

**Northern Municipal Roundtable
June 4th, 2010 Regina**

Mayor Woods started the meeting with a prayer.

Van Isman provided opening comments and a brief update on several issues from the January 19th roundtable.

- Met with S/E and FNMA to discuss the northern fishery issue. Will look at committee's that already exists within S/E and see how New North can have representation
- Government does and will continue to invite federal representatives to meetings on applicable and relevant issues

Minister Harrison provided opening remarks and spoke on several issues from the Jan 19th roundtable.

- the Ministry has opened dialogue with the federal government regarding policing in the North. No specific details mentioned
- responded to the Cumberland House and Ile a la Crosse issues by referring them to the Northern Highways Steering Committee. The committee revised the plan and these 2 projects are now included in the priority listing.
- the Wollaston lake road is still in talks with the federal government for funding participation
- discussed the excess Sask Housing units in Sled Lake. The excess units will be sold and the revenue used towards housing in other northern communities
- a letter was sent to Mayor Woods concerning the issue of non payment of tax on Sask Housing units. Once title has passed to individuals the issue becomes the home owners. In early years, it is probable, that insufficient training and follow-up was done.

Response of New North

Mayor Woods stated the need to maintain respectful meetings, thanked the Ministers for their attendance and participation and stressed a positive attitude and relationship building for the future

Mayor Fidler mentioned the need for more specific communication to issues

Mayor Favel stressed the uniqueness of the North and its many challenges. The North has been recognized as unique through the NAD and the NMA and policy and program decisions must take this into account

Mayor Woods voiced his support of Mayor Favel's comments and indicated both sides want results orientated discussions and approaches. The North has to be included in policy decisions to take ownership of these issues.

Mayor Favel emphasised the frustration that is felt by the northern mayors as the perception held is they have little ability to influence decisions. Often, responses from government are not adequate in dealing with the concerns brought forward

Minister Hutchinson stated they acknowledged and respected these comments, however, would like to point out recent successes implemented in the north to deal with issues

- the 3 Enterprise regions structured in a manner requested by northerner
- funding for 3 communities to help look at programming to combat the suicide rate
- the Northern Action Plan to deal with the social issue from a made in the North plan
- the northern fisheries plant
- the Northern Road Strategy committee

Mayor Stomp commented the north represented a land mass equal to ½ of Saskatchewan yet only about 4 percent of the population. This vastness and isolation created huge challenges and solutions for the south do not work very well in the north. This is especially seen in areas such as northern housing where low income programs still remain unaffordable in the north. Expressed hope for the enterprise regions success but voiced scepticism due to vastness and the lack of resources. Economic development and jobs are the main source of our problems in the north. Often northerners feel like forgotten people with government programs and responses.

The round table “memorandum of understanding” was signed.

Mayors Woods, Fidler and Favel commented that it is essential for all groups to work together. Indicated the frustration felt that issues, over the years, had not been dealt with appropriately.

Minister Harrison and Hutchinson commented that we should look at moving the timing of this roundtable during session so more Ministers would be around.

Northern Action Plan (Minster Hutchinson/Toby Grechner)

An overview of the Northern Action Plan was provided. Statistics concerning suicides, education and health were given to support the reason for the initiative. The intent is for all the north to come together to discuss these common concerns and to hopefully agree to work together to develop a workable framework to address these common social concerns. It is the opportunity for everyone to work towards developing northern programs to address them and identify existing resources and new resources necessary.

Northwest Partnership (Minister Hutchinson)

The Agreement between Sask, Alberta and BC was signed and becomes effective July 1, 2010. The agreement should open doors to cooperation and opportunities in international trade. Also reduces barriers between provinces in movement of people, services, goods construction and manufacturing. Certain areas have been excluded from the agreement including First Nations, water and sewer, energy and resources to name a few.

Duty to Consult Policy (Minister Hutchinson)

The policy was developed through lengthy (2 years) negotiations with First Nations and Metis. The duty to consult policy is necessary due to the Supreme Court’s decisions and direction. It will be a work in progress and will change and grow over time. Duty to consult means just that. It is a duty to consult but does not include the absolute duty to accommodate or compensate nor does it provide any veto ability.

The definition is that there is a duty to consult whenever actions are contemplated that may potentially infringe upon Aboriginal or Treaty rights. Aboriginal Rights is further

defined as rights relating to the customs, practices and traditions that formed the integral part of the distinctive cultures of Aboriginal societies as existed at first contact with Europeans and which still play a significance role today.

Northern Municipalities Act (Randy Braaten)

The new NMA will come into force Jan 1, 2011. Northern Municipal Affairs will organize workshops in fall to address the major points of change. The workshops will probably be held in Buffalo, Beauval, La Ronge, Creighton and Stony Rapids.

A short oversight may also be provided at the administrators conference in October.

Planning for Growth (Karen Bolton)

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is committed that the planning for growth program is a success in the North. The program is committed to developing an OCP (official community plan) for all interested communities in the North. Northern Municipal Services plans to hire 2 planning students to conduct the field work with support from the planning division in Saskatoon and the La Ronge office. Communities will have to make application and will be required to provide a small funding contribution to the plan. The Ministry has assured the application process will be simple. The Ministry will work with New North throughout the development and implementation of the program. Details will be worked out over the summer.

Municipal Infrastructure Program (Minister Harrison)

The province is establishing a committee to develop a long term infrastructure plan. Saskatchewan is the only province currently developing this initiative and it should put us in a very good position to prepare for the future and negotiate for funding from the federal government. As a province we do not want to look back and see we are in the same infrastructure deficit position in 50 years.

Needs (upgrades and gaps) have to be prioritized on an individual and regional basis and funding alternatives identified.

New North will have representation on this committee.

The meeting agenda was completed and closing remarks were made by the Ministers and the Mayors again stressing the need to come together to discuss issues with a solution and outcome based attitude.

Side comments from attendees:

Municipal Affairs including Minister Harrison – the structure of the round table must be looked at to be more effective. Both sides have a degree of frustration with the current format.

Housing – Premier Wall's mandate to the Ministry is to provide more social housing. Sask Housing agrees to meet with New North to discuss the challenges and the barriers that exist in current programs. Suggested the northern housing committee be brought back

