

Fire Hall Task Force

Mayne Island Fire Rescue Service Building UPDATE February 2010

The September 2009 \$4.2 million borrowing referendum for a new fire hall and emergency operations centre was cancelled when the underlying annual repayment calculation (based on information provided by the bank advising the MIID) was determined to be significantly erroneous.

There was also community concern over maintaining ongoing operations while a new fire hall was being built, and also concern as to whether the concept plans were overly conservative in addressing emergency preparedness operations.

There was also community sentiment that the design and costing accuracy should be taken to the next level of certainty before a financial commitment and approval was sought.

On advice from the community, and to keep the planning for a fire hall and emergency operations centre moving forward, MIID formed the “Fire Hall Task Force”.

The Task Force is comprised of islanders who responded to a request for volunteers posted in the Mayneliner and on the MIID website.

Volunteers were sought with experience in legal matters, Worksafe BC and code requirements, firefighting operations, financial planning, project management, engineering, and community engagement.

The members of the task force represent considerable years of collective hands-on experience in the planning, design, construction and delivery of significant public and private infrastructure projects, firefighting operations and community project management.

Task Force members are:

- Cal Biem: Cal has extensive experience in project management, construction management and building design and construction
- Ian Birtwell: Ian is a retired Community and Land use Planner with 40 years of experience as a government and private sector development manager and consultant for major building and development projects in the Lower Mainland. Ian has a record of creating and leading public development projects
- Sean Skiffington has 21 years of project and construction management experience in the engineering world. His experience extends to finance, cost control and scheduling for major industrial projects.
- Bill Warning, B.Sc. has 35 years of experience as an operations manager in the field of managing and operating industrial environmental laboratories. Bill's experience includes planning, budgeting and maintenance of infrastructure.
- Al Wood has worked in the construction business for 43 years. Al has had extensive experience in working with architects, engineers, project managers and sub trades. Al was site supervisor during the construction of

steel service buildings at Lornex Mine (Logan Lake, BC).

- Don DeRousie is a long-time resident of Mayne Island with problem solving skills developed as a lighthouse keeper with the Canadian Coast Guard. Don has practical experience in the areas of landscaping, concrete work, carpentry and teamwork.
- Harry Lane has 40 years of experience in working with the Fire Department – some as a member of the Improvement District; some as Fire Chief and always as a firefighter.
- Experienced fire fighters Per Nielsen and Kyle Stobart represent the Mayne Island Volunteer Firefighters Association
- Jim Marlon Lambert and Aaron Somerville represent the MIID Board of Trustees.

The Task Force has been provided with the following objective by the MIID Board of Trustees:

To provide detailed recommendations to the MIID Board of Trustees for the design, costing, financing options, construction and communications regarding a new Emergency Facility. This will be a multi stage objective with the first being a review of the current design, to be completed, if possible, prior to the MIID AGM (April 17, 2010). Subsequent stages will be defined by the Task Force for acceptance by the Board.

The Task Force was formed with the expectation that it would elect one of its public members as Chair, to be independent of the Board. At its first meeting on January 30th, the Task Force elected Bill Warning as chair, with Cal Biem as deputy Chair in Bill's absence.

Given the short timeframe, the Task Force has been meeting weekly, and has organised into four working sub-committees: Design and ongoing operations, Estimate Review, Financing, and Communications.

Background

One priority for the Task Force has been to familiarize itself with the fire service and emergency services operations and facilities, the 1994 fire service surveys, the recommendations of the 2005 Committee, a 2008 space needs assessment, consultant design reports and recommendations, 2009 referendum material, and community responses.

The Task Force provide the following summary information gleaned from its review:

Existing fire hall facilities

- The existing fire hall building was constructed in the 1968.
- Since then the amount of developed property and island population has increased substantially.
- In 1994, in an assessment of the Mayne Island Fire Protection Service, the Provincial Fire Commissioner recommended that the building be upgraded to meet seismic stability standards, and much of the workspace re-organized.
- Over the intervening years, there have been alterations and additions to

accommodate new equipment and fire and rescue equipment and capacity, and to address the conclusions reached by the Fire Commissioner.

- Over the past two decades there has been substantial changes in the National Building Code, especially the seismic requirements, and in WorkSafe BC standards for workplace safety.
- The existing fire hall building is seriously deficient regarding meeting seismic stability for buildings that are required to remain operational after a major earthquake event.
- The existing fire hall building does not comply with WorkSafe BC standards for working space beside equipment, ventilation, separation of post-fire contaminated firefighting equipment, and height and dimensions of equipment bays.
- The existing building cannot house the full complement of existing fire truck equipment, consequently equipment stored outside is at risk from weather, freezing and vandalism, and is therefore technically “non-operative” regarding certification for protection service from an insurance perspective.
- The current equipment bays can barely accommodate equipment. With tender #1, a hose lock must be turned horizontal to enable the tender to be backed under the doors.

