

Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, April 25, 2006

12:00 pm

La Place Rendez-Vous

M I N U T E S

Gary Rogozinski	P	Christine Denby	P	Brian Kahler	P	Geoff Gillon	P
Alan Tibbetts	P	Cathy Emes	P	Meghan Haehn	P	Bev Kotnik	A
Linda Larocque	A	Gus MacDonell	P	Kelly Spicer	P	Randy Thoms	A
Paul Wierzbicki	A	Jeff Wright	P	TOFF - T Drysdale	P	Couchiching FN	A
Patti Anderson	P	Jane Gillon	P	Barb Cournoyer	P	Michael Cameron	A
Dawn Booth	P	P - PRESENT				A - ABSENT	

Guests:
 Patti-Jo Reid - Town of Fort Frances Economic Advisory Committee
 Duane Hicks - Fort Frances Times
 Louise Kahler - Fort Frances Today
 Marlene Deschamps - Westend Weekly
 Jane Tibbetts - H & R Block
 Ala Dulas - B-93 fm Radio
 Gloria Wood - EWOC Enterprises
 Trevor Fitzgerald - Gillons' Insurance Brokers
 Nancy Kehler - Pharmasave
 ??? - Pharmasave
 Debbie Williamson - Fort Frances Clinic Dispensary
 Kim Finlayson - TD Canada Trust
 Jackie Lampi-Hughes - Energy Fitness Centre
 Margaret McDonald - Canadian Tire
 Dave Green - Green's Countrywide

Call to Order

12:05 pm

President's Message

Gary Rogozinski, President of the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce welcomed everyone to the meeting. He started off by saying that 2005 was another successful year. The Board of Directors and Chamber Manager continued to work hard, which resulted in a more financially stable Chamber and one that is making significant strides in becoming a stronger voice in supporting business in the community and district. We went on to say that as the Chamber continues to operate successfully, we will learn from those activities and become even more successful in the future. Gary continued by saying that our three main events held in 2005 were very well received including the Home & Leisure Show, Quest for the Best and our 10th Annual Business Awards Banquet. The Chamber continued to grow as the voice of business in 2005. Several key areas that we were involved with included active participation on the Downtown Core Committee, presentations to Town Council on the water and sewer rates, and active work on the business by-law. Presentations were made at the Forestry Summit and Fort Frances Community Summit. Continued on with our marketing efforts and partnership with the Rainy River Future Development Corporation's Great Canadian Experience campaign. Gary concluded by thanking everyone for attending the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 22, 2005 General Membership Meeting were presented for approval.

- **Kahler - Emes to accept the November 22, 2005 General Membership Meeting minutes as presented. CARRIED.**

Financial Report

The 2005 year end financial and year to date financial statements were presented for review. Gary stated that we are in the process of conducting a review engagement through Stewart, Sande & Zimmerman and anticipate that being concluded in early May.

• **Kahler - Spicer to accept the Financial Report as presented. CARRIED.**

Membership Draw

Dawn explained that as an incentive for members to pay their membership dues early, a draw was held for those members who paid on or before March 31, 2006. The winner was Celeste's.

2005 Retiring Directors Presentation

Gary had the following to say:

"A Chamber of Commerce is an integral part of a community's business sector. It consists of a volunteer Board of Directors that contribute endless hours to provide services that are necessary to help maintain a healthy business community. The success of the Chamber is a direct reflection of the time and commitment that each Director contributes. Without this dedication it would be impossible to have a successful Chamber. Today I would like to take the opportunity to thank three directors that have retired from the Board of Director's:

Jon Evans

Jon Evans served on the Chamber Board from 2004 - 2005. He participated on several committees including Business After Hours. Jon was instrumental in directing us in the importance of having an annual financial review of our books and this was started for the 2005 fiscal year. I would like to thank Jon for his term with the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce and present him with a plaque of appreciation.

