

**JOINT COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE NO. 23
and
TOWN OF HIGH LEVEL**

**Friday, November 8, 2002
1:00 p.m.**

**Seminar Room, Fort Vermilion School Division Central Office
Fort Vermilion, Alberta**

MEETING NOTES

PRESENT:

Bill Neufeld	Reeve
Walter Sarapuk	Deputy Reeve
Betty Bateman	Councillor
John W. Driedger	Councillor
Pat Kulscar	Councillor
Michael Nanooch	Councillor
Greg Newman	Councillor

Mike Mihaly	Mayor, Town of High Level
David Steer	Councillor, Town of High Level
Jerry Chomiak	Councillor, Town of High Level
Susan Callihou	Councillor, Town of High Level
Lorraine Donovan	Councillor, Town of High Level
Ellis Forest	Councillor, Town of High Level

ABSENT:

Joe Peters	Councillor
Wayne Thiessen	Councillor
Willie Wieler	Councillor

ALSO PRESENT:

Harvey Prockiw	Chief Administrative Officer
Dianne Hunter	Chief Administrative Officer, Town of High Level
Cora Klassen	Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Reeve Neufeld called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The Municipal District of Mackenzie added the following item to the agenda:
11. Library

2. Rezoning Issues

Reeve Neufeld mentioned that the Town of High Level felt that they were not properly informed about rezoning issues and the MD would like input from the Town.

3. Intermunicipal Development Plan

Mayor Mihaly said that this goes back to Intermunicipal Development Plan; the Town always thought that the IDP would be completed by now. The Town is not opposing the MD's ideas but is proposing that the agreement made in principle be used to absolve problem issues.

Councillor Kulscar said that the MD is committed to the IDP and also committed to economic development in this area. It takes time to ratify the agreement and iron out the specifics. The Economic Development Incentive is to promote this area under the IDP.

Mayor Mihaly said that it is hard to promote an area when you do not know where development is going. The Town cannot tell development where to go, as it has not been determined which industry should go where. Those developing south of High Level have many hoops to jump through, such as rezoning, etc. There is currently no cooperation between the municipalities and development will therefore take a long time.

Councillor Kulscar said that the MD is not asking the Town to stop development until the IDP is in place so then why should they ask MD residents to stop?

Reeve Neufeld and Mayor Mihaly agreed that most of the irritancies will be resolved with the IDP.

Councillor Steer said that he has seen places where there was no planning and it degrades the area. Cooperation is a good idea and needs a meeting of minds.

Councillor Kulscar said that the process will take time.

Councillor Bateman said that the process will need thought and a meeting from both sides.

The Chief Administrative Officers, Harvey Prockiw and Dianne Hunter, will meet to arrange a committee meeting to go ahead with IDP meetings.

4. Footner Forest Products Request for a Waterline to Service their Site

Reeve Neufeld said that the MD heard that the Town told Footner Forest Products to wait for a waterline until IDP is established. What is the Town's

position?

Mayor Mihaly responded that water services (including waterline installation, who controls water services, allowing the Town to charge services on taxes, etc.) must be resolved in the IDP. The Town currently has agreements with the MD and the province. MD residents are coming to the Town with MD permit in order to access Town services; the current agreement only allows for agricultural domestic services. The Town cannot provide water services to MD residents unless an agreement is in place and it is ensured that hydrants can still provide for fire trucks. How can the Town provide services if there is a fire at Footner Lake? The agreement with the province does not allow the Town to provide services to MD residents if they want to take water from Footner Lake.

Reeve Neufeld asked what the alternative water source is.

Mayor Mihaly answered that the Town is getting there.

Deputy Reeve Sarapuk asked if the water plant would be sufficient if a waterline was connected to Footner Forest Products.

Mayor Mihaly said that the Town does not know; they don't have the appropriate numbers. The plant can be extended (which would cost more money) but this would strain the plant. A comprehensive agreement is needed to resolve these water issues.

Councillor Bateman said that Footner Forest Products made the decision to opt out when the waterline was to go ahead a few years ago.

Mayor Mihaly said that Footner Forest Products found out that the water was too hard for their process and they needed a piece of equipment that would cost \$1.5 million. Footner Forest Products need an answer fairly quickly.

Councillor Bateman said that when Brian Clark was here, it was up to the provincial government. An agreement was in place but was lost along the way. Footner Forest Products said that they rather **wanted a**

Mayor Mihaly said that it was all verbal and there were no signed agreements.

5. Truckstop Development

Reeve Neufeld asked for update on the truckstop development.

