

September 23, 2023

DELIVERED BY EMAIL TO:

Members of Council of Grand Forks

RE: Committee of the Whole Presentation - Grand Forks Seniors Society

The Seniors Centre is a success story. Since the flood of 2018, where the centre was ruined, the society has brought the centre back to its rightful place in the community.

Much hard work brought us to this point and the centre's successful re-opening in April of this year was a grateful experience.

Open just shy of 8 months the board have successfully filled the calendar with events for our seniors and brought the membership from a number of 30 during the post-flood years and COVID to a number of 162 and rising. This proves, without a doubt, the need for a senior centre in Grand Forks.

Our leasing is working out well too. With many private events even some that are repetitious during the week, and giving the community another venue to hold their events.

Programs have resumed to full stride and there appears to be little room left on the calendar for programs, but we will always try to accommodate. A estimated number of 174 people pass through the centre for various activities per week.

Seniors are getting out and coming to the centre and enjoying their time with friends.

Other successful programs are the monthly newsletter that is sent to our seniors and available to post at any business if they want on the mail list. This newsletter is a great outlet to help seniors find out what is going on at their centre and how they may participate. Our Health and Wellness Fair for seniors was successful and we are now hosting the Boundary Family Services coffee shops for seniors at the centre.

Another success recently implemented is the recycling program where anyone may take their recyclables in to the recycle shop and donate their recycled bottles and cans to the centre. The money we make from these is donations and will be extremely useful in day to day operations of the centre.

We are also pleased with our collaboration with the City on the security of the building which has proven itself successful in at least one instance. Thank you for allowing us to work with you on this.

Recently, we had a membership meeting and had the representative of the Seniors Citizens Association of BC attend and speak on why we would remain with them. We then voted on whether to remain with them. The vote was for leaving the association and with this separation from the SCABC we are able to “rebrand” the centre to a more current model. Making the centre more of a community centre where activities can be run and all members of our community attend.

We hope to work with Council on this in the future and thank you for your continued support.

The successes of the centre are truly remarkable for such a short time period; however, there are many things still to be done.

We are asking Council for permission to go ahead with some upgrades to the centre.

1) Change the Lighting to Dimmer Switches

After leasing for these few short months we have determined that we would require a different lighting system in the hall. We therefore ask permission of Council if we may proceed with the work of hiring a professional to complete this work in the centre.

We also need some more lighting in the parking lot along the building to assist senior to their vehicles in the evening.

2) Beautification of Outside of Building

We have a beautification committee that will be in charge of the outside of the building to make it more attractive and friendly. This would include a mural done by Paul Archer. Mr. Archer has attended the building and is excited to start this project, if permission is granted. We want a mural to represent the modern senior of this time and would work with Mr. Archer and Council to get the message out in a picture. We need permission from Council to have the mural started.

3) Flood Mitigation Plans

We also ask for the City’s plans for the permanent flood mitigation of the senior centre. Will a retaining wall be built or will hesko bins be used as in this year?

The reason for this is that any mural must be seen and if a wall is going to be built in front of it this must be brought to the attention of the artist.

4) Paving of Parking Lot

As well, with any wall, we ask if the parking lot will be repaved and lined as discussed several months ago.

We ask these questions because these larger projects will require our application of grants and grants in aid to complete and so we need written permissions by the City so we may take all this into consideration when applying for grants.

5) Outside Park Items

We thank the City for the bike rack. It is being used by our seniors. We would also ask the City if we could get a city bench to be installed at the front with the bike rack and if there is a cigarette receptacle we could also have installed by the bench, because we do have smokers and it would be nice for them to sit outside and keep their butts in a proper disposal unit.

6) Signage

We also note that because of the location of the Slavonic centre and signage saying it is a senior centre, we have had a lot of people going there and not the seniors centre and ask that since it is no longer used as a senior centre if the signage at the front of the building could be removed or just turned around for directional sake. As well would the centre be able to get signage on the street saying "Senior Citizen Centre in Park" showing the people where we are. This may even include a digital kiosk in the park.

7) Storage

Finally, the Board have an idea for more storage at the centre. It requires either a shipping container placed at the back of the building or a standalone prefab 10x20 storage building that may be even incorporated into the centre so we could enter from within the building itself. If this were at all feasible we would ask for permission to go ahead and research further and confer with city staff on the placement.

8) Adhering Dividers to Ceiling

Although not yet determined, we may want to add a room divider that suspends from the ceiling to divide the large room into two smaller ones. As programs build we may find that two programs could run at the same time. We need City permission to do this.

The Board asks for written permission for the items mentioned before proceeding with any work on the centre.

Finally, touching on our finances, we attach our recent budget. While our accounts are managing for payment of the day to day operations and we do have a contingency, I will be applying for grants in aid with the City when appropriate and when it comes to things that improve the building, we will ask for financial help at that time.

Once again, thank you to Council for your continued support and we look forward to working with the City on the successes of the centre many years to come.

The Grand Forks Seniors Society