Ala Dulas

Ala Dulas served on the Chamber Board from 2003 - 2005. She served on numerous committees including Membership and Business After Hours and was always there to lend a helping hand when required and offer valuable opinions on all issues. The Business After Hours activity was initiated and nurtured by Ala and is growing into an event that many people are starting to attend and enjoy. The contribution of Ala and the continued commitment of B93fm have been instrumental in the Chamber becoming the Voice of the Business Community and we appreciate the effort and support. I would like to thank Ala for her term with the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce and present her with a plaque of appreciation.

Debbie Williamson

Debbie Williamson served on the Chamber Board from 2002 - 2005. She actively participated on numerous committees including our Business Awards, Events & Projects, Quest for the Best, our Home & Leisure Show and was always eager to bring forward her ideas and encourage discussion on key Chamber issues. Deb was actively involved in the Home in Leisure Show for several years and brought forth many good ideas like the Putting Competition that was successful for the past two years. The effort that Deb has made and the commitment from Kim Metke and the Clinic Dispensary over the years has significantly contributed to the success of the Chamber. I would like to thank Debbie for her years of service with the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce and present her with plaque of appreciation.

Guest Speaker

Patti-Jo Reid, Chair of the Town's Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Downtown Core Committee was present to provide a background on the Downtown Core Committee and report that was submitted to Council. The following is a summary of Reid's presentation.

The committee had met between January and October of last year to devise a report addressing how to revitalize downtown Fort Frances.

Created as a working body under the EDAC, the committee—consisting of members of the EDAC, the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement Association, Abitibi-Consolidated, Re-Inventing Fort Frances, and the Rainy River Future Development Corp.—met to discuss pertinent issues and formulate possible solutions to problems.

The "downtown core" was defined as the BIA zone (100-300 blocks of Scott Street), as well as the adjacent areas from the river to Second Street East, east to the Memorial Sports Centre, and west to Central Avenue.

Reid said they used some of the studies that already have been done in Fort Frances, such the Heritage Tourism, Re-Inventing Fort Frances, Tomorrow, and tourism, traffic, and fishing museum studies, rather than commissioning a new one.

After reviewing the studies, the committee investigated barriers and opportunities in relation to issues arising, she noted.

Issues identified included traffic flow, parking, funding, museum plan support, alleys and lanes, tourist centre relocation, the public library, the town as a destination point, signage, and downtown branding.

Four sub-committees were formed to review and analyze each of these issues, which then were grouped into four sections—traffic flow, parking, alleys/lanes, and the Tourist Information Centre relocation; signage; branding and downtown issues; and council issues.

Those subcommittees met and provided final reports of their discussions and ideas, which then were compiled in the document given to town council back in November.

Just a handful of recommendations in the report include:

- Designating Scott Street as “The Great Canadian Main Street” and marketing it as such;
- Making a concerted push to move the Tourist Information Centre;
- Making Central Avenue one-way from Scott Street south to the entrance of the bridge, and Church Street one-way from Mowat Avenue west to the entrance of the bridge, to make Canada Customs a “sterile zone” permitting traffic within it to only flow towards the States. (In a second phase, Central Avenue then would be closed from Second Street East to Church Street, routing traffic going across the bridge down Mowat Avenue);
- Relocating Canada Customs’ secondary inspection station at Mowat Avenue and Church Street to the existing Tourist Information Centre location; and
- Implementing angled parking on the north side of the 200 block of First Street East.

In March, council started to take action with a number of council-specific recommendations from the committee, including having the mayor and CAO commence discussions with the affected landowners to fulfill goals of the plan, and having the Planning and Development Advisory Committee review and report back to council on the most appropriate use of lands deemed available.

Council also agreed to hold public meetings to inform and get input from town residents regarding downtown core initiatives being proposed, the first of which will be on June 13.

Eventually, administration will be directed to put together an estimate of costs to fund the projects, and the Administration and Finance executive committee will be directed to put together a long-term plan to reduce the commercial taxes in town.

Question & Answer Period

Reid answered several questions about the report and phases of the report. She again encouraged everyone to come out to the public meeting on June 13, 2006 at the Fort Frances Memorial Sports Centre to voice their concerns.

Adjournment