



MINUTES
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Monday, July 15, 2019
9:30 a.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Mayor D. Reynard
Councillor M. Goss
Councillor R. McMillan
Councillor A. Poirier
Councillor K. Ralko
Councillor S. Smith
Councillor C. Van Wallegghem

Staff: Karen Brown, CAO, Heather Pihulak, City Clerk, Adam Smith,
Development Services Strategist

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Reynard called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Public Notices

Take Notice that as required under Notice By-law #144-2007, Council intends to adopt the following items at this Special Meeting of Council:

N/A

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & General Nature thereof

- i) On Today's Agenda
- ii) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance

There were none declared.

Deputations

None.

1. Non Profit Housing Board Composition

Karen Brown, CAO noted that this issue was spearheaded by some concerns by members of Council. The KDSB would lead the review and therefore Council would rescind the current board members appointments and appoint Council as the Board of directors.

It is Council's intention to appoint themselves as the Board and Council would only appoint themselves at the pleasure of Council, make a decision from the review, and then make their decision as a temporary board and then move forward once that is complete.

Councillor McMillan suggested an addition to the recommendation presented: That Council hereby requests the Kenora District Services Board (KDSB), as the Service Manager responsible for Social Housing in Kenora, to perform a review of the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation based on such parameters as deemed appropriate by the KDSB.

The addition to the resolution gives staff direction to engage the KDSB in the review immediately once the resolution is passed.

Recommendation to Council as a New Item – July 16, 2019:

Whereas the Province has provided direction to municipalities to review services and business models to identify areas where improvements could be made; and

Whereas the City of Kenora is effectively in a housing crisis, with an estimated shortfall in housing of roughly 10% of the City's existing housing stock; and

Whereas Council has determined that they wish to review opportunities to expand housing within the community; and

Whereas Council may be ultimately responsible for the current and significant housing portfolio managed by the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation; and

Whereas the legislative landscape in which the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation operates has changed significantly since it was first established in 1983; and

Whereas Council has determined that opportunities for enabling change may exist within the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation; and

Whereas the current appointees to the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation were appointed for a term at the pleasure of Council;

Now therefore, let it be resolved

That Council hereby rescinds all current appointments to the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation Board effective immediately, with the exception of Councillor Andrew Poirier; and further

That the Members of Kenora City Council be hereby appointed as the Board Members to the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation, with a term at the pleasure of Council; and further

That Council hereby requests the Kenora District Services Board (KDSB), as the Service Manager responsible for Social Housing in Kenora, to perform a review of the Kenora Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation based on such parameters as deemed appropriate by the KDSB.

The meeting was then held at 9:40 a.m. for Mr. Nault to arrive at 10:00 a.m.

2. Honourable Robert Nault, MP – Federal Initiatives/Directions

The Honourable Robert Nault, Member of Parliament for the Kenora riding along with Abbie Siroishka, Constituency Assistant, joined Council to discuss priorities. Mayor Reynard thanked Honourable Nault for initiating this meeting with Council. Honourable Nault advised that this is normal practice for him and he likes to get together with all of Council once a year and discuss with Council as a whole what their priorities are. It assists him to better understand where they are going and what the expectations are as a Member of Parliament and what the expectations are of the Federal Government.

Mr. Nault is starting his campaign for the upcoming Federal election and he is hearing various concerns in the community. There are several items that are concerns for not only Kenora citizens but other citizens from other Northwestern Ontario communities. Mr. Nault feels he is a better member of parliament when he understands what his constituents are looking for and what their concerns are.

Adam Smith, City Development Services Strategist provided an update on the complexities of the issues facing the downtown core. In the context of community safety we did start with the downtown business owners meeting and did follow up with the business owners the presentations by the partners who presented. Many are concerned about the changes we are seeing in the downtown. We are aiming for July 31st for the public meeting at the Lakeside Inn and we will be focused on crime prevention tips and the KDSB will be focusing on supportive housing developments. The NWHU will also discuss the concerns around needles. Kenora is part of the Crime Prevention Network and have engaged Felix Munger who will be coming to Kenora to assist us with the redevelopment of the Community Safety and Well Being Plan. We want to start creating a new action plan and will not be an immediate change but at the AMO Conference we have put in several requests with Ministers to address some of the concerns. One focus will be a treatment Centre here in Kenora as there are no treatment options available. We need a longer treatment model and working with the KDSB on enhanced street patrol program. Best practices are mobile outreach which has worked in other communities. We are working with All-Nations Health partners to do an assessment on all the resources and not duplicate services. As a municipality how do we become an active partner to make progressive change is a focus for us. Try to ensure there are adequate services and supports in their own communities so they can stay in their community and the Federal government can work with local hub communities and is a critical piece.

