

Fort Vermilion and Area Seniors and Elders Lodge Board 1788
Chairman's
Annual Report 2020

Dearest Membership:

It is with great humility that I pen my fifth Annual Chairman's Report at our sixth AGM. It has been an interesting year as our community has endured the effects of a new flu, a catastrophic flood event all after the wildfire evacuations in the previous year. Even so, the Board has taken courage remaining vigilant and patient, focused in completing its mandate to **"realize a culturally inclusive Designated Supportive Living Facility in Fort Vermilion for the Region."**

Accomplishments & Progress Since 2019 AGM:

- **7 Regular Board meetings**
 - 27 Motions Made
 - 683 minutes of Actual Meeting Time
 - Board coordination emails / phone calls and coordination emails with key partners.

- **Received funding from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation ('AREF') to complete Phases 1 & 2 of the Proposal**
 - The Board worked hard with representatives of the Alberta Rural Development Network in compiling and submitting a grant application to the AREF and on March 16, 2020 was awarded the necessary funding to complete Phase 1 and phase 2 of the Proposal.
 - As written in the funding approval letter *"The AREF Governors expressed their support for the initial phases of the Fort Vermilion and Area Seniors and Elders Lodge project which includes an updated and inclusive Northern Metrics Needs Assessment as well as stakeholder consultation and planning sessions. They believe the project will support the aging population in and near Fort Vermilion and can be applicable in other communities in the province. Governors remarked on the strong community support for this project and hope local real estate professionals will be able to take part in the consultation and planning of this community initiative. Depending on the outcome of the initial phases of the project, there is an interest in potential continued support to ensure the Lodge is successful."*
 - *The Proposal Phases 1 & 2:*
 - **Phase 1:** Discussions would need to take place with members of the First Nations and Métis Nation communities surrounding Fort Vermilion. Two housing needs assessment reports have been completed for Mackenzie County, but they are lacking complete data from the First Nations and Metis Nation communities. As the desire is for the facility to have a strong partnership with the communities, this is vital information to have so that there is a strong cultural connection and a true partnership. Specifically, there is a need for information from the health providers in the communities to identify seniors and First Nation Elders who are currently in home care and /or in a SL facility in another community some distance from their home but would be better served in a DSL facility. This information would supplement the previously completed reports.

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- **Phase 2:** Before the feasibility of operating a seniors' & elders', lodge is verified, the ARDN recommends identifying a path forward. A strategic planning session will help to define the project wants and direction using the collected data from the Needs Assessment.

- **One (1) Partner Meeting with ONPA Architects, Western Health Planning Associates, Alberta Rural Development Network & Crystal-Clear Consulting**
 - The discussion of this meeting focussed primarily on the lack of access to in-community interviews as part of the Northern Metrics data collection. The first phase of *the Proposal* remains ready to implement at such time health access restrictions are lifted for our Region's most vulnerable.
 - Western Health Planning Associates continues to foster critical relationships with leaders of each indigenous community and the North Peace Tribal Council advocating the Northern Metrics piece of our work.
 - Due to the Fort Vermilion flood event, the St. Mary's School facility no longer remains as a viable option to renovate into a Designated Supportive Living facility. As understood by the Board, the post flood inspectors discovered that the building has asbestos and along with flood damage, it is estimated it would require millions of dollars of funding to get the structure back to square one.
 - There is a need for flexibility, openness, and patience in the initiation of *the Proposal*. Keep working on stuff to keep well positioned with a move forward eventually coming.

- **Grant funding support from Mackenzie County – Project Completion**
 - Web Site Phase 2 Development & Updates project
 - Office Supplies (brochures, business cards, note pads, letter head, paper & printer ink)
 - The Board and our website contractor completed the website enhancement project in July 2020. We invite you to visit the site at fortvermilionlodgeboard.ca to keep up to - date on what your Board is doing. The Project Completion report has been remitted to the Mackenzie County.

- **The Board continues to pursue charity status with the CRA**
 - As you are aware, our first application to the CRA was denied. The Board was provided three different options as to how to continue to move forward with this important work. As such, we decided to work on a second application submission. Insights we have gathered from professionals commented that receiving charity status is extremely difficult and have further advised that upon receiving status the maintenance & reporting responsibilities can be onerous. Nevertheless, the Board encouraged our Treasurer at our October 2020 regular meeting to continue to pursue a second application submission. If required, the Board is also prepared to consider reasonable professional fees as achieving CRA status is primary to its mandate.

It has been an absolute honour to serve our Board over these past five years and to witness acts of our community coming together to help those who need it the most is something incredibly difficult to say goodbye to. Earlier this year I accepted a new position within the Government of Alberta that comes with an eventual relocation prompting me to leave my home for a while. This was a difficult decision for me to make and I did not make it lightly. Hence, this will be my last Annual Chairman's Report for a season.

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After so many years of this community lobbying health officials and politicians, I believe we are on the precipice of finalizing the critical planning piece, crystalizing its success. The planning phase of a health - project like this is arguably, the most difficult for it's taking a vision of the people through a planning and development process in such a way that when the shovel eventually hits the dirt you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the facility will be built, built right and by the right people. We have the right people and partnerships sitting at our table deeply committed supporting what we are trying to achieve.

Sincerely,

Jeff Anderson, Chairman
FVASELB1788