

## AREA C GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

### THURSDAY JUNE 29, 2017 SORRENTO MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT: Don Patterson (Notch Hill), Karen Brown (Shuswap Lake Estates), Cal Heschuk (Sorrento), Edith Rizzi (Sunnybrae Hall), Lenore Jobson (Sunnybrae Seniors), Larry Stephenson (Carlin), Steve Wills (Cedar Heights), Andy Bartels (McArthur Heights/Reedman Point), Gareth Seys (South Shuswap Chamber of Commerce), Paul Demenok (Director, Electoral Area C) and Facilitators Allan Neilson & Juliet Anderton

REGRETS: Henry Schnell (Eagle Bay) & Renee Rebus (White Lake)

#### MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:05 PM

Chair Steve Wills introduces the Governance Study Committee to those sitting in the public gallery. Committee member Karen Brown is appointed to take the Minutes. On behalf of the committee, Chair Wills gives thanks to Karen for taking the meeting minutes to date.

Chair Wills calls for adoption of the June 15, 2017 Minutes: MOVED/SECONDED Larry Stephenson/Andy Bartels CARRIED.

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#### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Allan Neilson then takes over to give an in-depth summary of the findings. He reminds the public that the job of the governance steering committee was to:

- a) learn about and document what is in place today ie governance framework and also service delivery: what's available and how services are paid for;
- b) guide the consulting team in the public process; and
- c) based on everything learned and from input received from the public, to determine whether or not there is a need for improvement either in current delivery of governance or to look at some alternatives, one of which could be incorporation. Other choices are available as well.

Allan indicates that the engagement process was fairly robust. A number of meetings were added to the initial proposal to ensure that all areas were represented. All in all there were 6 open houses, 216 surveys received online and three public meetings, two of which were highly attended. Karen Brown also adds that a formal position paper was received from the South Shuswap Chamber of Commerce, representing 110 members.

Juliet Anderton then takes over to go over the PowerPoint presentation to the public.

**Engagement Opportunities:** Over the course of the last few months, six open houses at Sorrento, Sunnybrae, White Lake, Eagle Bay, Notch Hill and Shuswap Lake Estates were hosted. Juliet shares that the consulting team was impressed with the attendance of the committee members at each of those functions.

A questionnaire had been launched and a governance study invitation to community groups to do presentations at their meetings. All meetings held have been open to the public – solid attendance as stated previously.

**Advertising:** Community engagement was by direct delivery via a 2 page flyer to 2000 households, 4 paid print ads, CSRD e blasts, Area Director stories in local media, twitter, facebook and direct contact made by Governance Study Committee members to others in their respective circles.

**Educational Opportunities:** A deeper report and a smaller overview ‘Getting to Know Area C’ were posted on the CSRD website and available for distribution at public meetings and open houses.

**Open House Public Feedback:** Overall, not a lot of strong opinions where people came to an open house with a specific issue. Some of the themes that came out of the Open Houses were a general appreciation for inviting the public to go out to the community to learn about governance. There is a specific ‘flavour recognizing urban and rural issues’ in Area C. In the rural areas there was a sense that generally people are quite okay with the status quo. More curiosity arose in the urban areas ie Sorrento and Blind Bay asking ‘what other options are out there and should they be explored, and if so, what are the costs?’

Across the region (Area C), cost to taxpayers was raised. Opinion was that the public may be prepared to pay for better services. Roads, pedestrian safety, autonomy and the voting model of the CSRD were all raised. Outer areas having a vote on Area C issues was concerning and left people feeling perplexed. There was a curiosity about general future impact of growth – what will Area C look like in 10, 20, 30 years and do we have the proper governance model in place to deal with ‘stuff’ down the road?

**Questionnaire Public Feedback:** As mentioned 216 responses were received. Graphs and charts were shared outlining responses.

With respect to the educational material provided BEFORE a person should take the survey, 80% of people reviewed it, 20% did not. The largest proportion of survey results came from Blind Bay and Sorrento but a good representation was received from the more rural areas as

well. Juliet comments that 80% taking the time to review the materials before taking the survey, in comparison to other surveys administered, is quite impressive.

Blind Bay responses were approximately 43% compared to the population of 3500 in that area. Roads, sewer, waste water, water quality were all big issues that came through loud and clear. Road, especially the maintenance and repair were a high concern.

When it came to top-of-mind issues, roads, sewer, water quality, police, planning, emergency services, autonomy, bylaw enforcement, building inspections and fire protection appeared in that order as top issues.

When prompted by the consulting team, and asked the question as to what improvements the public would suggest, governance, representation and autonomy in decision making was the topic that the public went to most.

