

A regular meeting of the District of Wells Council was held Tuesday August 7, 2007 at 7:00 P.M. in Council Chambers, 4243 Sanders Avenue, Wells, BC V0K 2R0

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor Jay Vermette and Councillors Judy Campbell, Neil Ferrier, Virginia Wilkins and Richard Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Gary Champagne, CAO; Dennis Manuel, Superintendent of Public Works; Carol McGregor, Marketing and Economic Development Officer; and Sundance Topham, Deputy Clerk

PUBLIC GALLERY: 2 Persons

A. CALL TO ORDER AND AGENDA ADOPTION:

07-198 MOVED Councillor Wilkins Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** the Agenda be adopted as amended as follows:

Move item G.1 Bowron Lake Reservation System Problems to item C.1

F.2 07.30.07 Jon Wolbers, Chair, Cariboo Regional District re: Joint Strategic Planning Session

G.2 Lot Sale – Barkerville Hwy.

Carried Unanimously

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

1. Minutes of Regular Meeting, July 17, 2007

07-199 MOVED Councillor Wright Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** the minutes be adopted as circulated.

Carried Unanimously

C. DELEGATIONS AND PETITIONS:

1. Bowron Lake Reservation System Problems

Jennifer Bird from B&M Maintenance Services, the Park Facility Operator at Bowron Lake Provincial Park, presented Council with an explanation of how the Bowron Lake reservation system currently runs, as well as how it has historically run in the past. Mrs. Bird explained that Bowron Lake Provincial Park currently takes all reservations through HelloBC, the reservation arm of Tourism BC. Mrs. Bird noted that the HelloBC system is supposed to book up to 28 people in group bookings per day (broken into two groups of between seven and 14 people) and 22 individual bookings per day, along with leaving space for four drop-ins. On top of having the booking numbers capped by number of people, HelloBC also limits the number of vessels allowed on the Bowron Lake Circuit to 25 per day. Mrs. Bird noted that because of problems associated with a changeover in computers at HelloBC there had been a large overbooking of individuals in the summer of 2007. She also said that because the group bookings at Bowron Lake use different campsites than the individuals, BC Parks doesn't want to take any unused daily quotas from the group reservations and move them to the individuals or drop-ins. Mrs. Bird could not explain why drop-

ins could not be topped up from the individual reservations list, and said there wasn't a coherent reason explained to her why this couldn't take place. Mrs. Bird also noted that the previous Bowron Lake Provincial Park Facility Operator, Hager Business Services Ltd., had relayed how the reservation system worked in the past, including the former practice of topping up the number of drop-ins from the daily quota of individuals, and grouping willing canoeists into group bookings in order to ensure that they could make it out on the circuit. Mrs. Bird also noted that in coming years the number of individual tent pads was going to be increased, but there were no plans to increase the number of users allowed per day. Mrs. Bird said that people were often willing to wait a day or two to get on the chain if there were slots available in the coming days, but that a byproduct of the current reservation system was a decrease in the numbers of international tourists doing the circuit, due to worries about getting on the chain. Mrs. Bird noted that a big thing that concerns her is the restrictions on drop-ins to four individuals per day. She said that this limited park use by families of five or more, and noted that it should be examined. Mrs. Bird also said that the counts should be based on the number of tents in use on the Bowron Lake Circuit, not the number of vessels allowed, as the number of vessels is irrelevant. The question was raised as to whether or not removing Bowron Lake Provincial Park from the HelloBC reservation system would be beneficial. Mrs. Bird noted that replacing HelloBC wasn't necessarily the answer, but working more closely could help improve things. Mrs. Bird noted that a lot of problems associated with the reservations and drop-ins were due to miscommunication between BC Parks in Williams Lake and the Bowron Lake Provincial Park Facility Operators. General discussion took place in regards to how to improve the reservation system. Mrs. Bird noted that she believed that the actions various parties have instigated are helping to bring about changes, as she had been contacted by BC Parks in order to investigate concerns in relation to the reservation system on the chain. Mayor Vermette noted that it might be a good idea for the District of Wells to invite Rodger Stewart from BC Parks to come up and see how Bowron Lakes Provincial Parks works, and at the same to go over the concerns and solutions raised by Mrs. Bird. Councillor Wright noted that the letter to the Minister of Environment should note the under use of the Chain in July, the negative feedback associated with people being turned away, and the fact that the regional BC Parks manager had not been to the chain. Councillor Campbell noted that a letter written by the District of Wells should relate the following points:

- That the District of Wells has no problem with restrictions on capacity, i.e. maintaining the wilderness experience, but that the mechanics of the reservation system need to be changed.
- That booking by vessel should be discussed. People to vessel isn't translating, and if you're going to book by something other than people then book by number of tents on the circuit.
- That the inability to top up the drop-ins out of the individual category is causing problems, and the impact this has on families, especially regional people (four or more in the family). The fact that the park was underutilized by 500 people in July of 2007, operating at 66 per cent capacity.

- That the District of Wells has heard numerous negative comments in regards to HelloBC and their reservation system. Include the fact that the Barkerville Campgrounds have switched away from HelloBC and they're happier.
- That there is a big advantage having a knowledgeable local person taking reservations.

07-200 **MOVED** Councillor Campbell Seconded Councillor Ferrier that the District of Wells write a letter in regards to the problems with the reservation system at Bowron Lake Provincial Park to Barry Penner, Minister of Environment, with copies to Rodger Stewart and Helen Farrer from BC Parks, Cariboo North MLA Bob Simpson, B&M Maintenance Services, CRD Director Ronda Wilkins, Becker's Lodge and Business Boosters Virtual Solution, Dave Jorgenson and Bill Horne.

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES / UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Recommendations for Board of Variance appointees
The Administrator provided background information in regards to the purpose behind and composition of the Board of Variance

07-201 **MOVED** Councillor Wright Seconded Councillor Campbell **THAT** District of Wells staff solicit the community of Wells for individuals interested in joining the Board of Variance

Carried Unanimously

2. Confirmation of participants for 2007 UBCM Conference
General discussion took place in regards to who would be attending the UBCM Conference. It was decided that Mayor Vermette, Councillor Campbell, Councillor Wilkins and the Administrator would be attending the conference.

07-202 **MOVED** Councillor Wilkins Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** the following attendees for 2007 UBCM Conference be confirmed: Mayor Vermette, Councillor Campbell, Councillor Wilkins and the CAO.

Carried Unanimously

E. CONSENT CALENDAR:

07-203 **MOVED** Councillor Wilkins Seconded Councillor Campbell **THAT** the Consent Calendar be adopted as circulated.

1. 07.07.09 Ken Cameron, Chief Executive Officer, Homeowner Protection Office re: Important changes to the *Homeowner Protection Act*
2. 07.07.12 Lisa Tompkins, Chair, WinterLights Celebrations re: Invitation to participate in the 2007-08 Edition of WinterLights Celebrations
3. 07.07.13 Karen Wanders, Committee Clerk, City of Coquitlam re: TransLink Fare Increases
4. 07.07.20 UBCM Secretariat re: "Urban Forum" Workshop at 2007 UBCM Convention
5. 07.07.20 Brenda Binnie, President UBCM re: Gas Tax Agreement Community Works Fund Payment
6. 07.07.26 Rick Thorpe, Minister of Small Business and Revenue and Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services re: Single Business License

7. 07.07.30 Craig Daniell, Chief Executive Officer, BC SPCA re: Regulation of Exotic Animals

Carried Unanimously

F. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. 07.07.26 Bob Gammer, Public Affairs Coordinator, BC Hydro re: Storm Outage Preparedness and Communications

The Administrator provided background information in regards to the purpose of the BC Hydro meeting.

- 07-204** **MOVED** Councillor Wright Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** the 07.07.26 Bob Gammer, Public Affairs Coordinator, BC Hydro letter re: Storm Outage Preparedness and Communications be received.

Carried Unanimously

2. 07.30.07 Jon Wolbers, Chair, Cariboo Regional District (CRD) re: Joint Strategic Planning Session

Mayor Vermette spoke to the letter, noting that staff should write a letter noting that District of Wells Council members would attend the meeting as long as all of the other member municipalities were represented.

