

Council Public Forum

November 1, 2011

The following are notes taken during the event. As much as possible the comments made at the forum have been recorded herein. It is important to note the comments are those of the individual, and by posting these notes the Town is not committing to the comments being factual.

Sixteen people present when it started. Three spouses of Council members. Three media. Twenty by 7:06 pm. Twenty four in total. Three Stanley residents.

Ken Wiebe opened the forum by introducing Council and giving a presentation.

Resident 1 - commended Council on getting minutes etc. out more. More information requested on discussion, Steinbach and Winkler video on line. Suggested getting agenda on the internet before Monday. More information on topics on agenda would be appreciated.

Resident 2 - Does Council have a plan for downtown Morden given the Arlington?

Ken Wiebe - Owners of older buildings must take responsibility. Costs were too great for Arlington. The Town owned heritage building has seen significant dollars spent. Province has spent significant dollars on Land Titles. Others spend dollars on theirs. Town doesn't have a plan, though we have talked about this.

Hank Hildebrand - One challenge we have, is how do we tell people they have to do work on their property?

Resident 2 - Are we looking at theming the downtown based on the study from earlier?

Ken Wiebe - Reality is, major stores aren't coming downtown. Businesses have to come on side to help make downtown a viable place.

Brian Minaker outlined the Milner House article in the Free Press.

Resident 3 - commented the Town is doing what it can do to help with old buildings. concerned what we are doing to look for future development. Developers have their hands full and have to put all their money up front. Doesn't think developers should have to put lift stations in, the Town should. There are 3 families at a time in our transition house which isn't good. We need a place to put them. Has heard our lagoon doesn't have capacity.

Ken Wiebe - The Kazakhstan families all came at once, but we've found places for them. More apartments are in the works.

Irvin Wiebe - Affordable housing funding window of opportunity in place and we're working on getting in on that. We're the catalyst.

Resident 3 - When can we see changes happening on sewer etc.

Hank Hildebrand - We aren't standing in developer's way.

Resident 3 - There are 30 to 40 lots for sure that are sitting because they need a lift station. We're not prepared to handle 100 lots again.

Resident 4 - commented the Town was very cooperative on making the lift station work for him.

RM 1 - confused that the developers suddenly have to put in all infrastructure like street, water and sewer lines.

Resident 4 - Addition of street costs is only new addition to developers, which is alright because now the LID no longer there.

Resident 1 - stated Alvey lift station payed by Town.

Resident 1 - Snowplowing, what's happening?

Irvin Wiebe - advised approval of driveway clearing for when there is significant snowfall. Putting together wordage for better understanding of what's a significant snowfall. Won't be cleaning driveways after every snow. When we do it will take an extra day or 1.5 days.

Doug Frost - Snow may not even be cleared from all driveways each time.

Resident 5 - living on Victoria. Asking if Town has a plan on location of Tabor Home?

Irvin Wiebe - We (Tabor) are buying and we (Tabor) have location. Single storey. Quite a bit of greenspace around it between it and neighbours. Well landscaped.

RM 2 - Is info on it available?

Irvin Wiebe - Will be soon. Taber has design there if you are interested. Outlined process.

Resident 5 - Is it able to be expanded?

Ken Wiebe - To some extent.

Irvin Wiebe - advised RHA is looking at buying between Tabor and Assisted Living for supportive housing. There will be tie ins to First Street and a pathway.

Maurice Butler - Town owns lot further north on 1st street which will be an access.

Resident 2 - Who's coming up with community's 10%?

Ken Wiebe - advised committee moving forward on this.

Irvin Wiebe - Lobbying to province on how much of the funding is really needed. For example funding to MRI should be recognized.

Resident 6 - 1.5 years ago a major fire in Morden. Apartments fully occupied now. Dynamics different now with lots of children. New Canadians. Playing on a small area by the street. Park space? Some people suggest N Railway St maybe should be a slower speed.

Ken Wiebe - Sees apartment use is transitional for these families. Short term but certainly an issue.

Maurice Butler - Province requires 50 km per hour

Resident 7 - prefers to pay taxes to RM. RM meetings open, Town isn't. Council meetings predetermined because meetings only 18 minutes. Doesn't like Committee of the Whole system. Community has perception of really closed shop.

Ken Wiebe - Committee of the Whole meeting is open to the public.

Heather Francis - Understands perception. We're trying to change it, and this is one way tonight that we're trying to change it. Could look at evening sessions. If there are better times.

Resident 2 - Why bother having a council meeting if all is decided?

Ken Wiebe - Time lapse between meetings allows public to see what is happening which gives public time to read and respond before the Council decision is made.

Resident 7 - Never been to Committee of the Whole, but at Council, never hear what members have to say. RM hear debate and Town we don't. Discussion at Committee of the Whole doesn't help community.

Ken Wiebe - All of Council are there. Meetings are open and anyone can attend.

Irvin Wiebe - We have changed structure from when we had 3 committees. Under that format it would end up that topics were being regurgitated again at special Committee of the Whole meeting and/or at Council which wastes member's time.

Doug Frost - Are we failing on getting the information out? It sounds like we are.

Resident 1 - In Thompson the gallery gets to have interaction. Suggests we do too. Make a few comments on things at Council.

Resident 2 - A number of years ago a lot of money spent on a pa system.

Maurcie Butler - Hockey games took preference to Council.

Resident 8 - spoke with Bob from local access tv who said Council meetings became boring with current process. Can media attend Committee of the Whole?

Ken Wiebe - Peter Cantelon does.

