and will experience more increases in its use, both off-season and in-season.

Possible solutions:

- Washrooms located within a new maintenance building at the east end of the park near the bridge.
- Add irrigation (from washrooms in the new maintenance building) for the new gardens on the trail and the orchard.
- Move the current repair shop out of the concession area behind the current washrooms (into the new maintenance building) and turn the loft above the washrooms into the caretaker suite.
- Top floor of the Norma Kenney House will now be available (current caretaker suite) to increase the seating for the Blueberry Kitchen to meet bus tour requirements.
- Extend the east patio of Norma Kenney House and cover it. This will provide a covered area for concerts or could be booked for catering engagements and/or to allow for expansion of the kitchen.
- These improvements would increase efficiency, viability and access to the park.
- There would be no increase of the building footprint in the park as the new maintenance building would be replacing the containers which house the tractors, mowers, chipper, etc.

Jim Hinds:

Had the following questions:

1. Would there be any Federal or Provincial funding towards the new police building?
2. To Inspector Walsh, is the current location a good location?
3. If the police building was relocated, would the existing building be suitable to be renovated into another community amenity?

The Mayor responded that the Federal or Provincial governments do not contribute any funds towards a new police building, and that if the police building was relocated, there would be a process where Council and staff would look at the options for that site and what it could be used for.

Inspector Walsh responded that the current police detachment was in a good location, but that there were some limitations with respect to the footprint, such as parking for the site. He indicated that the detachment not only housed Mission members and support staff but also had integrated teams on location for extended periods of time.

Councillor Horn responded by stating that if the police building was relocated, due to the commercial development in the surrounding area, it was quite possible that the best use for that land may be a commercial venture and purchase land elsewhere.

Councillor Horn questioned whether or not the Provincial government would contribute funds as there are Provincial Police housed in our detachment, and was there a provision whereby we could ask the Provincial government for a portion of the new facility?

The Director of Finance advised that there was a formula in ratio to the number of provincial members over the total number of members in the detachment, for both capital and operating costs.

Councillor Horn requested that this small portion be reflected in the future.

Councillor Scudder responded by stating that if a new police building location is identified, co-locating and/or leveraging should be discussed. What other amenity could be located beside or within a police building? Creating a park surrounding the facility may be a great idea. Once a new project has been identified, thought needs to be given to what other amenity could be included within the initial project.

Linda Goodair, Mission Seniors' Association:

Seniors are very disturbed to see that a permanent seniors' facility has been put off until 2015, and believe that is unacceptable as they expect more from Council. While the current location of the seniors' facility is good, the office space is the size of a closet, there is no designated "seniors' only" space and the association has to book room space in advance and this is not acceptable. The idea of a multi-generational facility is good as one amenity would complement another, but something needs to be done to enlarge the designated space for seniors now. She advised that the seniors association has access to various grants and other funding that they could assist with.

The Mayor responded by stating that Council values seniors and there are many things that Council does to demonstrate this, such as providing fee-for-service grants for life time learning, lawn bowling, etc. as well as working with the Mission Association for Seniors' Housing to have The Cedars built. Council realizes that the seniors need a centre where they can all gather and call their own. Council cannot however, take a community asset (the Mission Community Activity Centre) and give it to one organization. Council will work with the seniors to find a permanent location for a centre.

Councillor Horn responded by stating he had a number of questions that Council would appreciate receiving answers to. The questions are:

- 1) Do you want to stay at the current location or move?
- 2) How much more space do you need?
- 3) What other improvements – besides space do you need/want? We know about the parking lot.
- 4) Which of these improvements are priorities and how could they be phased-in?
- 5) Funding sources. Do you know of grants we can co-apply for or that you can apply for?

Council Horn requested that Ms Goodair have a discussion with the board members and email the answers.

Sieglinde Stieda:

Questioned whether Council considers permanent community gardens as an amenity, if there are plans for additional community gardens, and could a permanent community garden be part of the amenity project list?

She continued by stating that she agreed that a referendum should be held prior to building each amenity as this is too important to only be discussing with small groups. She also agreed that the Heritage Park is a wonderful facility and agrees that there needs to be changes at the seniors centre and that a new facility needs to be built sooner than 2015.

The Director of Planning responded by stating that currently there are no specific plans with regards to community gardens, but that the rezoning bylaw could be changed so that multi-family developments are required to provide a community garden, but then the garden would be privately managed and not for the general public. New parks could include a community garden, but these decisions would have to be made by Council.

