

Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

12:00 pm

La Place Rendez-Vous

M I N U T E S

Christine Denby	P	Cathy Emes	P	Nancy Daley	P	Janet Plumridge	P
Gary Rogozinski	P	Mike Cameron	A	Barb Cournoyer	P	Brian Kahler	P
Stephen Kontzie	A	Bev Kotnik	P	Kevin Nielson	P	Pam Parsons	P
Kelly Spicer	A	Jeff Wright	P	Tannis Drysdale	P	RRFDC - A Halvorsen	P
Patti Anderson	P	Christine Jourdain	A	Jane Gillon	P		
Dawn Booth	P	Kerri Dittaro	P	P - PRESENT			A - ABSENT

GUESTS:

- Roger Langevin - Roger Langevin Trucking
- Shiela Shaw - Canadian Mental Health Association
- Georges Blanc - La Place Rendez-Vous
- Joelle Blanc - La Place Rendez-Vous
- John Harrison - Abitibi-Consolidated Company of Canada
- Barb Everett - Northern Lights Credit Union
- Marla Thomson - Northern Lights Credit Union
- Jenni Condon - B-93 fm Radio
- Ala Dulas - B-93 fm Radio
- Deborah Emes - Acklands-Grainger
- Mike Anderson - United Native Friendship Centre
- Gus MacDonell - IQON Financial
- Don Hammond - Harbourage Restaurant
- Bill Gushulak - Fort Frances General Supply
- Tammy Grinsell - Pinewood Sports & Marine
- Chuck Arpin - Pinewood Sports & Marine
- Bob Fichuk - Pinewood Sports & Marine
- Alan Tibbetts - H & R Block

Call to Order

12:10 pm

President's Message

President Christine Denby welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated she was pleased with the great turnout.

"I would like to begin by welcoming everyone to our General Membership Meeting. It seems everyone you speak to is busy in one way or another ~ work is busy, home is busy, we're all busy. So I must say to each and every one of you how much I truly appreciate your time and efforts in joining us today.

Dawn had mentioned to me last week that she was concerned that we might not have a great deal of time today as our meeting was set for 12:00 instead of the usual 11:30. I told her I would try to keep my message short, but for those of you who know me, that may not be an easy task. I have a lot I would like to say which I feel is important, so please bear with me.

As a community, of late more than ever, we find that there is much to be proud of. Many good things are happening here in Fort Frances, not simply due to good luck, but hard work and good planning - I speak of the Just Imagine Campaign and the CT Scanner, the Tourism Heritage Project with Phase One completion of the Museum renovation, recent provincial funding towards the Fort Frances Public Library's Build for the Future Campaign, and of course the recent announcement at Abitibi to which John Harrison will speak.

As I said, some luck, but for the most part, hard work and good planning ~ which leads me to the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce. We are the Voice of Business in Fort Frances and have been since 1909. Once again, some luck, but lots of hard work and good planning by a volunteer Board made up of elected directors, and appointees, and staffed by a dedicated Chamber manager, Dawn Booth and assisted by Community Development Officer, Kerri Dittaro. As a working board, there are various sub committees on which each director is expected to serve on at least three of the committees. Membership on these committees is also open to the general membership and not restricted to directors. Most of these committees meet at least once a month, or more often as needed, while the board as a whole meets twice a month.

Let me give you an idea of what it is your Chamber does for you...

Executive, Finance and Personnel – made up of 5 directors, responsible for the preparation of the annual budget approved by the board of directors, as well as keeping the board on track with its goals and objectives as a Chamber.

Membership Committee – responsible for the retention and recruitment of new members.

Home and Leisure Show – responsible for the huge task of creatively and continually bringing new and fresh ideas to planning and organizing of the annual show, happening this weekend at the Memorial Arena.

Business Awards – planning the annual banquet – once again happening in early November, providing the community a chance to salute those in business deserving of our praise for a job well done.

Events, Projects and Marketing – responsible for the planning and implementation of special events, projects and marketing promotions. Included have been 2 very successful Business After Hours held at Plaza Lanes Bowling Alley, and La Flambee, with the next being held at La Place Rendez Vous, May 23rd, hopefully warm enough by then for most to network on the deck, planning for the upcoming Quest for the Best, annually held in conjunction with the Fort Frances Bass Tournament. The committee facilitated, along with community partners, a Workplace Mental Health Workshop. The committee is also responsible for marketing promotions including those directed towards our neighbours to the South, along with advertising in various tourist publications. Projects have included the successful Coin campaign, the Historical Tapestry, and more recently our historical perpetual calendar. I must acknowledge the support of the many sponsors of these events held, for without the various sponsorships, we would not be able to make many of these events happen.

Beautification Flower Project – responsible for the Flower project sponsored by many businesses and individuals, with the Town of Fort Frances as a key partner – many have complimented the many hanging baskets and planters, beautifying our community. Project Petunia is set to launch once again May 11th.

Customer Service – in partnership with Confederation College, the Rainy River Future Development Corporation (RRFDC), and the Business Improvement Association (BIA), the committee has organized and aided in the promotion of the Service Excellence Customer service training Program, of which a number of sessions have been held with more to take place in the very near future.

