

City of Kenora
Minutes
Of a Committee of the Whole of Council
July 22, 2010
3:40 p.m.

Present:

Mayor L. Compton, Councillor W. Cuthbert, Councillor C. Drinkwalter, Councillor R. McMillan, Councillor Van Walleggem.

Regrets:

Councillor D. McCann, Councillor J. Parson.

Lake of the Woods Development Commission:

Dennis Wallace, Chair, Randy Nickle, Director, Thelma Wilkins Page, Director.

Industry Canada / FedNor:

Aime Dimatteo, Fednor Director General, Jonathon Simms, Director of Policy, Planning and Coordination, Paul Podstawka, Manager of Program Delivery, Pam Bryson, CED Officer.

Staff:

Jennifer Findlay, Economic Development Officer, Heather Patterson, Tourism Development Officer, Karen Brown, Manager of Finance and Administration.

A. Public Information Notices

N/A

B. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & the General Nature thereof

1) On Today's Agenda

2) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance

None Declared.

1. Aime Dimatteo, FedNor Director General –

Mayor Compton introduced and welcomed Aime Dimatteo and congratulated him on his recent appointment as FedNor Director General. Dennis Wallace reiterated the congratulations.

Mr. Dimatteo spoke to a review and his long term vision of FedNor and noted he was pleased to be at the helm of this organization. Key items he indicated that would be focused on included:

- Ensuring Northern input is obtained on how to best align the FedNor program.
- Ensuring clarity for constituents, including faster advice on eligibility and clear communication on why when application is not successful.
- Focusing on economic development and job creation, and where an item falls within another agency's jurisdiction to leave that item to them.
- Communicating with Mayors that each municipality needs to get their strategic plan priorities in order and show how they can focus on economic growth, with a vision of reapplying common sense.
- A goal towards showing better results so when the Minister comes in, it is for project announcements and ribbon cutting, and not being criticized.
- Getting more funds into FedNor to do more projects.

Mr. Wallace indicated that he received Mr. Dimatteo's comments well, and offered a few suggestions for FedNor, including:

- Accessing local resources for major procurements where possible.
- Knowing what is going on in other jurisdictions so can act as a pathfinder and scout for and advise municipalities on other opportunities.
- Importance of looking for opportunities for how FedNor can fit with the City of Kenora as the City moves forward with the private sector.
- Working with First Nations, and looking for fresh ways of addressing this, such as providing a funding program through the college.
- Being the Region's voice in Ottawa, noting that the Minister has a dual role and could be very powerful influence for the North.
- Recognizing Tourism as part of a new shift as it takes on a new role.
- As done in other regions of Canada, investing in the private sector in order to position the City to meet the needs of a changing market – this is something that currently holds Kenora back to some degree.

Mr. Nickle noted that the Development Commission had developed a Tourism Strategy. The City has opportunities available such as development of the Prisoner of War camps, and the petroglyphs on the lake. Mr. Nickle noted that he does not believe that Kenora can become a tourist destination alone. Product development and events are part of this strategy and important to this community. Mr. Nickle referred to the current Downtown Revitalization project, and noted the shortfall in funding to erect a permanent tent structure this fall. In closing, Mr. Nickle noted that Northwestern Ontario is not recognized as a Tourism Destination and as such Kenora is not able to access funds that are available to other Tourism Destinations.

Mr. Wallace commented on a potential package for a tourist experience, including small to medium hotels, which could include things such as docks and interpreters for even one of the five war camps and the rum running locations, the petroglyphs, and various opportunities on Tunnel Island. Provision of various attractions and places to stay could give visitors a reason to stay for three to four days. Mr. Wallace indicated he felt this type of chunked investment would provide a good return.

Mr. Dimatteo noted that there were various agencies (CED-Q, WD and ACOA) that FedNor is visiting with the intent of comparing notes and finding out what works well and accessing the staff resources. The approach is that results get results and success begets success. Mr. Dimatteo recognized that some elements in tourism do not fall under FedNor's mandate, but hoped FedNor can help municipalities find other partners. He further noted that sometimes there is a fit in the municipality's strategic plan, referring to Sioux Ste Marie and their bush plane opportunities. Mr. Dimatteo noted that FedNor's intent is to come out swinging, with clear and understandable activities.

Participants in the meeting were each provided an opportunity to address Mr. Dimatteo and the other Industry Canada staff present at the meeting. The participants responded positively to Mr. Dimatteo's messages. Mayor Compton noted that despite the significant job loss since 2000, the attitude in the City is that Kenora is moving ahead, and pursuing opportunities such as Tourism, and value added forestry. Ms. Wilkins Page noted that a lot of volunteers have put a lot of work into a progressive economic development plan. She further noted that a significant part of recent development is small business expansion. Ms. Findlay noted that she had received a recent call from a company looking to locate in Kenora. That developer had noted that Kenora is the next hot place to locate, and expected popularity to continue to grow into late 2011 or even early 2012. Mr. Wallace noted that the former Abitibi site is full of opportunity and where value added forestry should be, the question being how to attract that investment.

In closing, Mr. Dimatteo noted that he has recently found himself referring to waterfront development achievements as successes, with one being Kenora, and the other North Bay. Kenora has shown FedNor success from first investment. Mr. Dimatteo noted that he appreciated the comments on pathfinding, and felt that would be important for FedNor. Mr. Dimatteo further noted that he met with the gentleman currently purchasing the Abitibi lands, and that he was enthused with the potential for development. Mr. Dimatteo advised Council that he has told the FedNor minister that he is going to push a lot of stuff his way.

2. Adjournment

Moved by R. McMillan, Seconded by W. Cuthbert & Carried:-

That this meeting is hereby adjourned at 4:40 p.m.