

TOWN OF ALTONA

Minutes of the Council & Management 2011 Planning Workshop that was held at The Hub in Altona, Manitoba, on Tuesday, December 7th, and Wednesday, December 8th, 2010.

Attendance:

Council Members: Melvin Klassen, Terry Wiebe, Glen Robinson, Ted Klassen, Don Braun, Ann Kroeker and Tim Fast.

Staff Members: Russ Phillips, Larry Driedger, Ron Epp, Irv Braun, Delores Loewen, Bill Loewen, Perry Batchelor and Steve Wiebe.

Youth Council Representative: Keely Loewen

Facilitator: Sheryl Feller

The meeting started at 8:45 A.M. Mayor Mel Klassen opened the meeting and welcomed everyone and made appropriate introductions. He also welcomed Sheryl Feller as the facilitator for the workshop.

Sheryl then assumed the role of meeting facilitator and carried on with the workshop.

Pick Three

Sheryl led the group in a 'Pick 3' exercise wherein each participant chose to answer/complete any three of the following statements:

1. One thing I'd like to see accomplished this term is...
 - Entry level housing established in Altona
 - Streamline communications from Council & CAO
 - Manage/minimize Council
 - Clean up bean plant fiasco
 - Keep Taxes in line
 - Keep Community Growing
 - Develop Leadership Capacity
 - Drainage on 4th Street SW
 - Better 'gel'/cohesiveness between Council and Staff

Town of Altona – Minutes of December 7th & 8th, 2010 Planning Workshop

- More TEAM – each group brings differing perspectives
 - Teamwork
2. The main reason I chose to run for Council is...
 - To work on better relationship between Council and Staff
 3. Something you might not know about me is...

Various responses were given.
 4. Something I'm proud of...

Various responses were given.
 5. My favourite vacation spot is...

Various responses were given.
 6. Something we need to celebrate in Altona is...
 - The community
 - Amenities and services
 - Parks & recreation opportunities
 - The snow – winter recreation – groomed cross country ski trails
 - Our heritage

Visioning Exercise

Sheryl asked participants to imagine that for some reason they were away from Altona for a period of five years. When you return to the community what do you see?

Business/Industry

- Retail – Starting to expand their services
- Bean Plant employing 30 people & paying full taxes
- Employment opportunities for our youth from professional to skilled labour
- Industrial growth – more jobs that have been created
- New Bars
- New Restaurants
- New Hotels
- Development of industrial park lands north of Fourteenth Avenue NE
- Friesens has expanded into the Altona industrial park leaving their main plant which is being converted into assisted living units
- Box stores on outskirts of community with re-development of Mall & downtown area
- Industrial park has doubled in size and is $\frac{3}{4}$ full
- Emerson Milling bought the bean plant and hired 20 people. Three other businesses have moved into the RM Agro Park
- New industry in the community
- Altona has a professional economic development officer on staff

- A vibrant business sector and small unique shops doing well

Other

- Population growth rate has doubled due to lower taxes, more recreation amenities and affordable housing
- Village of Altona has been annexed and all Altona borders have been expanded
- Entrances to town that welcome you
- Younger generation populating the community – ‘Youth coming home’
- Urbanization of Centre Avenue
- Taxation is such (due to business tax revenue) that property taxes are lowest in the region
- Annexation of more property so we can grow
- My children are living in Altona and are at good paying jobs and loving it!!

Recreation/Culture/Heritage

- I see a community that has recreation facilities for all ages
- Active cross country ski club with kids program
- Skate board park
- The ‘Field of Dreams’ has been completed and is used extensively
- Seniors activity
- Addition to playground
- New expanded & relocated campground
- Full time paid director position for Gallery in the Park
- More recreation programs – Sports/Arts
- Expanded Trail System
- A lot of activity in and around the community
- Opportunities for youth to volunteer (community service program?)
- New park (like Centennial Park) established in south end of Town
- New campground has been built and we no longer have overflow issues on busy weekends
- Population is now 6,000
- Aquatic Centre has been expanded and upgraded to include spray park, more water slides and a lazy river
- Splash park adjacent to Aquatic Centre
- Playground has seen 3 more phases and is the biggest and best in the province
- Gallery in the Park is open year round and has a full-time live-in curator

Protection/Prevention (fire, police)

- New police facility (X 3)
- New firehall & police station
- Trails
- Entry level housing
- Signage for Town
- Amalgamation of Altona Police with Morden & Winkler

