

TECK COAL ELK VALLEY COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

ADVISORY INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Version: Final

Issue Date: November 25, 2015

Minutes of Meeting

Location: College of the Rockies Fernie 342, 3 rd Avenue	Date: Sept 30, 2015	Time: 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Purpose: Steering Committee Meeting 2015 Q3		
Attendees: See attached		

Meeting commenced at 9:04 a.m.

Welcome, Housekeeping, Safety Share

Simon Howse welcomed the members to the meeting.

Anita noted where the exits and restrooms were located in respect to the meeting room at the College of the Rockies.

Gordon provided a safety share reminding everyone to be cautious as there are a large number of bears wondering around looking for food. He told of ATV riders going 45 kmp on their quads being chased by bears. Gordon noted that a couple of hunters were mauled recently, one in Cranbrook and one in the Elk Valley. There was discussion around the responsibility of area residents to keep attractants away from bears. Trees bearing fruit should be picked as soon as possible and dropped fruit should be removed from the ground and disposed of. Household garbage is not to be left outside or put to the curb until the morning of pick up. Lois provided a tip that smelly garbage can be frozen until time to dispose of it.

Review of Agenda

Simon asked everyone to review the agenda. Sharon pointed out that the heading for topic 3.1 should read 2015/2016 Executive rather than 2014/2015 Executive. Gordon added the Elk River Clean-up as item 4.4.

2015/2016 Executive

After a brief discussion, it was decided unanimously that the Executive for the 2015/2016 term would remain the same as the previous term with Simon Howse as Chair, Anita Palmer as Vice-Chair and Sharon Strom as Secretary.

Project and Other Updates

Childcare Advisory Initiative

Kim and Sharon provided a summary of the results of the child care survey expressing how grateful they were to Phoebe Scotland for the amazing work she has done with it. Results have been presented to the communities of Elkford, Sparwood and Fernie and presentations to respective mayors and councils will take place October 26, 2015. Kim said that Liz Gillis, with Columbia Basin Trust, has been great to work with through the process and is keen to dialogue with the project managers (Kim and Sharon) once our report for her is finalized.

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Councilor Halko noted that the current licensed childcare facility in Sparwood is a result of Council recognizing there was a need. The District of Sparwood continues to support the facility by providing the space rent free. Sparwood Council recognizes there are economic outcomes from providing childcare in its community.

Simon encouraged the committee members to get the survey results out to the masses as soon as possible. He then thanked Kim and Sharon for the efforts on this project and appreciation was reiterated by Lois Halko.

Survey results can be found at the Communities of Interest website at: www.evcnpvoice.com

Housing: Simon, who is the current President of the Canadian Home Builders Association of BC (CHBA of BC), provided an update on some issues affecting the housing industry which is the largest industry in Canada. The Association is made up of builders and support service providers and has around 1200 members in BC. There is now more two-way communication between builders and government to affect positive change in the industry. Rich Coleman, the minister responsible for Housing, attends CHBA of BC meetings. The aim of the Association is to protect home owners by driving away the underground economy of home builders who fly below the regulatory radar. One of the projects they support is the *Get it in Writing Program* for people having renovations done on their homes. Another project requires all licensed contractors to earn education credits each year, in other words, to upgrade frequently. This may be an opportunity to partner with the College of the Rockies (COTR). Simon noted that the CEO of BC Housing, Shayne Ramsey, is expected to announce a commitment of \$350 million towards more affordable housing for the Province. Simon expressed the importance of having projects that are shelf or shovel ready so that when the announcement is made, local projects can receive a portion of the designated funds. Simon noted that a housing assessment for Fernie hasn't been done since 2007 and feels that it should be done every five years for communities. He will look into this.