Mayor Mihaly said that it was rumored that the Town stopped Mike Lee's development and approved the one in High Level. The Town did not stop Mr. Lee's development; Alberta Transportation stopped it because of problems with the access. Water wasn't what stopped development. If someone wants to come

into the Town and buy property, they are happy. The Town does not oppose or prevent development outside. Developers are having difficulties getting approval from Alberta Transportation for approaches.

6. Ethanol Plant

Reeve Neufeld asked for update on the ethanol plant.

Mayor Mihaly said that as chair of REDI, he can say that money is in place. The Town had concerns because no permits are in place and held in-camera sessions. They bought property in High Level but they need to do a study to prove its safety. The Town asked for the appraisal price, which is a lot more than the cost of twice the size of property a few miles out of town.

Reeve Neufeld asked if there were any safety concerns.

Mayor Mihaly answered that they must prove that there are no concerns that the plant may leak.

Reeve Neufeld said that they had concerns at the plant in La Crete. Councillor Bateman said that equipment was at the plant in La Crete ready for an incident.

Mayor Mihaly said that the company has a practice in Red Deer that is good. They want to be on the railroad. The asking price for the land is so expensive and the Town has encouraged them to develop south of High Level. They need 30 acres. The land they want in Town is for sale and properly zoned. They must prove that there is no danger of emissions and the plant must be approved by the province. The project is \$10 million and will benefit the agriculture industry in the area.

Deputy Reeve Sarapuk asked where the parcel of land is located.

Mayor Mihaly answered that it is by Greyhound along the railway. It is in a swampy area.

7. Fire Protection Band West of High Level (High Level Wetland Project)

Mayor Mihaly said that this project is not west of High Level. The Town is looking to buy 17 acres inside the Town of High Level boundaries. At the AUMA Convention, a motion was made that the province take over the management of wetlands within town boundaries. Mayor Mihaly wanted to table the motion and was allowed one minute to debate the issue; then the motion was passed.

There are places in town that if development was taken out, they could not rebuilt because of its proximity to wetland. The Town applied for an exemption and it

was granted. The price is \$124,000 to buy 17 acres. The wetland is to hook into the water treatment plant to control the level of water. It is a 10 year project and the water will be used when making lakes for fire protection.

If a plane crashes into Footner Lake, they would have an alternate water supply. Ducks Unlimited and recreation would improve. This entire project would be within town boundaries. The Town will be asking the province for funding as an auxiliary water supply project. This would give a 2 year water supply. Fire danger is from the west and the project is located south and west of the Town. Much of the property west of High Level is wetland.

8. Recreation Committee

Mayor Mihaly said that the Town of High Level suspended the Recreation Board but at a recent retreat, Council chose to look at it again. This Board has seven members; would the MD want to send a Council and member at large to sit on the board?

Reeve Neufeld said he could not see why the MD would not.

Mayor Mihaly said that the Town wanted feedback from the MD. They will have to put a bylaw in place.

Councillor Bateman said that it is a great idea to have MD representation on the Board. The MD gives money to the Recreation Board and therefore would like to see how the money is used. Cooperation ensures that there is a watchdog.

Dianne Hunter said that the re-establishment of the Board will need organizational changes, which will be addressed at the next meeting.

9. Airport Advisory Committee

Mayor Mihaly said that it is time for the MD to appoint a member to the Airport Advisory Committee to provide input. The Airport serves whole region and input is necessary from entire area.

Reeve Neufeld said that this will be brought to Council.

10. NCDC Agricultural Study

Dianne Hunter distributed copies of correspondence from NCDC asking for financial support to do a feasibility study of increasing agricultural development in the area.

Mayor Mihaly said that he missed the meeting in Edmonton when they hammered out this issue. The study was passed in principle at the convention.

John Watt from the Town of Rainbow Lake was added as a member municipality but Rainbow Lake said that they would not contribute to REDI for agriculture or tourism. This money will go to the extension of their road too. From this district, there are four member municipalities and all are asked to contribute. When REDI was established, it was stated that there would be separate committees for agriculture and tourism. The Town of Rainbow Lake said that they did not want to contribute to these committees.

Councillor Bateman said that she thought Rainbow Lake's stance was tourism. This is a long term project and therefore agriculture and tourism could benefit Rainbow Lake and Zama.

Mayor Mihaly stated that a Councillor from Rainbow Lake said that they did not want to contribute to agriculture or tourism when REDI was originally established. They preferred to contribute more to oil and gas rather than contributing to agriculture. They are not members of the Mighty Peace Tourist Association either. Once the road is open, the Town of Rainbow Lake will be part of more. Don't count on Rainbow Lake to contribute to the Agricultural Study. John Watt is no longer the mayor.