- Regionalized Police Service of some sort
- Amalgamation of services with adjoining municipalities – Fire, Police, Public Works

Infrastructure/Housing

- All of our roads have been re-constructed and everything is concrete
- Roads & drainage issues have been resolved – ie no flooding occurs
- All lots are developed in the industrial park with medium sized industries
- Complete replacement of aging sidewalks
- Area west of 9th Street – a 55+ community has begun around an 18 hole golf course
- CPR tracks in town have been replaced with apartment blocks surrounding a town square. CPR spurs are located north of 14th Avenue N.
- New storage cell at lagoon
- All aging sewer mains replaced and/or re-lined
- All old concrete sewer pipes have been replaced or re-lined
- Affordable housing initiatives are in place and successful
- Affordable housing
- Housing expansion has occurred in north west with wetland retention lakes as a focal point for residential living
- Improved drainage – i.e. drain east of Altona has been improved to double flow capacity
- The issue of development not current with demand (housing, streets, etc.)
- Improved landfill site with office/maintenance building and staff of 1.5
- Infrastructure upgrade to accommodate current & future needs
- All of our water & sewer lines have been re-done
- New housing developments
- I see a town with new sub-division where the streets are lined with trees and every street has a sidewalk paid for by the developer. Also, every sub-division has ample green space
- New & improved drainage system is up & running

Environment

- All buildings consider the environmental impact
- The community has become more environment friendly – more people walking, etc. instead of driving, etc.

Health/Social Services/Education

- A new police station and library have been built
- More beds at Eastview to accommodate our aging citizens
- Expanded Health Care
- A larger health care facility with doctors to staff it
- Health clinic to have 6 doctors and all are willing to be on call
- New library
- I see Altona with a new high school – complete with performing arts centre and a new gymnasium, science labs and where teaching is dedicated to critical thinking, not just for feeding the work place

- Ebenezer Home given permission to provide 30 new rooms (assisted living)
- Hospital & Care home are expanding, 10 doctors occupy the expanded clinic

Interesting/Important/Surprising results:

- Unique, creative ideas (e.g. Friesens Main Plant)
- Similar ideas from different people
- Emphasis on infrastructure (foundation has to be there – eg water, sewer, lagoon)
- Regionalization
- Everybody wants to grow – what comes first?
- Affordable Housing – subsidization/partnerships are one dimension required

SWOT Analysis Exercise

Strengths:

- Location
- Staff Experience – Dedicated Town Staff
- Community work ethic
- Progressive
- People Powered
- Corporate Head Offices
- Amenities
- Vision
- Strong arts community
- Growing community
- Strong Education system
- Health Care – Fairly new hospital & Eastview Care home
- Blue Sky Opportunities – employment opportunities
- Cultural/recreational opportunities
- Pride in community

Weaknesses:

- Complacency
- The economy
- Taxes
- Geographic Location – no main highway
- Proximity to larger centres
- Lack of some retail services
- Lack of industry
- Corporate headquarters
- Town staff close to retirement
- “Old” Council – need younger people to get involved

- Funds of Town being stretched
- Lack of community long range plans
- Lack of progressive developers
- Housing (rental)
- Strong Canadian dollar
- Partnership with Rhineland – recreation/drainage/lagoon
- Lagoon capacity

Opportunities:

- New industrial park (room for expansion)
- Mobilizing retired boomers
- Large volunteer base
- Entry level housing
- Room for growth
- “drivers” for vision/growth
- Base infrastructure in place
- Visionaries in place
- Philanthropic companies/individuals
- Wealth
- Cultural work ethic
- Opportunity to plan
- Regional cooperation
- Think optimistically – not pessimistically
- Town needs to make opportunities

Threats:

- Declining retail (Winnipeg, Winkler, Grand Forks)
- Aging workforce (Town)
- Loss of industry
- Environmental facilities
- The economy
- Apathy
- Infrastructure limitations
- “Winkler”
- Health care
- Loss of youth
- Loss of volunteerism
- Loss of community – “me first” mentality

Priorities (in no particular order):

- Affordable (entry level) housing
- Employment opportunities
 - industrial growth

- expanded business base
- expanded industry base
- Infrastructure
 - Lagoon Expansion – needs to happen, however can we ‘buy’ some time?
 - Maintenance/upkeep of infrastructure systems
 - Resolution of drainage issues – specifically 4th Street SW
- Regional Collaboration
 - Resolution of Sunbelt issue – Will happen in due course
- Being proactive, creating vision for the future
 - Police Station
- Streamline office communications

Summary of Priorities: (not necessarily in any order)

- Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure
- Regional Collaboration
- Economic Development

Expectations Exercise

1. What do we expect from them?
2. What do we think they expect of us?

During this exercise the participants were separated into two groups, one being elected and the second being staff. Each group answered the above questions and then the whole group held a discussion.

