

ALASKA HIGHWAY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES

Date: April 5, 2005

Time: 9:00 a.m. (Alaska)
10:00 a.m. (Yukon and British Columbia)

Participants:

City of Dawson Creek	Mayor Wayne Dahlen, Interim Chair Councilor Bud Powell
District of Taylor	Mayor Fred Jarvis
City of Fort St. John	John Locher, Administrator
Town of Fort Nelson	Linda Wallace, Director Regional Development Services
Town of Watson Lake	Councillor Dianna Raketti
Marsh Lake Local Advisory Council	Council Member Mike Larsen
City of Whitehorse	Regrets
Village of Haines Junction	Mayor John Farynowski
Village of Teslin	Mayor Clara Jules
Teslin Tlingit Council	Regrets
City of Delta Junction	Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith Dowling
City of North Pole	Regrets
City of Fairbanks	Regrets

Coordinating Body: Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association
April Moi, Executive Director
Erma Stanonik, Special Projects Coordinator
Sennen Charleson, First Nation Advisor
Lisa Hildebrandt, Assistant Project Coordinator

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** 10:10 a.m.
- 2. ADDITIONAL ITEMS** None
- 3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

MOTION to adopt minutes of January 11, 2005 conference call

1st – Mayor Clara Jules, Village of Teslin

2nd – Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith Dowling, City of Delta Junction

Discussion: None Carried.

4. OLD BUSINESS

Revised Vision Document

April Moi reviewed that the community signatories approved the Revised Vision Document and the proposed stages in-principle during the last conference call on January 11, 2005. It was also approved that the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association is the interim coordinating body for the initiative. The Revised Vision Document was distributed to interested partners and senior levels of

government. April added that this is a working document which is open to recommendations and changes as the initiative progresses and more partners become involved.

Discussion:

Mary Leith Dowling requested that the funding structure reflect the population base of each community within the revised vision document.

April Moi stated that the funding structure will be reorganized so that each community is aligned with their respective population base.

Phase I Funding Update

April announced the contribution of \$30,000 from the BC Ministry of Small Business & Economic Development and Western Economic Diversification Canada through the joint Western Economic Partnership Agreement towards Phase I of the Alaska Highway Community Initiative. In order to show support from partners, seed funding from BC communities and BC Hydro was used. Considering this is BC based funding, the associated activities are to be located in BC. The timeline for Phase I is from April 1 – May 31, 2005.

The main focus for Phase I of the Alaska Highway Community Initiative is to develop an Aboriginal Tourism Framework that will outline ways in which all players can work cooperatively towards a common goal. The Framework will begin the process of identifying aboriginal needs and how they fit into the Alaska Highway Community Initiative. Phase I will also consist of developing a Participation Strategy and Communication Strategy, researching the Scenic Byways Program and building partnerships with all parties involved. This project will be carried out by contracted positions including a First Nation Advisor, Scenic Byways Advisor and Project Coordinator in cooperation with the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association.

April Moi commented that the Association is delighted to welcome Sennen Charleson, First Nation Advisor to the Alaska Highway Community Initiative – Phase I for British Columbia. The Association is excited about the developing relationship with Treaty 8 First Nations and Aboriginal groups in Northeastern BC.

First Nation Advisor

Sennen Charleson presented himself as the new First Nation Advisor for the initiative. He explained that he comes from Treaty 8 where he was the Cultural Heritage Planner for the past two months. His position at Treaty 8 was to review the paradigm of land use as it pertains to First Nation values. Sennen reinforced that First Nations are in a government to government relationship with BC and Canada and that the majority of cultural resources are owned by First Nation families who define themselves within the landscape. Sennen will develop an Aboriginal Tourism Framework that will involve First Nation themes identified by the respective families. The Alaska Highway Community Initiative and the Aboriginal Tourism Framework will be presented to the families and Chiefs for their review. At present, the Chiefs welcome the initiative.

Scenic Byways Advisor

April Moi explained that two consultants have submitted a proposal that will assist the team to streamline, coordinate, and provide best practice concepts that are applicable to the initiative according to the Scenic Byways model for the long-range goal of potential future international designation. The Association is communicating with Donna Larsen from Marsh Lake to identify the best candidate or a combination of the two.

April also mentioned that there is continued research to identify a champion to apply for State Scenic Byway designation in Alaska. The following individuals have provided comments and assistance: Carl Ekstrom, Bronk Jorgensen, Mary Leith Dowling, and Kim Enders.

Discussion

Mary Leith Dowling – City of Delta Junction is supportive of the Scenic Byway program and was pleased when the Richardson Highway was designated as a scenic byway. It is important to find the right group/individual to pursue the scenic byway application for the Alaska Highway. Brenda Peterson, Delta Chamber of Commerce is supportive of the concept; however she is too busy to take the lead.

April Moi – Haines, Alaska is designated as a State Scenic Byway and is in the process of organizing a corridor management plan. The Haines Convention and Visitors Bureau is also interested in pursuing International Scenic Byway designation for the Haines Highway which runs through Alaska, BC and Yukon.

John Farynowski – Members from Haines Convention and Visitors Bureau will be present at the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon Spring Conference. Steps can be taken at that point to coordinate efforts.