College Project: Simon has been in discussions with a university to secure four practicums for a five-year term. This could work as a catalyst to push COTR toward acquiring a new building. The practicums consist of eight weeks of programming and include: watershed management, urbanism (arising from mass exodus from small communities), landscape architecture and one other. Simon feels the Elk Valley will be a viable location for a college because of its proximity to Calgary and Vancouver. He believes in the philosophy that 'build it and they will come' as opposed to 'proving the business case'. The USA has multiple examples of small communities with large colleges or universities. He added that UBC has infused \$13 billion into the economy and the U of A \$11 billion. One idea Simon posed to Anita as a potential COTR program is Craft Brewing. In Colorado, there are 2300 small brewers.

Elk River Clean Up: Gordon's crew of 14 people from the ATV club was the only one working from Elkford to Line Creek to clean the river and they managed to remove 4 truckloads of debris. In addition, the team recently focused on removal of the bridge that washed out in the last flood. They were able to remove the bridge from the water within the 10 days allotted by the Ministry of Environment. The metal is still on the river bank. When asked about the purpose and size of the bridge, Gordon stated that it was used by snowmobilers, ATVers, hikers, bikers, and even cows. It covered a 120 foot span across the river and was 62 inches wide and even though it had nine feet of clearance between the bridge and the river at its normal level, it was still washed out by the flood. The group is still working on replacing riprap until October 15, 2015.

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New Business

Terms of Reference: Simon wondered if the Terms of Reference and its strategic direction are still relevant moving forward over the next 12 months. He suggested everyone take a copy, read through them and provide feedback. It was decided that first he, Anita and Sharon would meet to review the document and draft new objectives and strategies if necessary for review and input from the rest of the committee.

Miscellaneous:

It was suggested by Simon that a Wall of Wins/Accomplishments be added to the COI Advisory Initiative website with such items as the childcare survey project and the successful ECE course offered by Fernie COTR that allowed students to become licensed childcare assistants upon completion. Simon stated that a new college facility in the Elk Valley will benefit residents now and 100 years into the future. He suggested that he work with Sharon to draft something for the website referencing how a new college will improve community sustainability post Teck.

Janice led a discussion on healthcare in the Elk Valley and stated that currently there is a full complement of physicians in Sparwood and Elkford. There is a lack of Health Care Assistants (HCAs) in the region and across the board. The \$20/hour wage is not attractive. This will have an impact on our aging population. HCAs are not hired in hospitals in the Elk Valley. They are hired in long-term care facilities and for residential community visits. Elkford currently has no after hour emergency care. When asked if Dr. Nalley, the Fernie surgeon who will be retiring, will be replaced, Janice said she wasn't sure but Interior Health Authority (IHA) is actively looking for someone to replace Dr. Nalley. Simon suggested the COI Advisory Initiative group be pre-emptive and rally to keep a surgeon in Fernie since it is such a high priority affecting community sustainability. IHA is doing their best to keep the Operating Room in Fernie Hospital open. If there are no surgeons, babies can't be delivered there because emergency c-sections would not be possible. Janice noted that it will be harder to keep family physicians in the Elk Valley if there is no surgeon. There will be a ripple effect. Simon asked if Shirley Mercier, Health Service Director, Acute Community Liaison for IHA might be willing to attend the next partners meeting to give an update on healthcare in the Elk Valley. Janice said she will ask.

Simon said the topics of physicians, childcare and the college courses should all be a part of the year in review for the partners meeting. He then asked if the subject of healthcare and the need for a surgeon in Fernie should be the COI group's next initiative as part of a succession plan. He, Anita and Sharon can examine that as they review the objectives for the upcoming year.

A further discussion was had around childcare and the poor wages the workers are paid. Even with Elkford and Sparwood subsidizing space for childcare, wages are low in order to keep fees affordable. Scott suggested that if we can affect change locally rather than by lobbying the provincial government, it may be quicker to do so. Kim, while driving in, was listening to a radio broadcast on CBC which claimed that by adding \$11/year per household for taxes, the problem of homelessness in Victoria could be eliminated. One has to keep in mind that mental health and addiction issues are part of the lives of a high number of homeless people and the provision of housing wouldn't address those concerns. Nonetheless, perhaps something similar regarding property taxes can be done for childcare in the Elk Valley.