Elected – What do we expect of Staff?	Staff – What do we think Council expects of Staff?
Options – Clear recommendations with pros & cons Competency Honesty Self-awareness Timely answers Enact policy as directed Consistency Equal access to CAO Full disclosure	No surprises Solidarity – ‘Team’ Expert professional advice Vision & Leadership Look, Listen, Learn Commitment Dedication Cooperation

Elected – What do we think Staff expects of Council?	Staff – What do we expect of Council?
Guidance Policy Speak as one voice Let them do their job Assume positive intentions Follow chain of command Visionaries Honest Feedback No criticism in public Loyalty Integrity	Vision & Leadership Solidarity – United Team Support of staff No surprises Look, Listen, Learn

After the above exercise there was agreement on what should be continued and what should be done differently.

Continue to do:

- Work together – as a team
- Have one voice
- Let staff do their jobs
- Follow chain of command

Do Differently:

- Present options, rather than just one choice (knowing that capacity for research is limited)
- Inform Council of the options that were considered

Doctor Recruitment

1. Do we want to consider Carman/Winkler model?
 - Winkler Does their own recruitment
 - Regional collaboration
 - Winkler has people in place to look after recruitment
2. Is investment in students a strategy to pursue?
 - Yes
3. How do we want to recruit?
 - Should we hire a person to help us?

4. Incentive Packages?

- How do we avoid 'bidding wars'
- Need to look at subsidization packages
- Consider purchasing properties for future expansion of Health Centre (these residential properties could be rented until needed)
- **Key Consideration** – lessening the ON-CALL burden
- If we lose one doctor, could result in status changes to hospital/ EMS

2011 Plans:

- Need 4 more physicians
- Nurse Practitioner will be retiring
- Nurse Practitioners and Physicians Assistants need to be pursued. Doctors will need to change their way of thinking.
- Need to convince potential doctors who ask – 'Can I build a practice here?'
- Need to maintain a minimum of 4 doctors
- Need to maintain hospital status
- Need to talk to C.W. Wiebe medical clinic in Winkler to investigate options

Council Recommended Next Steps

- Health Board (ADHCC) to talk to doctors
- Need to proceed 'softly' (through private conversations) with doctors, but need to keep moving forward
- Need to work with the doctors to find solutions
- Ask the Clinic to appoint a representative to the ADHCC
- Investigate Options – e.g. How are people feeling about the Carman/Winkler model?

Land Use Development Planning

The report was included in the Planning Workshop Binder. Secretary-Treasurer Larry Driedger gave an overview of the report and its recommendations.

Council was in agreement that an "Analysis of Land Inventory" should be conducted in 2011. This may have a budgetary implication for 2011 which will be dealt with at budget time.

Council was also in agreement that administration should start incorporating the recommendations made in the "Development Agreement Conditions" with any new development agreements.

Police Staffing / Restructuring

Police Chief Perry Batchelor gave a presentation on the needs of the Altona Police Service. The presentation is also contained in the Workshop Binder. Chief Batchelor also stressed that while Option A of the recommendations would be the preferred option, for now the service could probably continue along if Option D were implemented.

Council discussed the report, however did not make any conclusions or recommendations.

Recreation Statistics / Infrastructure

Recreation Services Manager Ron Epp gave a presentation on the Altona Recreation facilities and amenities. Several usage statistics were also presented. The presentation was also contained in the Workshop Binder.

Street Paving / Drainage Issues

Public Works Supervisor Steve Wiebe gave a presentation on the status of the Towns Road Construction, Overlays and Drainage. The presentation was also contained in the Workshop Binder.

It was noted after the presentation that with 14th Avenue NE coming in under budget, that the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund might accept further contiguous projects to complete the budget. Contact has been made with our representative at ISF and she has suggested that we submit a plan that would see the balance of the budget utilized. A plan will be submitted that will incorporate the completion of either Industrial Drive or Second Street NE, or a combination of the two.

