

Date: August 31, 2011



City Council Committee Report

TO: Mayor & Council

**FR: Heather Kasprick, Deputy Clerk
(Rory McMillan, City Councillor)**

RE: AMO Conference Summary

Recommendation:

That Council accepts the report resulting from the recent AMO conference held in London, Ontario August 21-24th as presented.

Background:

Councillor Rory McMillan provided a summary of the recent AMO conference held in London, Ontario August 21-24th, 2011. The summary is as follows:

I along with Councillors Ron Lunny, Sharon Smith and Mayor Canfield attended the above conference. It was an interesting conference in that all three leaders had an opportunity to speak and outline their particular platform. This generated considerable discussion amongst the delegates during the networking portion of the conference.

The theme of this year's conference was Our Communities Our Potential..... The keynote speakers did speak to the theme. The opening speakers topic was entitled "Leadershift". He spoke to the impact of the electronic world and the impact that this has on communication amongst society. Some of the questions he responded to in his presentation were – how do we "leadershift" our efforts towards our full potential; what are the best ways to improve our individual and team level productivity; can we manage information bombardment and transform this threat into an inimitable and sustainable competitive advantage. He introduced the delegates to learning about how to cope with the information bombardment; improve our ability to manage change; increase productivity and efficiency; speed up innovation through collaboration and; focus on what action we can take tomorrow.

Meetings with the Ministers:

At this year's conference we were limited to three meetings which occurred over two days of the Conference with the first two on Monday and the third on Tuesday. Prior to the end of the opening speaker the City had its first meeting with Minister Chiarelli, Infrastructure. This was a positive discussion and although there was no promise of immediate funding, the Minister reiterated their party platform and that being to address infrastructure issues focusing on roads and Bridges. The Minister identified one of his senior staff members to liaise with the City and pursue discussions with the Ministry of transportation as well. Discussions have commenced and information is being exchanged between the Centre and the Ministry. It was positive.

Our next meeting was Minister Gravelle and a number of issues and requests were shared with he and his staff. They included reference to Forestry industry issues/Tenure;

Abitibi site Brownfield development; discussion requesting the relocation of the Ontario Travel Centre at the Manitoba Border to the new Discovery Centre and; discussion re the Homeless Issue in Kenora and the need for an infusion of funding to aid those presently delivering programs. Minister Gravelle and his staff are familiar with the issues presented and will respond to the requests under his Ministry and will approach his Ministerial colleagues on the other issues presented. The request presented is for the Ministry to consider funding a Pilot Project that would further develop and work on the strengths of this existing program that the City has been supporting. It could be model and applied across the Province. This is a consistent 'ask' and it is hoped that one day it will be responded to in a positive way.

Our third meeting was with minister Duguid, Energy and the focus was on addressing the energy constraints to economic development. The ask was twofold – that the Minister of Energy work with the City of Kenora and other municipalities in the Northwest to explore opportunities with Manitoba Hydro and; direct Hydro one to increase the capacity of the transmission lines in Northwestern Ontario that would enable companies to obtain FIT contracts. The minister and his staff requested more information on the 'asks' and support continued dialogue.

The Premier was the first leader to speak and his party's platform has been reflected in the news and, shortly, may be viewed online through the AMO Conference website. Both the leader for the Conservatives and the NDP spoke as well and their speeches may be accessed once they are up on the AMO Conference site.

It is interesting to note that a short q and a followed each speech which allowed the speakers to expand on the platform they identified and comments made addressing Municipal priorities. Ryerson University Professor (Journalism) April Lindgren was the moderator. It proved to be insightful as each of the leaders responded to a series of questions focusing on their respective speeches.

During the conference a series of concurrent workshops took place and each of us attended different sessions. Of interest, a number of key themes did emerge and were discussed during the networking opportunities. The following are a few of the items discussed.

- a. The issues that Municipalities face with respect to arbitration awards and the clarion call from Municipal leaders to the Province to address this and work on revisions to the arbitration system.
- b. Necessity to provide financial assistance to Municipalities to address the aging infrastructure – namely roads and bridges. This was addressed in the Premier's speech.
- c. The topic of 'joint and several liability' is of concern to the delegates and this in reference to insurance. The Municipality, in some claims, are the ones deemed to have 'deep pockets'. There is need for continued discussion at the Municipal level with our respective insurer to continue to learn and continued discussion needs to take place with the Province to determine how they may aid Municipalities.
- d. The high cost of energy was another hot button item and the need to adopt ways of obtaining reliable energy services at reasonable cost. For us in the North it is opening access to other sources of electricity namely Manitoba Hydro, they are interested in exporting power.
- e. Discussion re approaches to Municipal aboriginal partnerships was an informative session focusing on the unique and successful approaches used by some Municipalities. The opportunities and challenges and the associated lessons learned

between aboriginal communities for economic development, post-secondary education and infra - structure projects were explored.

It is clear an election is on the horizon, what used to be referred to as the 'Bear Pit' session is known as the Ministers' Forum and the time allotted to it was reduced to one hour for this conference. It proved to be interesting.

The conference concluded on Wednesday a.m. with the closing keynote: Communities in the National Context with John Ibbitson, Ottawa Bureau Chief, The Globe and Mail. He spoke about the new political scene in Ottawa from his vantage point and what the new scene means in both the short and long term. He offered some challenging insight and thoughts.

All in all it was a good conference. With it being an election in a short time it is not difficult to understand that the comments made by all three parties are seeking the support of the delegates. Once the conference proceedings have been made available on the AMO web site it is recommended that they be viewed.

Please take the time to check the AMO website which will provide information addressing the responses from the three leaders re the 12 AMO Asks. The information has been sent to all of Council

Budget: N/A

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:
N/A