Mayor Mihaly said that the MD would have to take this back to Council; the Town Council has not discussed it yet but they will likely contribute because they benefit. \$8000 is needed from the municipalities in our area. Fort Nelson has committed \$2000. If Rainbow Lake does not contribute, the MD would be looking at \$4000; the Town of High Level would give \$2000. NCDC pounds on governments on behalf of organizations. When they put Fort Nelson road on, there was no more dallying and BC is addressing the request. The contract is going ahead for the bridge. This organization has the clout. They want to see improved production up here to make the Prince Rupert terminal a viable option to the terminal in Vancouver. There is good soil but the south is saying it is not; ignorance can only be counteracted with facts.

Councillor Bateman said that Rainbow Lake has been pushing for their road but now they are backing out of tourism.

11. Library

Harvey Prockiwi distributed documentation about the funds that the MD contributes to the Town for the High Level library.

Councillor Bateman said that in the current agreement, the MD gives the Town money for the library through "cultural". The province, however, says that the funding has to go directly to regional library board. The province is threatening to take away about \$4 per capita for all 7000 residents from the Library Board. The High Level Library says that they are not getting any of these cultural funds. The High Level Library wants \$33 per capita but the Regional Board cannot afford

this. The government dictates that this funding must go through the Regional Library Board's records in order to get provincial funding.

Dianne Hunter said that this is the first she heard of the High Level Library feeling that they are not getting their full amount. She will investigate and ensure that this funding is going to the High Level Library. The Town's position is to increase funding to the library board for 2003 for the High Level rural residents but they want assurance that the money flowing through the Regional Library Board is in fact going to the High Level Library. If the Board cannot guarantee that the funding will go to the High Level Library, it will continue going through the Town; otherwise the Town does not have a problem with the funding going through the Regional Library Board.

Councillor Kulscar said that legislation says the Board cannot guarantee the distribution of funding.

Harvey Prockiw said that a motion to provide funding shouldn't break legislation. Councillor Bateman said that the Board simply wants the problem to disappear but the money must flow from the MD to the Board in order for them to receive the grant.

Dianne Hunter said that the wording in the agreement was changed to "cultural" because the MD is not giving "library" money to the Town.

Councillor Bateman and Councillor Kulscar said that the Board is still not seeing funds for the High Level rural residents come through board.

Councillor Donovan said that she was not aware that library funding could be cut. There shouldn't be a reason why a motion would not contradict legislation. The Town only needs a letter.

Harvey Prockiw said that a letter is needed from the Regional Board saying that this money will flow to the High Level Library.

Dianne Hunter said that the Town does not have a problem with refunding this money to the MD to the Regional Library Board; the Town just wants a letter of confirmation.

Harvey Prockiw will meet with the Board at their next meeting.

Mayor Mihaly said that if there is an irritant as neighbors, it only takes a phone call to iron it out. Let us not take away our credibility as it will only degrade the organizations. The municipalities must come to an understanding in order for the region to progress. Call and give heck if it is well deserved, such as when the rumor was heard that the Town refused to attend a Mighty Peace Tourist Association general meeting.

Councillor Steer said that if the municipalities work together they need a solid foundation. There is opportunity to do much and chances to fail; we need to work together.

Mayor Mihaly said that the Mayor of Grande Prairie will be attending the Elected Officials Meeting on November 29, 2002 to speak on community growth. To carry growth further, the regions need to be connected (there are no current bus routes connecting High Level and Grande Prairie).

Reeve Neufeld said that Councillor Kulscar brought forward the closing of the Alberta Human Resources and Employment offices and moving of the Regional Health Authority offices, with the request to keep them open. The MD needs High Level and High Level needs the MD.

Mayor Mihaly agreed that the municipalities are very interdependent. The "region" mentality is catching on. High Level growth is starting to catch up on their past potential.

Reeve Neufeld said that the funding is gone now that our region is growing. There was a lot of funding when Grande Prairie was expanding. Transportation is lacking.

The Tri-Council meeting will take place after the Elected Officials Meeting.

Reeve Neufeld said that Council prefers the Regional Health Authority regional office be in Fort McMurray rather than Grande Prairie. Council passed a motion stating that the region not be amalgamated with anyone.

Mayor Mihaly said that the Town prefers Fort McMurray over Grande Prairie as well. Yet Grande Prairie is better than Peace River, as Peace River would probably think that they can service our region.

12. Adjournment

Reeve Neufeld adjourned the meeting at 2:37 p.m.