Larry Stephenson adds that when first reading the findings, he was trying to come to grips with the idea that some of the responses didn't jive together ie level of satisfaction relative to level of importance. Knowing that responses to aimed questions might well differ from responses to top-of-mind issues, helped to solve the disconnect in the results reported from these two areas of the survey.

When asked about value for taxes, 55% agree we get good value, 31% are in disagreement.

With respect to representation, autonomy and governance, 32% of the population agreed that one director was sufficient while 50% said one director was not sufficient. Having a say in community decisions, 44% strongly agreed that there were ample opportunities to have a say in local decisions while 35% strongly disagreed or disagreed with that statement.

When posed with additional committees or commissions, 61% strongly agreed or agreed that having additional opportunities through committees would encourage more participation or advice on local levels; 14% disagreed.

When asked about fair and equitable representation, 27% agreed it was fair where as 80% strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed on this view.

When asked if different governance options beyond the current system should be explored, 70% of respondents indicated that 'yes, it should be explored'; 13% expressed it should not.

With respect to decision making, 70% strongly agreed or agreed that Area C needs to have greater autonomy over their own decision making; 7% strongly disagreed and 6% somewhat disagreed.

Andy Bartels asks if these results are atypical or typical compared to other surveys done in other areas. Juliet responds that each area surveyed is very different. What she can share is

that at the open houses there was a very clear reason why people attended. Roads and highways were an issue. From the entire process she feels that there is a need for more information. It will give much more of a respectful outlook from one area to the next.

Allan adds that in Area D Okanagan Similkameen there are 7000 people. Salt Spring Island is also another. In those two particular examples, the consultants have found quite a bit of stress and tension which wasn't apparent in this study. There were specific service issues but not the disparaging issues causing infighting etc.

Consultants comments regarding their 'take' on the Open Houses is that some were nicely attended while others were not. At those meetings they heard specific issues, and a fair bit about representation. They got a sense of curiosity from the group as a whole with respect to representation, the ability for one director to make decisions in Area C, the voting system and autonomy. Overall, people would like to see another option or opportunity for governance but that takes getting the information first, which was favoured.

Juliet comments that at one of the open houses, Area C Director Paul Demenok was asked how he felt about this process and how he felt his workload was etc. That question to Director Demenok indicated that people weren't quite sure what their level of service should be; there was almost a sense of what people are expecting for their tax dollars.

Larry comments that through this process, Area C residents have a fairly good understanding of who we are; we share a common interest and have leadership that builds that in our area. The feedback we are getting indicates that the rural areas are more supportive of the status quo than are the urban areas. Larry also added here that the rural areas are understanding and supportive of the urban area's concerns about the pressures of continued growth and effective governance going forward.

### **Summarizing**

Allan takes over and goes over what the purpose of the Governance Study was all about. We were to document and assess current level of services, understand the concerns of residents re services and governance and identify future governance service options, if needed. This was not an incorporation study, however we explored if there was enough appetite to request a formal incorporation study. A volunteer group making up the Governance Study Committee turned out to 6 open houses and a recommendation by that committee, based on those engagement opportunities, survey input and face to face engagement in the community was to be made.

The mandate being set, through the process governance was explored, voting rules specified, voting procedure (which didn't always sit well with residents), talking about local services wherein CSRD is primary provider, plus sub regional and region wide, talked about service

categories, who participates and how much it costs, plus tax implications. Overview for each service groups, decisions and how they are made and how costs are recovered ie who pays and how much were explored. We went through the Tax Notice and took a sharper look at how costs are arrived at and brought to the residents through their annual notices. Governance options were explored to get us into the frame of mind as to how things should be run.

Turning the committee's attention to the options available, Allan then went through the three choices to consider:

### **STATUS QUO**

Nothing changes in the governance model however through the added use of committees or commissions, there could be more 'say'.

### **INCORPORATION**

New municipality in a portion of Area C, using the findings from the public engagement. A new committee working with the Province and the CSRD would need to choose appropriate study boundaries for a new municipality. Assess cost and tax implications for incorporated and remaining unincorporated areas (which would then form a new Area C). Assess impact on farm properties as farm lands don't get all of the tax benefits under a municipality so that would need addressing.

### **NEW ELECTORAL AREA**

Divide Area C into two resulting (C1 & C2 for example). With two electoral areas, you could have two directors making decisions, thereby reducing the current director's workload. Others at the CSRD Board level are still involved in the decision making like they are today so nothing would change in that regard. Local roads and policing would still be at the provincial level. Tax implications would affect both new electoral areas.

Gareth asks about land use and planning and autonomy in those areas to which Allan replies that under this third option, decisions would be made by directors from all electoral areas for Area C, like those decisions are made currently. Community Parks for example could be made between the two directors if they shared the service.