Janice noted that there is an issue with seniors' housing with nothing existing in Elkford. Councilor Bertrand said she is currently planning to do an assessment of seniors in Elkford considering such things

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as finances, needs, and whether or not they are infirm. She received some contacts from MLA Bill Bennett who may be able to provide support and guidance for this project.

Round Table

Kim – noted that much of her time in the last few months has been consumed by the Childcare Survey.

Scott – asked what specifically the group would like to see from him as a representative of community safety. He is currently working on fire evacuation preparedness. Simon suggested a focus on the highway auto accidents between Elkford and Cranbrook. There was some general discussion regarding various issues with the 12-hour 4X4 shifts and the effect they have on safety (including driving) and families. Scott said he will do some investigation.

Janice – added that 12-hour shifts have an effect on healthcare workers and nurses and as the nursing workforce changes as a whole, 8-hour shifts may be looked at by nurses in general.

Anita – was pleased that the COI Advisory Initiative was creating positive change and not spinning its wheels.

Denise – expressed thanks to those who have been working on the childcare survey.

Lois – stated that she learns something at every COI Advisory Initiative meeting.

Liam – noted that he is also learning many new things at the meetings and he congratulated those involved with the childcare survey and Simon for his work in securing college practicums for a 5-year term.

Gordon – acknowledged the amount of time and effort that went into the childcare survey. He added that he agrees with Simon that it is important at times to have a job or project shelf/shovel ready in case funding comes along. Just recently an email was received from Quad Riders of BC noting that they have \$3500 available if a club has a project ready to go. The Elkford ATV Club had a project ready, regarding ATV safety compliance with highways and RCMP, and was able to secure the \$1200 of the \$3500 they needed for their project.

Simon – committed to pushing Fernie to update their housing study.

Sharon – shared that she was pleased with the amount of progress that has been made this year with the child care survey and other projects.

Closing Remarks

Simon thanked everyone for their attendance.

Meeting ended at 11:10

Next Community Partners Meeting:
Next Steering Committee Meeting:

December 16, 2015 – Sparwood Senior Drop In Centre
December 2, 2015 – Elkford Arena Hobby Room

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Action Items

Action Items	Who	Deadline
Steering Committee executive to draft 2015/2016 objectives	SH/AP/ SS	Prior to next SC meeting
SC executive to consider succession plan and focus for the year	SH/AP/SS	In above meeting
Add Wall of Wins to COI Advisory Initiative website	SS	Before year end
Write article/blog about benefits of new college to Elk Valley	SH/SS	Before year end
Discuss updating housing assessment for City of Fernie	SH	Before year end
Invite Shirley Mercier to give IHA update at Partners meeting	JT	By end of Nov
Research accident statistics from Elkford to Cranbrook	SR	By next SC meeting

Attendance

Name	Representing	Role	
Arbuckle, Liam	Youth/ Crowsnest Pass		
Bauer, Kim	Social Services/Elkford		
Bertrand, Denise (Guest)	Elkford Council		
Galloway, Gordon	Motorized Recreation/Elkford		
Halko, Lois	Municipal Government/Sparwood		
Howse, Simon	Business & CHBA / Fernie	Chair	
Palmer, Anita	Education/RDEKA	Vice Chair	
Robinson, Scott	Community Safety/Fernie		
Strom, Sharon	Teck / Communities	Secretary	
Talarico, Janice	Healthcare/Sparwood		

Unable to attend:

	Representing	Role	
Anonson, Terry	MNBC/Elkford		
Drain, Joanne	Seniors/Crowsnest Pass		
Walker, Lee-Anne	ENGOS/Fernie		
Wedderburn, Shelley	Michel Crk Rd Residents/Sparwood		