Sidewalks & Trails

Public Works Supervisor Steve Wiebe gave a presentation on the status of the Towns sidewalks & trails systems. The presentation was also contained in the Workshop Binder.

Update on On-going Cemetery Improvements

Public Works Supervisor Steve Wiebe gave a presentation on the status of the Towns on-going plan to upgrade the cemetery. The presentation was also contained in the Workshop Binder.

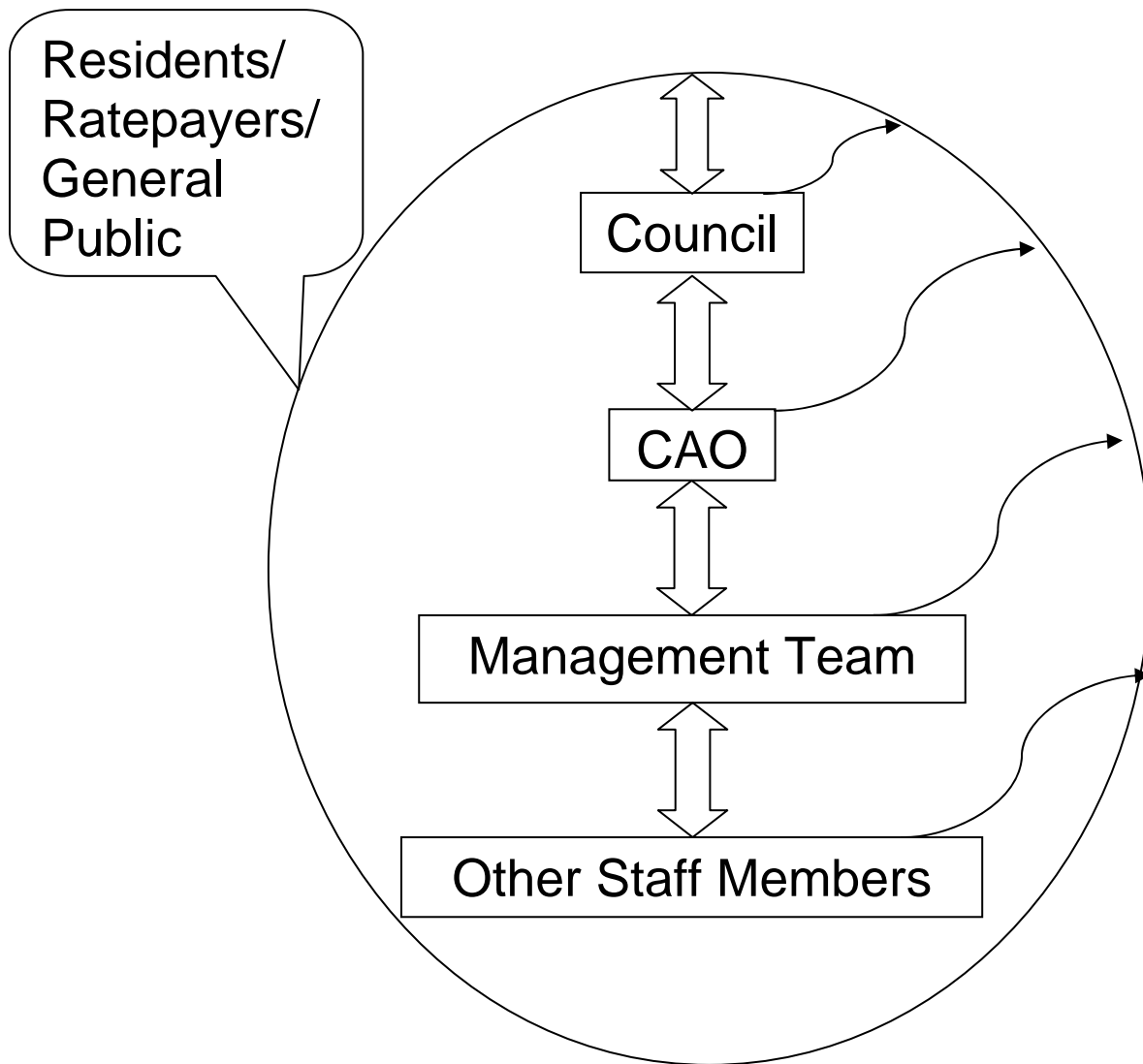
Committee Restructuring (Concept of Committee of the Whole)

CAO Russ Phillips gave a presentation of how the Council might work under a system of 'Committee of the Whole' (COTW).