Another option Allan discusses relates to local community commissions. There are a handful in BC and they tend to be applied to more remote areas that have specific local service issues. Local community commissioners are elected by residents; a body of 5 including the Electoral Area Director can make up an advisory body or as a decision making body. As the consultants did not hear a lot about services not getting attention with the exception of roads, they feel that this option would not be one to consider for this area.

Other service commissions – they tend to be ones involving collections of electoral areas. They have these in the Okanagan – again not the best for this area.

Regional District Model or other models: perhaps setting up a parks commission or recreation commission is possible under any governance model.

Boundary Changes to take some of Electoral Area C and annex to Salmon Arm or another electoral area was brought up and deemed not a good choice for this area.

At one Open House, Allan states that a gentleman brought up the idea of redoing the boundaries of the CSRD to match the watershed. While this is an intriguing and interesting idea, Allan feels that the Province would be reluctant to pursue this option.

Resort Municipality is the next option raised. Allan states there are two types: Mountain Resort Municipalities and Resort Areas. Taken together, Resort Municipalities have three defining characteristics to receive status and funding from the province: Higher proportion of hotel rooms relative to population, Hotel Room Tax and a resort development strategy endorsed by the province. This all being said, we do not fit the criteria, therefore this option cannot be explored.

## **ROUNDTABLE**

Chair Wills then asks each of the Governance Study Committee members to share his/her opinions and recommendations:

Larry Stephenson speaks in favour of an incorporation study to gather more information for a variety of reasons – relative to the level of satisfaction with services and the level of satisfaction comparing importance of those. CSRD is too huge a body to deal with specific issues; we could explore incorporating into a municipality that could be geared toward doing these types of things. Interesting challenge here would be how the boundary would be determined. From the committee's perspective, he recommends going to Stage 2 of the study.

Edith Rizzi gives kudo's to Area Director Paul Demenok for the job done. She states that as a whole, Area C is pleased with Director Demenok and the work that he puts into the job. Rural areas have sent a clear message that they'd like to be 'left alone' and they are quite satisfied. More populated areas are questioning their level of contentedness with the status quo. Although there have been no demands for incorporation, people are certainly supporting getting the numbers in Stage 2 of the study. She shares that there is certainly not representation on the CSRD Board and she supports Stage 2.

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Gareth Seys shares that the overall consensus seems to be less populous areas area content while the more populous areas are looking for options. He recommends exploring other governance options.

Cal Heschuk says that his feelings are already summarized. It's a 'no brainer' to go ahead and get the numbers in Phase 2 because it will give us the data we need. It is hard to make an informed decision with limited information and there is certainly enough interest to pursue the study because of the information it will provide.

Lenore Jobson found the Open houses interesting and informative. Presentations by Allan and Juliet were well received and encouraged participation. Residents had lots of questions and although they were curious, many residents were happy and didn't want changes. Only area she found was Blind Bay where they definitely wanted to see what the financial differences would be. She recommends Phase 2 of the study.

Andy Bartels shares that he is neutral on most issues. A few people he has engaged with state 'show me the number and we will talk'. Public wants to know how much it will cost and what is the value for those dollars? Roads are concerning and the costs associated. He is supportive of continuing to Phase 2 of the study and well as other governance options.

Don Patterson has watched the evolution of Area C for the past 40 years. Director's job is quite cumbersome. One of the things Don senses with this proposal is an urban vs rural type of feel. He feels that the regional district model is a lousy one to begin with and he feels that we are trying to make improvements to something that is essentially bad to begin with. He has one concern; the people who are ambivalent to this – there is risk in that. The decision made here will be meaningful and long lasting so we need to get some answers to support a solid decision. To that end, Don is supportive of Phase 2 of the study.

Karen Brown feels that getting to Phase 2 of the study is essential to get all of the information needed to make a well informed decision. This is a pivotal time in the community and it is to be explored thoroughly. One concern she also has is the 'coffee shop talk' that takes place in a community. Many hear misinformation and can base a referendum vote on misinformation or no information which would challenge making a properly informed vote.

Steve wishes for all three choices to be on the table. He is not opposed to an incorporation study but does not want that to be the only option.

For the record, Area Director Demenok adds that both Henry Schnell from Eagle Bay and Renee Rebus from White Lake have written indicating their support for proceeding to Stage 2 of a study.

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Allan explains that normally when it goes to referendum is that the community is asked 'are you happy with the status quo'. If they count the votes and people are generally happy, the second part of the referendum results are not needed. If the votes are counted and people are not happy, then the votes for the second part of the referendum as to governance options ie incorporation or adding a new electoral area (C1 & C2) are counted. Allan notes that the Province, based on the recommendation of the Board, will determine the exact process to follow.

Cal asks if the study shouldn't be called something else to which Allan replies it could be called a Restructuring Study.

Allan notes that the process of collecting data and examining impacts is essentially the same for a restructuring study and incorporation study.