Business Retention & Expansion (fondly known as the B, R, & E project) – the original project was implemented in 2001 with the goal of identifying concerns, barriers and challenges facing business owners in maintaining and or growing their businesses, and by doing so, attempt to address those issues ~ and promote success for local businesses. In March, after several meetings with community partners, the 2007 BR&E was launched, by Community Development Officer, Kerri Dittaro.

Government Relations Committee – responsible for lobbying government at various levels, on issues of regional concerns and issues important to the Business Community. This committee also prepares resolutions to be submitted to the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber of Commerce (also known as NOACC). Recent resolutions brought forth have dealt with the International bridge and Passport issues. Issues are brought to the provincial association, OCC Ontario Chamber of Commerce who then actively lobby the provincial government. Recent victories by the OCC have included a reduction in the Business Education Tax, announced in the latest provincial budget, resulting in an approximate 30% reduction – provincial estimated at \$500 million and 14 million in Thunder Bay. As a NOACC member, our Chamber and its membership are represented on the Northwestern Ontario Forest Council. NOACC recently met in Red Rock, with 3 delegates from our local Chamber actively participating in policy making decisions as well as attending presentations made by politicians and others. The Fall meeting will be held here in Fort Frances the end of September and yet another committee has been formed to plan the event. This committee also organizes All Candidates debates as required for

elections at all three levels of government, and to that end will be busy again this fall as a Provincial election looms on the horizon.

And we cannot forget the Chambers involvement in the 2nd Community Summit held in March as one of the many community partners. Once the report is released, the Chamber will make it available for the membership.

The Chamber also has representation on the BIA, NOACC, MOM's Way, Fort Frances Museum Heritage Plan Steering Committee and the Town of Fort Frances Economic Development Committee, as well as the Downtown Core Committee.

So as I said, we have much to be proud of here in Fort Frances, and that includes the Fort Frances Chamber, the Voice of Business, the work that has been done and continues to be done – our successes due to a bit of luck, hard work and careful planning – and the dedication of volunteers and our wonderful staff without whom we would be unable to function.

Thank you once again for coming out today, and always feel free to contact Dawn Booth, or any director, with ideas or concerns.”

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 28, 2006 General Membership Meeting were presented for review.

- **Emes - Rogozinski to accept the minutes from the November 28, 2006 General Membership meeting as presented. CARRIED.**

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Janet Plumridge presented the year-to-date balance sheet and income statement ending March 31, 2007. It was pointed out that we are currently in the process of conducting a review engagement for the 2006 year-end, noting that we ended the year with a \$7,500 surplus. 2007 saw a balanced budget presented and the Chamber will work hard to meet that. It was further noted that due to the fact that the Chamber currently has two full-time staff persons, which is not typical, and that one is funded through NOHFC on a reimbursement basis, the majority of our accounts receivable is a result of that.

- **Gushulak - MacDonell to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. CARRIED.**

2006 Retiring Directors Presentation

President Christine Denby presented both Alan Tibbetts and Gus MacDonell with retiring Director's plaques for their service to the Board. Gary Rogozinski was also presented with a President's Plaque for his term as President from 2005 - 2006.

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

Chamber Manager, Dawn Booth gave the following speech:

“I have the honour today of presenting some very special awards to several Directors who have dedicated many hours of work to the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce. Each have different skills and abilities that have helped the Chamber grow and prosperous over the years.

They are all being awarded with an Ontario Volunteer Service Award. The Ontario Volunteer Service Awards are a way to thank volunteers for their continuous years of commitment and dedicated service to a particular group. Unfortunately the awards ceremony is taking place in Atikokan on May 8 so I thought it would be a nice touch if we could do something special here today.

We have four people who will be receiving an Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 5 years of continuous service to the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce. I'm going to ask each of these people to come forward when I call their name, I have a little gift for them, on behalf of the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce.

*Christine Denby
Jane Gillon
Gary Rogozinski
Alan Tibbetts*

We also have two individuals who have each dedicated over a decade of service to the Chamber. We sincerely thank them for their time.

Tannis Drysdale - Tannis was actually presented with her special 10 year clock back in 2005 when she reached her ten years, so isn't receiving a special gift today, sorry Tannis, but thanks for all of your hard work for the Chamber.

Kelly Spicer - and unfortunately Kelly is not here today but I will ensure she receives her clock.

Thank you to these volunteers and to all the volunteers that help to make Fort Frances a better place to live, work, and play.”

Guest Speaker

Christine introduced John Harrison, General Manager of Abitibi-Consolidated Company of Canada as our special guest speaker.

Speech highlights:

- spoke to us a few years back, story not so positive at that time
- forest industry crisis
- energy costs major factor on profitability
- Bio-Mass Boiler Announcement
- \$84.3 million bio-mass boiler construction
- Increased job stability for mill employees
- 650 jobs at the mill
- 350 woodland jobs
- 125 temporary jobs created by bio-mass boiler construction
- bio-mass boiler to use tree limbs and other materials not harvested from the forestry operation
- entirely new business to be created
- 20 - 30 truckloads per day of bio-mass fuel
- possibly an additional 100 jobs from that

Question & Answer Period

John Harrison fielded several audience questions.

Adjournment