It was acknowledged the meetings last week with the All Nations Health Partners and working on putting an action plan in place and doing the action plan for the community and a communication strategy that this is being undertaken.

Council recognizes the urgency and need to find a solution to this problem. The biggest driver is the housing crisis and lack of housing available. That is a huge driver and can affect negatively on all the social issues. Seniors cant transition out of their own homes into supportive housing and the problem is growing and is a critical driver to the issues we are seeing. The social issues will continue to grow and it changes but magnifies it by the housing crisis.

Further from the business owners meeting want to underscore the fact that the business community is concerned that there is no appropriate treatment facility for these people to

get off of meth if they wanted to. This problem is not unique to Kenora and how do we find a solution to this crisis. Mr. Nault noted that several things are true that it is a national crisis and the Federal Government is very aware of the drug problems. It is the cheapest drug and is very easy to get. Need to be aware of how difficult it is going to be to combat the drug issue. The government of Canada does have a role and needs to find a way to stop the drugs coming into Canada. The relationships between the Feds and the communities, have spoken with the OPP and Treaty Three. We are talking about what kind of programs and things we can try by working on the policing side. On the social side, finding solutions for people who are marginalized and have nowhere to go, living day to day, addicted to drugs as powerful as this, it means we have to find ways to address this. As the Federal representative is to find solutions at home, we need to find our own solution and our own strategies for people who are struggling every day. One thing we do have available for us is community culture and recreation \$407.1M which is intended for things just like this and can apply to the government of Canada for facilities like that. One of the issues that we need to encourage our colleagues to ensure these types of infrastructure dollars are available and ask for those resources available to them. Municipalities looking for ones that are better to invest in quality of life. Work with municipality on quality of life and focus on their recommendations and priorities. Want to make it very clear that if it is not well communicated to the population of where we are going it will not change. The population has to know the importance of why we are doing it. Not well versed in what the plan is for the community and have been in the business of being an elected official but have a lot to do on the communication side. How could we do it a little better and can't wait for a year from now and it has to happen tomorrow. We know there is an issue and we are working on it. Consultations are helpful but if it takes place without consultation, it becomes a venting session and not productive. It is important for us to do that and ensure the communication is there.

Mr. Nault's expectation is the government of Canada is going to have to participate financially. When asking the OPP why we don't have street patrol when everyone is asking for it, it is very clear that everyone is asking for that and it appears it is due to lack of funding for the program. It is important that the Feds hear the community issues.

The Federal Government is policy and what we are seeing is happening and coming into our community from outlying communities. The Feds need to be working on bringing those supports into their communities. It would bring employment into their communities and creates economic development for them. Everyone wants to be at home and want to be treated by people in their community that they trust. It is a long term solution to help deal with this issue and we need to deal with it where it is happening. Alcohol is still one of our biggest problems and is still one of the most harmful substances out there. Feds need to think about decriminalization of all drugs, is it doing more harm or doing more good if we looked at it under a policy type manner. Is it going to be expensive? Absolutely but the taxpayers are taking up the cost for this.

Council referenced the director of EMS provided stats for Kenora. In this calendar year which is also Council's budget year, there was 18 people that was responsible for 240 calls for service in downtown Kenora. If that continues, can't image what our cost for land ambulance is going to continue to rise. A good chunk of that is born by the local taxpayer. There is no place or sustained effort to have them treated. The numbers continue to get worse and how does that compare throughout our region. Accounts as much as Ignace and Ear Falls on an annual basis. What can we do with those 18 people those are solutions

we need. We need to come up with solutions now to the social challenges that are driving our costs up.

We need to find why people are being driven into this fundamental behaviour. It's cheap to get by to get high and not deal with the underlying issues they personally have. There are different drugs that are affecting different parts of the country. That's the big shift we have to somehow get to.

One of the important parts of the discussion relates to policy shift. We are not in this alone, in a matter of weeks there are going to be asks and Mr. Nault wants to ensure that our region is part of that solution and we aren't missed. Knowing what we want to do and how we want to do it. Affluent societies are going through this and they can find ways to feed their habit so they are not exempt.