Application of Funds for Phase I Communication

April Moi presented the various ways in which the Association will communicate regarding the initiative as part of the recent funding announcement for Phase I:

- Communication Strategy will be developed
- Resource Material will be prepared
 1. Logo has been identified, approved and implemented
 2. Letterhead has been printed (1500 copies)
 3. Information Packages have been prepared for meetings
 4. Informational Insert in the 2005 Hello North Travel Guide (distribution 40,000)
 5. Fact Sheet is being developed for the Alaska/Canada Rail Corridor Conference (April 7-8, 2005)
 6. Banner is being developed for the Alaska/Canada Rail Corridor Conference (April 7-8, 2005)
- Alaska Canada Rail Conference – Alaska Highway Community Initiative will be a bronze sponsor at the conference. Sponsorship includes 4 registrations, display space, registration packages, website, and recognition during the luncheon during which Minister Les is the keynote speaker.
- Website Update

Discussion

Mary Leith Dowling – US government is studying the Alaska Canada Rail link. There has been 100 kilometers of rail link added to Delta Junction.

Participants of the Alaska Canada Rail Corridor Conference in Prince George include: Fort St. John, Taylor, Peace River Regional District, Fort Nelson, and Watson Lake.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE** None

6. REPORTS

Interim Chair – Mayor Wayne Dahlen, City of Dawson Creek

The City of Dawson Creek is committed to tourism and to the Alaska Highway; over \$400,000 of the City's budget is allocated to tourism. Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association (NRAHTA) is contracted to administer tourism services for Tourism Dawson Creek. The City is pleased with the results and with the working relationship.

The Canadian Tourism Commission has announced that they will be moving from Ottawa to Vancouver. This is a great opportunity to present a strong lobby to bring forward concerns regarding the federal section of the Alaska Highway. Other tourism influences may be the gas prices that are predicted to rise to \$1.00 - \$1.25 per liter.

The NRAHTA Team is very committed to the Alaska Highway Community Initiative and is keeping the momentum. The Alaska Highway House is well underway – it will be positioned as the gateway to the Alaska Highway with the objective to promote the highway for the benefit of all along the route.

Councilor Bud Powell, City of Dawson Creek

The City of Dawson Creek is excited about the developments of the Alaska Highway House. A professional design and planning company has been hired to organize display space and conceptual design. A workshop will be held to receive input from partners along the Alaska Highway. All community signatories are welcome to attend the discussion of Alaska Highway corridor and how it pertains to the Alaska Highway House design concept and future developments. This section of the workshop will be held May 11 from 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Bud Powell extended a warm welcome to Sennen Charleson as the First Nation Advisor. The focus of First Nation participation is good news and an important part of the process. First Nation communities will have the opportunity to tell their story. There are great partnerships for the future with the Teslin Tlingit Council and Village of Teslin. Overall, the preservation of wilderness, cultural and historic values are significant.

Proposed Budget

April Moi presented the proposed budget for the Alaska Highway Community Initiative.

Discussion

John Farynowski – Have all communities been invoiced for the funding requested? Village of Haines Junction passed a motion to support the initiative for three years.

April Moi – The NRAHTA office will confirm if invoices have been sent to communities and will send invoices if they have not been sent. The remaining communities to become members of NRAHTA include: Whitehorse, North Pole and Fairbanks. April explained that funds would not be spent unless in bank account.

Wayne Dahlen – This project takes dollars to implement, gather support and research funding options; all communities are encouraged to participate. Wayne also extended congratulations to April and the NRAHTA Team for a job well done.

Bud Powell – Dawson Creek has committed \$10,000 to the initiative for the Fiscal Year 2005/6.

April Moi – One expense that can not be included in funding applications is wages for the project coordinator employed by NRAHTA. This expense is viewed as administrative costs and not applicable.

Mary Leith Dowling – The City of Delta Junction and the Delta Junction Chamber of Commerce are working towards how they can contribute for the Fiscal Year 2005/6.

MOTION to approve the Alaska Highway Community Initiative proposed budget 2005/06

1st – Mayor John Farynowski, Village of Haines Junction

2nd – Mayor Clara Jules, Village of Teslin

Discussion: None. Carried.

Concluding Discussion

April Moi – In conclusion, April thanked all signatories that have joined NRAHTA as members. Also, she informed the signatories that April Moi, Bud Powell, and Erma Stanonik will be attending the Tourism Association (TIA) of the Yukon Spring Conference in Haines Junction on April 21 – 23. The team will be meeting with elected officials and interested groups including TIA Yukon to discuss the initiative. An invitation is extended to community signatories that would like to join the meetings. In addition, it has been recommended that we work with an organization in the Yukon to administer the Alaska Highway Community Initiative on behalf of the Yukon.

John Farynowski – TIA Yukon has the ear of government, they would be a good organization with which to work. John commented that he would be interested in meeting with other Yukon elected officials.

Clara Jules – Indicated she is also interested in participating in the meeting with Yukon elected officials.

Dianna Raketti – Indicated she will be in Haines Junction representing tourism interests and not as an elected official. She will inquire if anyone is interested in participating.

Linda Wallace – Requested clarification on what Phase II will include.

April Moi – Replied that Phase II is outlined in the Revised Vision Document. The NRAHTA Team will send a copy to Linda for reference.

7. NEXT MEETING

John Farynowski – Suggested that the Interim Chair decide the date of the next meeting.

MOTION to Adjourn

1st – Dianna Raketti, Councilor Town of Watson Lake

2nd – Mayor Clara Jules, Village of Teslin