- 07-205** **MOVED** Councillor Campbell Seconded Councillor Wright **THAT** staff write a letter to the CRD noting that members of the District of Wells Council will attend as long as participants from all CRD member municipalities attend the meeting

Carried Unanimously

G. NEW BUSINESS:

2. Lot Sale – Barkerville Hwy.

The Administrator provided Council with information in regards to a lot owned by the District of Wells that was available for sale. The Administrator noted that the lot, located immediately next to the Northwoods Inn Restaurant, was acquired by the District of Wells in 2005 due to failure to pay taxes. He said that the land had previously gone through the obligatory land auction with no interest. The Administrator noted that he was recommending that staff approach the owners of the Northwoods Inn Restaurant and give them the first option to purchase the lot at assessed value, currently \$19,600, and if the Northwoods does not choose to purchase the lot, that the land be put up for auction with a minimum opening bid of the unpaid taxes of \$4,803. The Administrator noted that the land had no value to the District of Wells. Councillor Wright wondered if it was a good idea to offer the land to one party, without putting it up for sale to everybody. The Administrator noted that this recommendation was based on his previous experience, but that Council could direct staff otherwise.

- 07-206** **MOVED** Councillor Campbell Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** staff approach the owners of the Northwoods Inn Restaurant and give them the first option to purchase the lot at assessed value of \$19,600, and if the Northwoods does not choose to purchase the lot, that the land be put up for auction with a minimum sale price of \$4,803.

Carried Unanimously

H. REPORTS:

1. Public Works Report
The Superintendent of Public Works provided Council with a verbal report.
2. Fire Chief Report
The Fire Chief provided Council with a verbal report.
3. Marketing and Economic Development Officer Report
The Marketing and Economic Development Officer provided Council with a verbal report, including information in regards to a large increase in Visitor Information Centre statistics for July and the August Long Weekend. The Marketing and Economic Development Officer also noted that the CAP Site would be moving from the Frog on the Bog to the Wells General Store, and that in its new location the CAP Site would be hiring a Wells CAP Intern. The Marketing and Economic Development Officer also provided an update on the Wells Comedy Auction, which is scheduled to take place on Thursday, August 30.

07-207 **MOVED** Councillor Wilkins Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** the Public Works Report, the Fire Chief Report and the Marketing and the Economic Development Officer Report be received.

Carried Unanimously

I. BYLAWS AND RESOLUTIONS: NIL

J. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Council Members:
Councillor Wilkins thanked everybody for the cards and flowers that people had sent her during her hospitalization and recovery. Councillor Wilkins also suggested that staff send Mia Cirotto a letter inviting her to attend the Tuesday, August 21 Council meeting to receive her District of Wells Scholarship.

Councillor Campbell noted that Barkerville Historic Town statistics were up 13 per cent overall for 2007. She also noted that the ArtsWells Festival had went well, and that she hadn't heard any complaints in regards to the weekend's festivities. Councillor Campbell also brought up the possibility of using the vacant building next to the Firehall as a practice facility for the Wells Fire Brigade, instead of having it removed.

Mayor Vermette noted that he had met with the RCMP commander in July, and he said that the RCMP were going to be sending a member to attend Council meetings in the future. Mayor Vermette also noted that the Masons were going to be coming to the community on the August 11th and 12th weekend, and the Frank Cushman Trail Ride was going to be taking place on the same weekend. Mayor Vermette also asked about the progress of the Pooley St. Performance Centre and Ball Park development. Mayor Vermette also said that the first half of the pea gravel necessary for upgrading the District of Wells owned swing sets was delivered by himself free-of-charge using a truck donated by HMC, but that there was no guarantee that the second half of the pea gravel could be delivered

free-of-charge by HMC. Mayor Vermette also asked about the progress of the removal of the building next to the Fire Department.

2. Staff:

The Administrator noted that the emergency satellite phone ordered by the District of Wells had arrived, and that the land line that was in place at the pump station had been cancelled.

3. Public Gallery:

K. ADJOURNMENT:

07-208 **MOVED** Councillor Campbell Seconded Councillor Ferrier **THAT** the meeting adjourn at 8:49 PM.

Carried Unanimously

John P.S. Vermette, Mayor

Gary Champagne, CAO