

## **Councillor Report      06.19.17      Chris Hammett**

### **Downtown Business Association**

The DBA presented to the COTW on May 15, requesting continued round table discussions with council and recapped the work that the DBA had accomplished during the past year. They didn't intend to discuss the problems with the chamber, but rather, the merits of the Downtown Business Association. The city provides the chamber with fee for service funding in the amount of \$20,000 annually and the chamber sets \$5,000 aside for the DBA from these funds. Because of the uncertainty of the chamber, especially in light of their 2017 AGM held in March, the DBA had concerns regarding the security of their funding and requested that the city fund the DBA the \$5000 directly, bypassing the chamber. I wasn't in attendance for this meeting, but did view the video the next day and I was shocked and disappointed at the direction this meeting took, and the behaviour of 2 councillors, who walked out of the meeting, leaving council with no quorum. They were overheard by a member of the DBA, who was in the gallery, that if the discussion turned to the chamber, they would walk out. This kind of unprofessional behaviour has no place in council chambers and is very disrespectful. When the DBA delegation left the COTW, they felt extremely slighted and came away with no response to their asks.

The BCRCC and the DBA represent the business community and it's unfortunate that in recent months, members of council who have had no previous connection with either group, have politicized both.

### **Boundary Country Regional Chamber of Commerce**

The board of the Downtown Business Association held a follow-up meeting on Tuesday, May 30 to discuss the results of the Special Meeting held on May 29 between the Boundary Regional Chamber of Commerce and City Council to discuss their AGM and the fact that the bylaws were not followed and they didn't have a quorum to conduct the meeting. James Wilson was invited to attend as a result of his willingness to step in as interim executive director until such time that a new one is hired, as he stated at the COTW. The DBA believed that James, as past executive director, would be able to restore the chamber to where it was 2 years ago, prior to his leaving, and reconnect with the business community. The new president of the BCRCC, Dean Engen, appeared at the meeting soon after it was called to order, wanting to

answer any questions the board may have and suggested that they put the past in the past and move forward from this point on. The board expressed concern that too much damage had been done since the AGM, with inaccurate information being relayed to the public regarding the DBA. Dean had given a radio interview with Juice FM stating that the DBA had never provided the chamber with any minutes or communicated with the chamber. Both our past chair and the chamber liaison disputed this since minutes were sent to the chamber's executive director every month and the chamber liaison reported to the board each month. Dean said that he would gladly be re-interviewed and release the correct information and apologize for the miscommunication.

The board also explained that they have been unsuccessfully trying, for the past 3 months to obtain the balance of their Fee for Service Agreement with the chamber for the 2016/17 fiscal year and that after their AGM, the chamber froze their funding. This is critical, especially at this time when they're in the middle of their Heritage Sign project. This has put the DBA in a limbo situation because they were counting on this funding to pay for the walking tour brochures and assist with the horizontal signage. Dean promised that he would get to the bottom of this and would have a balance for the board by the end of the week and guaranteed that the funding would be forthcoming, with a cheque to be delivered by him personally.

As of the writing of this report, there has been no official communication from the chamber, although, the minutes from their most recent board meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> indicate that the board voted to end their fee for service agreement with the DBA retroactively, effective May 31 and revert the remaining funds back to the chamber. It should be noted that the Fee For Service Agreement between the DBA and the BCRCC is dated August, 2016. The board also voted at this meeting to sever their relationship with the DBA and not engage in another Fee for Service Agreement for the next fiscal year. The funds earmarked for CANADA DAY projects, which the DBA and the Canada Day committee applied for and which were approved during their May meeting is still in question.

## **Grand Forks International**

The board and volunteers are heading into the home stretch with preparations for this year's tournament. Volunteers are still needed and can go to the GFI website or FB page for contact information. They can also contact me and I'll pass on the information.

Along with the great prizes donated for the 25 Bingo games, and the 50/50 cash draws, there will also be 4 additional draws on Canada Day for \$150 each to celebrate Canada's 150 Birthday.

City crews have done a great job of sprucing up JD Park and the fresh coat of paint on the bleachers looks great.

I have been involved with the GFI since 2004, but after sitting on the board this year and seeing firsthand what it takes to put on an event of this magnitude, I'm in awe of the past and present committee members, team leads, and volunteers who dedicate/d so much time to make it one of the most successful tournaments in North America. This event truly makes Grand Forks proud.

## **Public Works Day**

There were many children attending the Public Works Day again this year; learning how the machinery works and what our works crews do for their city. It was especially great to see the hands on displays that tested their abilities. This is a great event and a wonderful opportunity for the community to get an inside look at what it takes to keep our city operating.