

Mayor McMyynn opened the special meeting of Council at 8:32 hours on April 26, 2017 in the Council Chambers at 661 Eighth Ave., Midway BC

Present: Mayor McMyynn
Councillors Schierbeck, Metcalf, Dunsdon

Staff: Penny Feist, CAO
Jenny Simmonds, Receptionist

Delegation: Ron Trepanier and Laurie Jones, Whalebone Productions

Public: Sandy Elzinga, Community Futures
Kettle River Museum Society Members: Stephanie Boltz, Tannis Killough, Elaine Fromme, Casey Bot, Jim Madder

Press: Kate Saylor and Colby Mullis, Boundary Creek Times

Adoption of Agenda

Moved Councillor Dunsdon, **Seconded** Councillor Schierbeck that the April 26, 2017 special meeting agenda be adopted as circulated. **Carried**

Delegation

Ron Trepanier began his presentation by providing some background information on himself and Whalebone Productions. Their company focuses on community economic development initiatives.

Councillor Metcalf enters at 08:35 hours.

Trepanier continued saying they are familiar with the Boundary area and were involved with the Village of Midway during the Pope and Talbot days. They were involved with the Christina Lake initiative as well. Jones has a historical connection with museums and a background in marketing with Whalebone Productions.

Trepanier handed out the power point presentation (on file).

Trepanier shared their vision for the Bunkhouse project and a market analysis explaining that the two key markets that are growing are cyclists using trails, road cyclists, and mountain bikers, and other outdoor enthusiasts who are looking for a unique overnight experience. He reviewed stats he received from Ciel Sanders regarding the number of trail users as well as highway traffic. Trepanier outlined the assets that Midway has including the KVR, the Columbia and Western Rail Trail, and the Village trail network. He has spoken with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOT) and Destination BC. They are supportive of the project and have a specific focus on the same market group. Jones noted that TOT would be developing this portion of the KVRT. TOT sees the Bunkhouse filling a gap and are excited to be able to tell there is a place to stay on this section of the trail.

Cycling tours are already coming through the area and the hostel will be another option to offer people. Tourism, especially cycle tourism, is on the rise and there is a need for infrastructure in the area. Mountain biking is a growing trend; they are looking for new experiences, are the hostel crowd, and spend a lot of money on bikes.

Hostels offer a unique overnight experience. People seek them out. These people are social, enjoy meeting new people, and want to save money on accommodations. Key trends in the hostel industry are a move towards more privacy (determines how you set up your hostel). There has been a step up in service, as people don't want the bare minimum. Digital dominates.

Competitive landscape that won't affect the motel or hotel/bar as hostel seekers don't usually stay in motels/hotels. This is a unique attraction for the Boundary as there are no other hostels in the area and will serve as a tourism draw that will benefit the local economy.

Jones reviewed the comparative hostels they visited including The Shuswap Lake Hostel in Chase, The Riding Fool Hostel in Cumberland, The Dancing Bear Inn in Nelson, and the HI-

Penticton Hostel. They zeroed in on hostels that are affiliated with Hosteling International Canada. HI Canada is a not-for-profit organization that sets out specific criteria allowing people to be comfortable with the hostel they choose. They set out a standard of service that must be followed. HI Canada likes unique buildings. Trepanier suggests that the focus should be on a higher-end hostel and not a party hostel.

Mayor McMynn opened the floor to Council for questions.

Councillor Dunsdon asked the cost per night? Approximately \$30/night for a single bed, a family rate would also be available.

Mayor McMynn asked when it would be open? Seasonal for the summer (May to September).

Mayor McMynn asked if the other accommodations would be included with TOTA? Trepanier explained they only focused on the hostel but the Village can look into it and figure out how it could work. TOTA wants to market the area as a whole and Destination BC would like to work with Midway to promote the area.

Mayor McMynn asked if they had revenue numbers from the other hostels. No, they didn't share actual numbers but all are stable businesses. He noted that there is not a lot of initial investment to get it operational, marketable, and established. Estimates that it will be established in year three.

Trepanier noted that there is room for expansion both with respect to other buildings and the operation season. This is the opportunity to start and overtime you can reconfigure and expand to meet people's needs. The focus should be on the Wow factor and attention to the little details to make it a memorable experience.

Trepanier recommends becoming affiliated with Hosteling International and notes that online booking will be critical. Also critical that the manager lives on-site, which is perfect for a summer student.

Marketing is key to the success and can start immediately. Need to figure out what kind of experience you want people to have and collaborate with key players. TOTA is committed to supporting the marketing initiative for two years but it needs to be market-ready.

Initial start-up costs: \$16,300.00 (grant funding available). Furnishings need to be nice but not new. Operation budget on file.

Question Period

Stephanie Boltz noted that she has been working with TOTA and Destination BC and they have money for the area but we need to take advantage of it.

Councillor Schierbeck leaves at 10:00 hours.

Sandy Elzinga provided an overview of the marketing materials already being produced in the area.

Councillor Schierbeck returns at 10:02 hours.

Elzinga continued that there are resources to move forward and that Community Futures assisted with the BC Rural Dividend grant with the intent of applying for stage two funding.

Kate Saylor and Colby Mullis leave at 10:06 hours.

Tannis Killough stated she is in support of the project but has concerns with the condition of the rail trail in the area. She feels more money needs to be invested. Trepanier noted they would need to work with collaborators on what needs to happen to the trail system.

Jenny Simmonds noted that the Village of Midway is currently in the process of developing a brand strategy that if approved will tie in nicely with promoting the KVR Trail and the hostel project.

Jones stated that the focus is on cyclists because that group is a captive audience.

Mayor McMynn asked if the museum society has reviewed the business plan yet and who would be the lead on the project. Stephanie Boltz would like it to run through the museum building as it is already a part of the museum operations.

Trepanier provided a copy of the business plan to CAO Feist and Jim Madder of the Kettle River Museum Society. An electronic copy will also be available shortly. He noted that the museum will handle the overall management and there will be minimal cost to the Village of Midway.

Mayor McMynn noted that the museum society would have to present to council once they review the plan. He thanked Trepanier and Jones for coming.

Moved Councillor Dunsdon that meeting be adjourned at 10:20 hours.

MAYOR

CAO