

**City of Kenora
M i n u t e s
Of a Special Committee of the Whole of Council
December 21, 2011
8:00 a.m.
City Hall Council Chambers**

City Representatives Present:

Mayor D. Canfield (left the meeting at 8:20 a.m.), Councillor C. Drinkwalter, Councillor R. McKay, Councillor R. McMillan, Councillor L. Roussin, Councillor S. Smith, Karen Brown, CAO, Heather Paterson, Tourism Development Officer, Heather Kasprick, Deputy Clerk

Regrets:

Councillor R. Lunny

Lake of the Woods Development Commission Present:

Geordie McEwen, Don Denver, Randy Nickle, Thelma Wilkins-Page, Mort Goss, Andy Scribilo, Pamela Bryson, Allan Luby, Carol Leduc (Intern staff)

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. Education and Training Presentation

The Development Commission held a presentation to the Kenora District School Board proposing that 7 Generations, Lake of the Woods Development Commission and both School Boards conduct a study to review the possibility of an Education Centre in the Lakewood School building. The Kenora Patricia District School Board authorized the study to be conducted on the site and Grant Thornton, the firm hired to conduct the study, has released the initial key findings in a report.

The Lake of the Woods Development Commission has identified additional education and training capacity as a driver of economic growth and community sustainability. With the identification of the Lakewood School as a potential redevelopment site for an education and training Centre in Kenora, the Education and Training Committee of the Development Commission tasked Grant Thornton with the development of a business plan for this location.

The Lake of the Woods Centre purpose and concept include site and centre development with both education and training as well as arts and culture components.

This would include classrooms, and auditorium/theatre appropriate for performances, larger events and lectures, and a daycare. The primary student market for the education and training component is adult learners, with additional opportunities for summer camps and a range of other groups. The facility would be actively managed by a joint Board to develop programming that meets both the current and future needs of the community, and seeks collaboration between partners.

There is a significant education and training demand for high school completion, upgrading and transition to post-secondary, as well as apprenticeship and post-secondary program offerings, in the Kenora area. Some evidence of this is the trend of increasing Grade 12 enrolments (9-12) as students are taking longer to graduate or are returning to improve grades, and/or are not ready to continue to post-secondary outside of Kenora. The number of graduates in Kenora per year is increasing particularly within the First Nations population and on average 50% of students do not continue to a post-secondary institution immediately after graduating.

There are proposed anchor tenants for the proposed facility which include Confederation College (Contact North), Seven Generations Education Institute, Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (Adult Education) and Lakewood Early Learning Centre. In addition to these potential anchor tenants there has also been other interest expressed in administrative or classroom space. These include Kenamatewin Native Learning Centre, Ne-Chee Friendship Centre, Adult Learning Line (Literacy), Common Ground Research Forum as well as Treaty 3 and or Bimose Tribal Council as well as performing arts groups and users.

The Lakewood property is a 16 acre site with a 76,000 square foot building. The building has four floors plus a lower level. The cost to upgrade the building would be between \$3.3 to \$4.2 million which excludes any change to the building exterior and any site work. The renovation budget includes between \$1.6 to \$1.85 million to upgrade the gym and adjacent area. This includes conversion to a theatre/performing arts venue, within the existing envelope, with approximately 450 fixed seats and would include lighting, audio/control room, storage area, lobby/crush area. The existing gymnasium does not provide ample space for "stage wing" access which is typically provided in a true performing arts venue, which would be recommended to add onto in the future. Assessment of the available space for redevelopment within the current building envelope could lend itself to a 450 seat auditorium and stage area with an estimated renovation budget of between \$1.6 and \$1.85 million. More extensive renovations and/or redevelopment outside the building envelope would require additional investment.

As part of the regulatory requirements for disposal of surplus buildings by the School Board, the City of Kenora is an eligible buyer for the property and the property could be owned/operated by the City or by another arms-length party. It is recommended that a Program Advisory Board would manage the facility with representation from the owner, anchor tenants, operations manager as well as community members. The Board will provide a forum for discussing evolving tenant and community needs, with a key goal being to meet the current and future education and training needs of the community and to encourage economic growth.

Redevelopment Timelines include:

January 2012 – School Board reconsideration of closure decision

February–April – School Board consultation process with parents and stakeholders

April – Lakewood property put on the 'market' to the preferred list of purchasers, assuming consultation is successful and the Lakewood School is declared surplus

May-July – the regulatory period for expression of interest from the list of preferred purchasers. During this time the City can express interest.

July-August – Once interest is expressed, the School Board will require an assessor to establish the value of the property to begin negotiations around purchase price.

August-September – Negotiations regarding purchase until price and conditions are agreeable to both (or a deal cannot be reached).

June 2013/or to be determined – Possession date/transfer of ownership of the school, this date is to be determined by the School Board and purchaser. As renovations will be required for the building to accommodate the new uses and users, the transfer of ownership date is not the same as the Centre opening. June 2013, following the school year, may be an agreeable/reasonable target date.

Spring 2013-Spring 2014 – Renovations – Although the school is in good condition, to accommodate new users and users some renovations will be required. A year is a rough estimate with some aspects of the Centre potentially able to begin prior to opening date.

Fall 2014 – Full Centre opening target date for standard school year.

Mr. McEwan indicated that the next step in the process is this same presentation to the Kenora Patricia District School Board in January 2012 and the completion of the business plan report complete.

CAO Karen Brown questioned if consideration had been given to the School Board taking the lead on this rather than the City. Mr. McEwan noted that the School Board's distinct preference is disposal of the property rather than operation and leadership in this project.

Council thanked the Commission for the presentation and a copy of the presentation was left with the Clerk.

Moved by R. McMillan, Seconded by R. McKay & Carried:-

That this meeting now be declared closed at 8:40 a.m.