Under infrastructure, we have a housing shortage and maybe even a crisis. There are at least 150 people who work in Sioux Lookout and live in Dryden because there is no housing. Jurisdictionally housing is a municipal jurisdiction. Ontario is the only province in Canada where housing is municipal jurisdiction. All other provinces in Canada, it's a provincial jurisdiction. The province chose to make it your issue. Therefore it is up to the municipality to make it a priority because there is no requirement as the Federal government to work with the province on housing in Ontario. We are going directly to municipalities under the National Housing strategy and national housing plan. Different from other provinces and from a housing side, you can send them away, but they come back. This is home and whether they are in remission but when they relapse the problems are back. In Sioux Lookout the 20 unit transitional housing development he talked about what it is like to have transitional housing and what it is like to have her own housing. Rules are strict but the point is that if we are going down this road, people have to be accepting that if you decide to put transitional housing in their area of community, and if going to be regional hub you are going to look after own issues. Support that this community is growing fast. It is successful in growing quickly and that is why you have a housing issue.

This is a place people want to live and it comes with challenges. There are going to be a lot more housing opportunities in the next couple years than what people think. The KDSB has put in more proposals than any other region and they have done a great job to deal with housing. Pretty clear to see. Have not built a senior housing facility in decades. That has to change otherwise our seniors have no choice to leave. They find that to be the biggest frustration that the government has not done a good job help them in transitioning to the next steps in their lives. The housing strategy is here for a decade and our interest is to have Federal money on the table on the capital side, not in the housing business, except to put capital dollars in the hands of proposals that make a lot of sense. Going to see a lot of growth on the housing side and this is the best team have seen in his political career and have never seen better in his time as a politician. Very driven and are willing to deal with this.

Within weeks they are announcing a bridge build across the Barrons River which will open up significant connections for the northern first nations reserves. This will have a huge impact on Red Lake. That comes with the territory as being a regional hub. We are now a player for all sorts of reasons and get used to what that means. Pushing really hard in Ottawa to give us help on the housing platforms. Need willing participants and if people are afraid of a transitional help, it is changing their lives and moving them from being

marginalized to somewhere safe to be. If we are going to govern with a heart we have to understand what these parties are struggling with.

Council questioned what they can do as a Council to enhance their case so they obtain money from the Federal government to complete these builds. The key is the business shovel ready project, if we get money for a senior's facility, where does it go? Be ready as to where we are going to put a senior's apartment block. It is a planning and land use process.

Streams that are not open in Ontario that you can't apply for are Green \$2.8B and the community, culture and recreation \$407.1M, those streams are not open yet. Your best to build climate friendly infrastructure understanding climate litigation are all the discussion. Mr. Nault will sort it out with provincial colleagues and want to encourage us and thinking about proposals and putting together and wonder why we would spend thousands of dollars on fixing our infrastructure and confident we will get our differences settled and want to see Kenora access green infrastructure. It is the kind of infrastructure you have to develop and it includes municipalities' energy costs and costs to our buildings.

The new cost sharing for all projects under the bilateral agreement, Canada will contribute up to: 75% to Indigenous ultimate recipients, 50% for municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more; not-for-profit organizations; and public transit rehabilitation. 25% for profit private sector, 60% for municipalities with a population of less than 5,000 and 40% for municipalities and regional governments, not for profit organizations, new construction and expansion of public transit. Want to see these projects ready to go.

Suggested that if we can't get an agreement with provincial agreement, talked about going right to the municipalities directly and have a lot of work to do and this money is sitting there not doing anything. Mr. Nault sees that as his job to ensure these proposals get into the system. The proposal goes to the province and the province sets the priorities. So far we have had 47 proposals sent to the feds for the rural and northern communities and not one was in our riding. They don't go to the Feds or the local MP they go to the province. Ontario cannot afford to have this money sitting there and not working for us.

Last point will make on Green Infrastructure, in that agreement there was about \$450M that was supposed to go to projects on the green side that was supposed to go to municipalities, school boards, hospitals. Minister is now looking for proposals that go back to that fund and is separate. That is a big part of our work here and needs to continue because it is a struggle.