Blake Hudema, Vice-President of Genstar Development:

Expressed that community amenities are an important matter to Genstar and that we have lived through one of the most trying economic times, are trying to establish new businesses and that it's a very sensitive time to be looking forward. He agreed that it is not a matter of "if" but "when" for amenities and that this community has fallen behind and needs to catch-up, but there is that balancing act to allow communities to flourish and grow.

Mr. Hudema voiced his concerns on:

1. The industry is in a weak moment and trying to keep development moving in this community with the tremendous opportunity on the west side of the city and the waterfront and inner city development. The District must be careful about going forward with initiatives and understanding how they fit into the context of the cost structure of what we have to go through.
2. Comments made that development fees (such as development cost charges (DCCs), community amenity contributions (CACs), levies, etc.) could further reduce the cost of land, when the development community actually sees the opposite. Raw land prices keep rising and so do the development fees, and these costs are passed onto the end user and the price of housing goes up.
3. The voluntary nature of the community amenity contribution.
4. While there is a difference between DCCs and CACs, developers only see the total cost of all fees. Things that could add to an unsustainable set of housing conditions.
5. How Mission fits in with Abbotsford/Langley/Maple Ridge. Will it be too expensive to do business in Mission?

He concluded by saying the community needs to look at innovative ways to deliver these services, multi-use leveraging, marrying projects together, and municipalities need to work together with developers.

The Mayor responded that the District is very conscious that we are competing with other communities and not to be uncompetitive. He asked Mr. Hudema if he knew of any best practices from other communities, of how Mission is doing things differently, and that we would appreciate hearing from him, and having him as part of a developer stakeholder.

Councillor Horn commented that Genstar has a tremendous amount of development experience all across western Canada, and would appreciate receiving comments on the following:

1. Genstar's experiences locally and with other municipalities.
2. What other models have worked? We know the Phased Development Agreement (PDA) is unique, to see that municipalities and developers can work together.
3. Ask around and have other developers' impact comments.
4. What is that bottom line developers are willing to pay as it is just one cheque?
5. How does Genstar see the phasing-in of the amenity contribution? What sort of time-frame to come up to \$6,200?
6. We need touchstones from the community.

Mr. Hudema responded that the market moves on a diminished land base, wildly different economic micro climates. The frameworks here are healthy devises, contextual, however you need to be cognizant of setting expectations and need to ensure you are fiscally responsible especially in these interesting times. The old way of doing business is no longer, business is being done differently now.

Barb Strachan:

The final \$6,200 developer contribution amount is extremely high, but what has been started here tonight, an open discussion is just the start. She understands that the amenities need to be there and that the money has to come from somewhere, and if not from the developers, then from where? There are answers somewhere there.

Jean Price, Mission Seniors Centre Association:

She wanted to commend Parks and Recreation staff who have worked with her association and are very willing to help. She believes her association should work more closely with Council and staff so ways can be found to do the things we want to do, to see if work can be done in phases or temporary arrangements to fill in the time. She requested a copy of the questions that Councillor Horn asked of the Mission Seniors' Association.

The goal is to achieve obtaining a bigger seniors' centre in Mission and would like some help from Council to find ways to make things go a little bit faster.

Jim Hinds:

Asked if the District had looked at some of the schools that aren't currently being used for some of the amenities? If the seniors' move out of the Mission Community Activity Centre, perhaps the youth could move into that location.

The Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture responded by stating that some of the schools not in use are in the outlying areas and the locations are not particularly good for seniors. He noted that Fraserview is pretty much rented or leased out to capacity, but he would check into the existing facilities situation again.

Mr. Hinds responded that the biggest problem for the seniors is that instead of their facilities, programs, etc. growing each year, they are getting smaller. The seniors gave up a fully stocked kitchen, recreation and meetings rooms when they were temporarily moved to the PLAY Station (now the Mission Community Activity Centre). Council needs to do something for these people.

The Mayor extended his sincere thanks to everyone who came out this evening, and encourages everyone to check the website, pick-up information provided this evening and to send in your written comments. Once Council receives the priorities and comments from the stakeholders another meeting will be advertised.

2. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Scudder seconded by Councilor Plecas, and

RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.



JAMES ATEBE,
MAYOR



PAUL GIPPS,
DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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