When discussed as to how to properly present to the public, we don't want to give so many choices that our electoral area director has too 'wishy washy' of a proposal to take to UBCM (to the Province) in September. Our wants have to be clear and concise. Status Quo is always an option however it's not really needed on the proposal.

Larry wishes to clear up what might happen with the data collected through a further study. He perceives that the committee managing the next step might well examine the data and make the decision that neither a move to incorporation nor a move to restructuring would be worth pursuing. In that case, a referendum would not be required.

Whatever the information, we need to have a clear understanding of our community's needs. We need to have a clear vision to support the data, who has control in decision making . There will be development happening over the next 20 or 30 years; we need to plan for those changes.

Andy shares that 'we need to keep our eyes on the ball'. This is an academic exercise giving us a body of knowledge.

Allan shares two comments:

- a) Status Quo is always an option, and is a legitimate outcome of any restructure study. The Committee should not consider a study that settled on the status quo as the preferred option as a failure.
- b) Provincial Government like any other government is constitutionally responsible for local government structure throughout the province. The Province takes this responsibility very seriously, which is why these exercises tend to be long and involved. The Province will set out

the process to follow, and will determine what kind of question(s) to put to the public. Any significant change from the status quo will require a public vote.

Area Director Demenok is asked if he wants to add anything. He suggests a restructuring study. Andy Bartels & Karen Brown motion & second to proceed with a restructuring study. Chair Wills calls for a vote. Question of procedure arises as no further discussion was called for prior to the vote. Discussion ensues.

Larry raises the point that the wording needs to be more specific to provide guidance to the next step based upon the information that was returned through our study. Discussion and consultation as to how this might be achieved followed, then: Larry Stephenson moves/Andy Bartels seconds the following amendment, to clarify wording, to the initial motion:

**'Based on its review of the current governance and service delivery frameworks, the South Shuswap Governance Committee recommends to the CSRD Board of Directors that a restructure study for Electoral Area C be undertaken and that the restructure study examine two options:**

**The incorporation of a portion of the electoral area; or**

**The division of the current Electoral Area into two Electoral Areas'**

Chair Wills calls for the vote. After no further discussion, **the vote to approve the amendment to the initial motion is UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

Chair Wills then calls for the vote on the motion as amended. **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

#### **NEXT STEPS**

After completion of the Final Report, all of the feedback from the interim report and engagement sessions, a presentation will be made to the CSRD in August, 2017 by the Chair for the Governance Committee. After receiving in and approving the report, the CSRD Board would then make a submission to the Ministry of Community, Culture & Sport. A representative in Director Demenok's absence would speak to the report in September at UBCM.

#### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

If, as a result of the restructuring study, there is a referendum on incorporating a part of Area C, do all voters get to vote or just those in the proposed incorporation area? There is clear impact to all not just the proposed area. Allan responds Ministry would look at what the impacts would be. All of the data would identify for the incorporated area what the impact would be re taxes etc. Impact would also be explored for outer lying areas as well.

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Resort Municipalities – are roads still provincial – no, municipal.

Provision for Roads – if we were to incorporate, how does the municipality get monies to transition from the province? Amount paid by the province to keep the status quo in service for a period of five years. After that time, the municipality is on its own. Province will design a process and work with the committee to negotiate a transition plan.

Comment made by a resident feeling sensitive and offended by the term ‘coffee shop talk’, a term used by committee member Karen Brown. Karen apologizes if the resident was offended by the comment. The point being made by using ‘coffee shop talk’ was meant that through casual talk and interaction in the community, it is not uncommon in a small town, for the facts to become a tad mixed up or misinterpreted. As news travels through a small community, it can take on new forms. The comment made was not to insinuate or infer that anyone attending a coffee shop or any other public place is uneducated or uninformed.

Secondly, the resident also felt that the distinction between urban and rural in our area was off-point as we are all rural, to which the committee responded the better use of term could be ‘more populous and less populous’. Again, not meant to offend; simply to give distinction between the outer lying areas as opposed to Sorrento and/or Blind Bay.

Third comment made by the resident suggested that if only 216 surveys were completed out of 8000 residents, does that not signify that those who did not complete a survey or attend an open house are content? The argument given there was that while many are ambivalent and have many things to do, some may not have understood the significance of what was being discussed. Also, in a municipal, provincial or federal election, a small population might cast a vote – this does not necessarily mean that are happy and satisfied – you will never get your entire population voting on an issue.

Another member of the gallery suggests that if there is an incorporation, there will be a resulting cultural shift here.

Final comment: Relying on the recommendations of the consultants and governance team, given the surveys, the open houses, the public meetings and other submissions, there is enough interest to warrant further study.

**MEETING ADJOURNED 8:45 PM**

**Approved: STEVE WILLS, Committee Chair**

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