Resident 6 - Committee of the Whole is intimate and the process works. Council needs to make decisions. Winkler and Stanley don't do it better just different.

Irvin Wiebe - We don't have good facilities for our meetings. Sitting at a table is a better format for members to discuss but it isn't friendly to a gallery.

Resident 1 - Is there still a Transportation Committee between Morden and Winkler?

Doug Frost - public transit is Winkler driven though we are still working on it.

Resident 1 - Sees public transit as a benefit even if not 50/50.

Doug Frost - Will be a cost. Funding available but rubber has to hit road by May.

Brian Minaker - Cost to taxpayer too. It's a marathon to bring it in to being. Employers being canvassed on interest and input.

Resident 5 - doesn't like the sound of public transit because he thinks it will kill taxi. Doesn't like taxpayers dollars going to this. Sees it as a white elephant. Suggests businesses should work something out with existing. If it can't pay for itself don't do it. Of course Winkler on side because small dollars to get people to its box stores.

RM 1 - A lot of Winkler come here for amenities.

Doug Frost - Selkirk first year about \$190,000 deficit.

Resident 6 - A lot of people could use the bus. Governments do what private business doesn't do.

Brian Minaker - Sees dollar amount eventually coming to Council for consideration.

Resident 9 - Economic development, aware Morden decided to go on its own rather than join Winkler and Stanley.

Ken Wiebe - We hired Economic Dev for years. Sees our goals as different than them. We meet with them to discuss joint issues. For example 2014 winter games. Tax sharing and where it goes, needs to be worked out first. We see development differently.

Resident 9 - Doesn't that give rise to frustration when we're going to the province? Want to encourage collaboration.

Ken Wiebe - Cooperation would help, but some areas we can't do it in. Sewage treatment thought of doing it together. Put on back burner because of issues such as storage over winter. We're now aware there may be funding available to overcome this. Other things being worked on too.

Irvin Wiebe - Lots of things we do together and part of reason it works is Stanley is becoming more urban. Reality is, members think of their municipality first. We weren't prepared to give up our EDO to Winkler and doubt they were prepared to have the regional EDO in Morden. Swimming pool has to be a regional approach.

Resident 8 - Suggesting annexation even an issue. MSTW has had lots of resignations and turfing. What can you tell us.

Hank Hildebrand - Advised there are changes in staffing.

Irvin Wiebe - We (MSTW) have eliminated one position. Annexation doesn't make friends with your neighbours. There isn't animosity, there isn't any. Annexation does bring win/lose situation so we're working on a tax transition.

Resident 7 – the area proposed seems large from what I've seen

Irvin Wiebe - Last time we didn't take enough. We should be looking out at least 20 years. It has to be reasonable.

Resident 1 - Attended session with Randall Arendt in Altona. What can we hear about this.

Hank Hildebrand - MSTW invited him here and invited developers to join us. There are great ideas which we are looking at implementing over time. More greenspace may not be popular with developers.

Irvin Wiebe -We have to be more proactive in planning. We need to have input early on where greenspace is going to be in developments so it fits in to our plan.

Resident 9 - Is Town planning to hire consultant to help with the planning process? Use marginal lands rather than prime agriculture. Use the escarpment.

Ken Wiebe - Have already for Pembina Connection for example. Also talking about entire community.

Resident 10 - Planning and development. sees lack of sidewalks in new development. More walking paths are needed too. Developer should be required to.

Irvin Wiebe – Sidewalks are put in after the houses are developed, we've put in over \$120,000 this year.

Heather Francis - Agree we need to do more. Clare Agnew working on a better plan to have in place.

Resident 11 - Why sidewalks only on one side?

Ken Wiebe - Cost.

RM 1 - Cobblestone downtown not friendly to seniors.

Heather Francis - Age friendly committee has group from province working on ideas.

Resident 6 - This building project. Are Town's interests growing larger?

Maurice Butler - Are seeing the big picture, we're doing a pathway plan. Sidewalks torn up in places where on both sides and wider one on just one side. Have a handle on the big picture but everything takes money.

Resident 6 - What's it like after first year?

Doug Frost - Interesting because everyone wants something but don't want to pay.

Irvin Wiebe - We have lots of vision but not lots of money. We have very few discretionary dollars in the end. That's the cold bath for any new Council member.

Resident 8 - Do you have any reserves? How much is that and have you dipped in to it? Contingency plan for rainy day?

Ken Wiebe - For specifics yes, but not a lot for contingencies.

Doug Frost - If we're going to dip in to the kitty it's not going to be for an individual.

Maurice Butler - Advised tax dollars for average house is [\$180 for a half million].

Hank Hildebrand - read out reserve listing and dollars in them.

Resident 7 - Tourist booth traffic on street in front is like trains as it is heavy trucks. Is that provincial responsibility?

Ken Wiebe - Yes.

Resident 12 - Uniqueness of Morden is events it attracts. Work Council has been doing like Tabor will also drive business to Town. Have to look to our unique features we have. What's Council's vision of CFDC as a catalyst. Is Council accelerating this?

Heather Francis - Have a dream for a stand alone facility that brings tourism. Project takes time, commitment and money. Business plan being developed right now. final report expected by the end of the year. CFDC is unique. Attention given to it from around the world.

Ken Wiebe - Town gives it \$127,000 a year.

Doug Frost - A lot of residents don't think we should put money to CFDC.

Ken Wiebe - Homestead South on schedule. Pembina Connection third store under construction. Three incubator mall businesses are now going on their own within one year of going in the incubator mall. Chamber display was good this weekend.

Thanks for attending.