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November 2020 Newsletter

1. Our 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our President has set December 10, 2020 as the date of our first virtual membership meeting that will serve as our 2020 AGM. At this time of writing, all the current officers are standing for re-election. The results of the election will be reported in our December Newsletter.

2. Our Various Grant Applications

As mentioned in last month's Newsletter, we don't anticipate hearing the results of our several funding applications for some time, but with a sense of optimism we consider no news from the funding agencies to be good news in the meantime.

3. The History of our Project – Up to this Date

When we halted our account in the June 2020 edition, our Society had received substantial financial support from all five of our member Bands together with significant funding from various external sources, all of which had enabled the new Society to conduct a topographic survey, an archaeological impact assessment and a thorough feasibility study that had proposed a very large structure that the Society members felt was unrealistically expensive – both to build and to operate.

The attention of the Society had then turned to a very much smaller and less expensive model that was considered manageable both to build and to operate, and with a combination of Band funding and external grant money, the Society had engaged the outstanding architectural firm of *McFarland Marceau* to prepare a conceptual design. That report was received in December 2013 and, as previously noted, was approved enthusiastically by the Society members and by the 5 member Band Councils.

In several earlier issues of our Newsletter, we have expressed our gratitude to numerous entities that supplemented the funding of our member Bands, and allowed our project to move forward. From 2013 onwards, the major contributions were made by the BC Government's Rural Dividend Fund that enabled our architects to produce a design development report in 2016 and subsequently in 2018, the construction documents that would be required for us to go to tender for the construction.



In the meantime, residual funding from some of the previous projects enabled us to commission an environmental site assessment that was completed in 2014 and that confirmed that the site we had chosen, would meet relevant environmental standards. That same year provided us with a thorough business plan prepared by *Cadence Strategies* which predicted that our facility would require to be subsidized by approximately \$125,000 per year for its first five years of operation and to a slightly lesser extent in subsequent years.

2014 was an extremely active year for our Society, as in addition to the results mentioned above, we concluded an agreement with the *Cariboo Regional District* for a 99-year lease of a 2-acre parcel of land that we had assembled immediately adjacent to the BC Government's rest area at the 108 Mile Lake. The parcel was created by a gift of approximately one acre to the Society by Telus, almost 3/4 of an acre that the Society purchased from the *BC Ministry of Transportation*, and a small area that was donated to the Society by the *108 Greenbelt Commission*. For a number of reasons that included the law that prohibits the Greenbelt Commission from selling any of the land in its care, the Society agreed to cede title to the entire parcel to the CRD in return for the 99-year lease at \$1 per year. An earlier Newsletter covers the colourful signing ceremony that took place on the site at the time.

In the following year we had accumulated sufficient funds to enable us to retain *McFarland Marceau* who submitted their Design Development report in 2016, leading to our first successful application to *BC's Rural Dividend Program* that allowed our architects to move to the production of the construction documents which were finalized in 2018. In that same year we succeeded in a second application to *BC's Rural Dividend Program* which enabled us to retain the renowned exhibit design consulting firm D. Jensen & Associates to start the process of identifying the stories, artifacts and programs that our five member Bands want to see exhibited in our facility when it opens. David Jensen submitted his Road Map report to us in April 2019, leaving us almost fully prepared to proceed with construction of our Centre as soon as we could acquire the funding to do so.

Starting in 2019 and continuing throughout most of 2020, the Society undertook the task of obtaining commitments from our member Bands for the \$125,000 annual subsidy that our 2014 Business Plan predicts will be needed. Happily, we were successful in that endeavour, and those commitments which are an absolute prerequisite to the securing of external funding for the construction, have put us in a position to make a number of applications for that funding. Our recent editions of this Newsletter have provided the details of those applications,



which brings this abbreviated history up to date. We hope that it has been of some interest to our readers.

4. Covid-19

As all our readers know, this Newsletter in previous editions has made reference to the COVID-19 pandemic and has expressed the hope that all of you and your loved ones are remaining safe and well. Your editor has taken the pandemic seriously from the very start and has basically isolated himself from others to the fullest extent possible. He has also written letters to the editors of the 100 Mile Free Press, Williams Lake Tribune and the Vancouver Sun, urging everyone to take the virus seriously and to follow what are really the very simple rules of hand washing, face masking, social distancing and the more challenging requirement to limit social gatherings. And although it seems apparent that more people are following that advice from the medical experts, and it is clear that our member Bands have practiced extreme caution from the outset, we are all in danger from those who still aren't willing to follow the guidelines. In those circumstances, this message is to wish you all continuing safety and good health.



Notes to the Reader

1. If you would prefer not to receive future monthly Newsletters, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.
2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.