\$180 + Billion infrastructure plan over 12 years is that year over year or how does that flow. It is based on per capita so Ontario get far more of the money. It flows based on what they think the need is and the term of the agreement. This agreement was supposed to be for four years, commit so much money and go back and invest more money as we go. All 5 streams are in the Canada-Ontario agreements. It is up to the province to open up the stream. Ontario has not opened the two streams.

Mr. Nault thanked Council for their support with the water for Rat Portage. This is one of the kinds of agreements that they always wanted. It makes complete sense to do things this way and will be environmentally safer. Congratulations to Council on that agreement. Aboriginal colleagues in government and encourage us to talk about waste disposal. Hoping there is a way to find a solution and have a regional waste disposal system that

the Federal government can fund. There can be many simple solutions but the era of having a garbage dump in every First Nation is not to structure to get these garbage dumps up to standard. Working so closely with some First Nations in the area, it is something that Canada supports and would like to see some resolutions to these. The City would be open to discussions with First Nations but would need to have a recycle plan in place as well.

Other four issues regionally Mr. Nault wanted to bring up. The most important issue for all of us is health care. In Canada, health care usually polls first or second, when there is a recession health care is always at the top of the list. Health care is no different for us. Trying to push the reality difference between rural and urban health care. Most communities in our region can't afford a health care facility in their community because they are too small. For this community to be the real community hub on health care, it is absolutely critical to understand the importance of what we are talking about. We are going to see some planning and consulting over the next couple of years but we need a vision of where this is going to transpire and take place. Important areas in government that goes beyond one mandate. We need to ensure we get done what we have set out to do. Need all our partners making the argument that our health care system is challenging and we need to fix that. We do not have enough long term care beds to look after our elderly. We have to see this as a regional issue. The hospital belongs to the whole region and this is a big regional file and is a top priority for Mr. Nault. Trying to position us with some key components with the health care world. We lead in the disease of diabetes in the whole world and we have no diabetes health care support here. That is the kind of area health care that we could lead a bigger role.

Twinning – we need to twin this highway and we need to get started. The money is available for the small first phase which is 5.6 km and is a good start. Being told by the First Nations leadership that the province has an obligation to consult and they have not done that yet. There are certain other legal requirements and hoping that someone is doing work so we can get started. Encouraging the provincial government to make this a priority with the Federal government to make this priority and that has not happened. The Feds are funding in areas where there are agreements in the province. Council needs to convince the province to make the twinning a federal-provincial priority. Also propose that phase II is a priority otherwise we will not see phase II for a long time unless we participate. The priorities are up to the province that stream under infrastructure is not open and you have to make it a priority. Ask the Feds for the money.

Wanted to bring to Council's attention, and don't know if Council has been briefed by the scientists and people from the MNR what is going on with our forests. Mr. Nault had a briefing two years ago that our forests are the driest that they have been in 100 years. This presentation that was made to him by the MNR in Red Lake they were talking about the needs for evacuation plans in our areas. What can happen in a community if fire just takes off. We need to be thinking about what would happen if this forest was to take off. Our forest is huge and if climate change has its way with us and we get drier and drier we need to think about this from the perspective of the cost and the evacuation process is. When you move 3,000 people twice for health and safety, the stress and safety and health issues for people is phenomenal. Would we be a host for fire evacuation in the area? Sioux Lookout is being a host, Rat Portage has done a few, we are sending people very far away. Reason interested in Kenora, part of Treaty 3 territory and there are many Ojibway speakers in the community and there has to be people on the ground that can talk to them. This would be an opportunity for Kenora to be a welcoming for all the individuals

and use the facilities that may not be used. It's a big issue for them and one that won't go away. There are going to be a lot of fires and it is going to continue to be challenging to find locations for these people who are being evacuated. We have been approached twice to become a host community and we could not accommodate the requests due to lack of vacancy in hotels and other facilities.

The north is warming up twice as fast as anywhere else in the world. There will be huge impact to our north and do believe the science and there are serious issues that the next generation will have to worry about. Serious impacts on them and look at it from that perspective and what that means for us.

The EOC group has discussed a regional hub evacuation centre that a building be developed that communities could access possibly in central Canada (possibly Winnipeg) where there are more services available. Schools should be looked at as they can feed and house people. Both high schools are more than sufficient to feed hundreds of people each day.

Council thanked Mr. Nault for him taking the time to come and talk about the priorities and things going on with the Federal Government. Honourable Nault was part of municipal Council in 1985 and it is a lot more complicated and more challenging than it was back then. He commended Council for their dedication to the community.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.