This was the final presentation of the day and the meeting was adjourned for the day after the presentation.

Day 2 – Wednesday, December 8th, 2010

Having had some time to process the COTW presentation, there was some discussion about it.



The chart above was used to clarify some of the existing roles. There was discussion about some of the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of the potential change to this structure. After some time of discussion it was agreed that we should have someone like Jack Kehler, CAO for the City of Steinbach, come and meet with us to discuss how they use this system in Steinbach.

GIS – Geographical Information System

The report was included in the Planning Workshop Binder. Secretary-Treasurer Larry Driedger gave an overview of the report and its recommendations.

Some discussion took place on the merits of this system. After discussion Council was in agreement that a concerted effort should be made in 2011 with a dedicated summer student to see how far this can take us. At the same time there will need to be on-going relations with the software development company, Marmak, to help us achieve certain goals. This may have a budgetary implication for 2011 which will be dealt with at budget time.

Tourism – Local and Regional Needs, Role of Town / Chamber

CAO Russ Phillips gave a presentation of the role of tourism in the area. The presentation was also contained in the Workshop Binder.

After the presentation it was agreed that further research needs to be carried out on this topic.

Economic Development (future of regional engine vs needs of community)

- Need to find way to integrate Plum Coulee
- Regional Concept makes sense, however the ‘Sunbelt’ brand needs to be eliminated
- BR & E –
 - need to start survey process again with the completion of a complete GAP Analysis after the survey
 - in order to be successful this will need to be resourced
 - must evolve
 - needs to go beyond gathering information
- Economic Development Officer – Do we want an EDO dedicated to Altona?
- PVDC, ACDC Triple R, etc. – Are there too many organizations? Is there duplication of effort? Is this area of service fragmented/fractured?
- How much is the Town willing to invest?
- Tax incentives – are they correct?
- Jobs are essential for the future
- Need economic ‘drivers’
- Sunbelt Development Group

- Idea was good
- ‘thanks for trying’
- What’s the mandate?
- What will happen to the tax agreements?
- Need to have more ‘checks and balances’ in the future
- Driver Role vs. Investor Role – Driver Role must be a reasonable cost
- What is Council’s ‘risk tolerance’? – upside limit?
- Need to develop a formal statement of ‘limit’
 - To resolve
 - ❖ Bean Plant – middle of January
 - ❖ Sunbelt - Sometime in 2011?
- Identify options & costs
- “Home Grown” business is key (BR&E)
- “Engine” to drive economic development

Short Term Priorities:

1. Resolve situations
2. Do we want to pursue regional concept for economic development?
3. Options & recommendations to resolve Sunbelt, by next month

Next Steps

1. Workshop report – to be completed by Christmas 2010
2. Strategic Plan – Clear & concise – to be drafted by the end of January 2011
3. More discussion and time to follow up on key issues
4. Budget:
 - Multiple competing priorities
 - Will be tight
 - Need to clarify priorities
5. Review Progress:
 - Periodically
 - Minimum in six months

Wrap Up

Sheryl Feller conducted a session ‘wrap-up’.

She then asked for input regarding what ‘highlights’ and what to do ‘another time’ for a future planning workshop.

Highlights	Another Time
- Open dialogue	- More time for discussion of complex issues (come back to key topics) e.g. Committee of the Whole update
- Team building	
- Reality check	
- Expectations were eye opening	- In the future the days meetings should not proceed past 4:00 P.M.
- Excellent facilitation	
- The Hub facility – good	
- Food	
- Department Heads contributions	
- Dinner at CAO’s house	
- Planning <u>not</u> budget (this removed constraints for this session)	

Youth representative, Keely Loewen, was asked to bring the following question to her peers at Miller Collegiate and hopefully report to Council on her results:

“What would bring you back to Altona in the future?”

Adjournment for Management Team, Youth Representative and Facilitator at approximately 12:00 p.m.

The agenda called for the Council members to have an ‘in-camera’ session, however due to it being lunch time and facility cleanup required, the Council members decided to meet after the regular Town Council meeting Tuesday, December 14th, 2010.

Recorded by Larry Driedger.