2001-2009 fire hall planning activity

- Many of the recommendations of the 1995 Fire Commissioner’s assessment have been implemented over the intervening years, with the exception of seismic upgrading.
- Consultations with structural consultants (2001 and 2005) concluded that the building would not survive even a moderate earthquake event.
- The Board concluded in 2005 that upgrading the building to meet the then current (and much lower than present) seismic standards would be prohibitively expensive, and would also reduce equipment capacity and severely compromise firefighting and rescue operations.
- Many of the WorkSafe BC issues have been addressed but only on a temporary approval basis, on the understanding that a replacement fire hall is under active discussion.

In 2005, an ad hoc Committee comprised of Board members, Firefighters, Emergency Services Coordinator and community representatives prepared a detailed report regarding the Mayne Island Fire and Rescue Service operations, and particularly the facilities.

Their October 2005 report reviewed operations, functionality of the buildings, an emerging long range plan for equipment and personnel, coordination of firefighting, rescue and other emergency preparedness operations. The Committee provided in some considerable detail design and space requirements for a new fire hall and related facilities.

Building on the 2005 Committee recommendations, MIID began a process of bringing forward a concept plan for a new fire hall and emergency operations

centre, for ultimate funding approval by the community.

- Consultants with expertise in fire hall operations and design worked closely with Trustees and the Fire Chief to determine the operational requirements for the foreseeable future, using a twenty year projection of community development and anticipated fire protection and rescue demand.
- Also factored in were emerging requirements for wildfire disaster planning, with experience gained from the recent Kelowna and Galiano wildfires.
- A conceptual design for a new fire hall and emergency operations centre was prepared.
- These concept plans were costed out on an order of magnitude basis (early stage design, general square foot pricing, with factored allowances, and contingencies, giving a plus/minus 30% accuracy range).

The concept plans, which were the basis of the cancelled September 2009 referendum initiative, represented a long-term community investment in infrastructure that would maximize firefighter, first responder, rescuer and emergency operations response and effectiveness and would provide Mayne Island fire-fighters and emergency preparedness co-ordinators with a safe and efficient workplace.

MOVING AHEAD, RECOMMENDATIONS

Note, these recommendations are a work in progress, and may not necessarily reflect the final recommendations from the Task Force to the MIID Board of Trustees.

The Task Force has reviewed the current (2009) design proposals and consultants reports.

The Task Force has come to some preliminary conclusions and is recommending:

- that the siting of the new fire hall be south of the existing fire hall, such that the existing fire hall can continue full operations during the construction period.
- that the proposed emergency operations facilities be reduced in scope to conform with emerging CRD emergency operations procedures (requiring less on island co-ordination requirements);
- that the emergency operations centre and ancillary MIID office facilities be housed in a second storey above the fire hall (above the area not dedicated to fire tender and firefighting vehicle parking).
- that from a building efficiency and construction cost perspective the design should include bare unallocated second storey space suitable for accommodating ancillary revenue generating functions such as the requested RCMP office space, and as appropriate, space for future emerging needs.
- that the proposed fire hall facilities (ready room, facility separation for contaminants, ventilation, equipment housing and servicing facilities, office and meeting spaces, washrooms and ancillary accommodations are adequate and required.
- that given the existing state of the fire hall facilities, particularly with

respect to acute deficiencies in meeting seismic standards, that time is of the essence, and that the project be moved forward in a timely manner.

- that the Board allocate funds from existing reserves and authorize the project to proceed to the next levels of design and costing.
- that the Board continue with the existing professional design team and project managers in order to provide continuity and design cost efficiencies.
- that the next generation design, costing, and financing proposals be brought forward as soon as possible for community evaluation and input preparatory to any referendum for approval to proceed.

Emerging recommendations and actions.

The Task Force sub committees are continuing with their analysis and planning.

Some of the emerging observations and recommendations are:

- that the Fire Chief in consultation with consultants and the Task Force develop an operations plan for fitting out the new fire hall and transferring equipment such that ongoing operations are maintained throughout with minimal disruption.
- that the site conditions preparatory work such as excavation preparation, water tank relocation, wells, septic, demolition, be handled locally and directly by the Board.
- that where practicable, the engagement of qualified local resources be encouraged when determining construction contracting.
- that sustainable and energy efficiency practices be considered, particularly in anticipation of future cost sharing and granting requirements.

Ongoing and future work plans

If the Board of Trustees act on the recommendation to move the project to the next level of design and costing, the Task Force will engage with the consultants to develop design plans, and to generate more accurate cost estimates.

At some later stage, with revised cost estimates in hand, the Task Force will be reviewing financing options, and the previously proposed blended taxation formulae.

The Task Force may be contacted at esctfc-miid@shaw.ca