



NW Provincial Restructure Committee

TO: NW Provincial Restructure Planning Grant Committee

FROM: Brian Reardon, CAO

DATE: February 24, 2021

SUBJECT: Recap of Inaugural Meeting and Next Steps

Purpose: To report back to the Committee recapping the January 20, 2021 Inaugural North Westside Provincial Restructure Planning Grant Committee meeting and to present next steps.

Executive Summary:

The North Westside Provincial Restructure Planning Grant Committee held their inaugural meeting on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 in the Woodhaven Boardroom. The Committee received a number of presentations and comments as described in the meeting minutes. At the end of the meeting, the Committee requested a staff report summarizing the discussion to date including comments from Allan Neilson and the Province.

Following the Inaugural Committee Meeting, RDCO staff sent an email to the Provincial Governance and Structure Branch staff thanking them for their participation and asked for any follow-up comments they may have for the Committee. Mr. Barrie Nicholls, Program Analyst replied with: *"At this stage, the Committee may wish to further discuss the merits of either undertaking local initiatives as outlined in the 2017 study or undertaking a governance and services study to identify and evaluate options to address community concerns with the current electoral area governance and service delivery. Once the Committee has come to a consensus on the characteristics of the issues at hand, it may then be able to come forward to the Province with possible solutions."*

In terms of "Next Steps" staff have arranged a workshop facilitated by Mr. Neilson of Neilson Strategies on what the Committee needs to be aware of as it considers what is involved in making an application to the Province and what the Province will be looking for from the Regional District.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Committee receive for information the CAO Report dated February 24, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Reardon".

Background:

The North Westside Provincial Restructure Planning Grant Committee held their inaugural meeting on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 in the Woodhaven Boardroom. Following introductions of the Committee members and the appointed support staff, the Committee:

- reviewed and ratified the Committee's Terms of Reference;
- reviewed the Conclusions and Suggested Action Plans from the North Westside Services and Community Issues Study completed in October 2017;
- received a presentation on the RDCO 2021-2022 Electoral Area Communication Strategy;
- received a presentation from the North Westside Community Association entitled "Request for a Governance Study JANUARY 2021";
- received comments from Allan Neilson, consultant from Neilson Strategies regarding restructure planning grant process and protocols;
- received comments from Provincial Governance and Structure Branch staff members; AND
- discussed why the North Westside Communities Association wants a governance study and what that process might look like and how to move forward.

The Committee requested a staff report summarizing the discussion to date including Allan Neilsons' and the Provinces' comments. These comments have been captured in the minutes taken at the inaugural meeting which were emailed to Committee members and are attached to the February 26, 2021 Committee Agenda for adoption.

Comments of note that the Committee should keep in mind are as follows:

1. The Director of the Governance and Structure Branch indicated that the *Provincial process is designed for diagnosis before prescription*. She went on to say that there is a need to make issues transparent in the process and that incremental improvements may have the desired effect instead of exploring future options. Also, the Province intentionally moves slowly to allow time for consideration and review.
2. The Director of the Governance and Structure Branch also indicated the full cost of a governance and services study is considerable and impacts not just the Province. The requesting agency should anticipate staff time and financial costs associated with the study.
3. Mr. Neilson advised that if a request goes forward to the Province we will need to know the scope of the work, what would be the process, the timeline and the budget.
4. In discussion, it should be noted that the financial estimates and service delivery statements provided by North Westside Communities Association representative in the presentation to the Committee have not been verified.

The value of the information lies more in identifying the areas of concern in the community rather than the accuracy of the information presented. This information would be clarified through a governance and services study.

It is recommended that the Committee take the areas of concern identified, for instance water rates and water delivery service, and building inspection delivery, etc. and include them in the scope of any future governance and services study.

Following the Inaugural Committee Meeting RDCO staff sent an email to the Provincial Governance and Structure Branch staff thanking them for their participation and asked for any follow-up comments they may have for the Committee. Mr. Barrie Nicholls, Program Analyst replied with:

“At this stage, the Committee may wish to further discuss the merits of either undertaking local initiatives as outlined in the 2017 study or undertaking a governance and services study to identify and evaluate options to address community concerns with the current electoral area governance and service delivery. Once the Committee has come to a consensus on the characteristics of the issues at hand, it may then be able to come forward to the Province with possible solutions.

If Ministry involvement is part of the proposed solution, the Province would require additional details on the process, scope, budget and time frames. This information will be informed at the Committee level and will be shaped by the established terms of reference. As you likely know, Provincial involvement requires a significant commitment of local and Ministry staff time and resources.”

A copy of the full email exchange is attached to this report.

It is apparent that additional work is needed at the Committee level. A great way to make progress in this area is to hold a facilitated workshop by a subject matter expert.

Next Steps:

Based on the comments received from the Province the following has been arranged:

1. Mr. Allan Neilson will facilitate a workshop today on what is involved in undertaking a provincially funded governance and services study in order to:
 - a. *further discuss the merits of either undertaking local initiatives as outlined in the 2017 study, or*
 - b. *undertake a governance and services study to identify and evaluate options to address community concerns with the current electoral area governance and service delivery;*
2. Once the Committee has come to a consensus on the issues at hand, then recommendations will be brought forward for Board consideration to forward to the Province with possible solutions;
3. If Ministry involvement is part of the proposed solution, the Province will require additional details on the:
 - a. *process,*
 - b. *scope,*
 - c. *budget, and*
 - d. *time frames.*

In addition, this information will need to be presented at the Committee level and will be shaped by the established terms of reference.