



COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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ASC Recommendations to CBID Trustees

Special Meeting – Wednesday March 17, 2021

The CBID trustees received the recommendation from the ASC with regards to the Fire Hall Upgrade Project. The Trustees independently reviewed the recommendations prior to meeting to discuss and formulate an official response. This document has been prepared by the Trustees to respond to the ASC and to provide the Public an update on the current environment with regards to the Fire Hall Upgrade Project.

1. The ASC recommends that the Board should proceed with plans to build a new fire station. Analysis of all the information made available to the ASC make it clear that the best use of resources is to replace the existing buildings. Options that looked at renovation and additions to the existing building required sacrificing some operational efficiencies and were as expensive as building new.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID will continue to explore the project of bringing a plan to replace the existing facility to the public for consideration in the form of a referendum.

2. The ASC recommends that the Board continue with plans to utilize the existing land for a new building. The site has been confirmed by expert analysis as the best location for the effective delivery of fire and emergency response services. Financially it makes the best sense as it is already owned by the CBID.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID will continue to explore the project utilizing the existing property. This plan would include exploring the best options for a transition that would not impact the operational abilities of the Fire Department during construction of a new facility.

3. Fire station planning should include careful consideration of increasing the public value by inclusion of spaces that may be used by select community groups and organizations from the areas served by the fire station. It is felt that inclusions that increase the community value without hampering fire department operations will make it easier to gain community support.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID will explore the requirements to allow for Community use of the proposed Multi-Purpose Meeting space. This should include adequate security between the public access and the operational and administrative areas of the facility. This will also require access to washroom facilities, separate access / egress, parking, etc. The CBID will investigate the additional costs of the project and consider the added value of the potential costs prior to formulating a final decision on this recommendation.

4. The planning and development of the proposed station and the communications processes that are used to inform residents need to respect the differing expectations and needs of area residents.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID has already employed a two-pronged approach to communications with our community. The recent Newsletter released by the ASC was delivered both through the Canada Post system and through electronic access utilizing the CBID Website and Social Media. The CBID will continue to utilize both traditional and electronic media to share information with the community. The community has been provided options for contacting the CBID through regular mail, electronic mail and by telephone.

5. All considerations for spaces and approaches to the development of the new fire station must be fiscally prudent and respect the residents who are required to pay. As an example, the ASC was concerned about reducing fire station bay length from 90 feet to slightly more than 80 feet and the impacts this decision might have on future fire vehicle acquisitions.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID is committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility while also meeting the operational requirements of the Fire Department. The CBID will explore the possibility of extending the apparatus bays to the suggested 90 feet while still maintaining requirements set forth with regards to property line setbacks and apparatus turning radius. The CBID will report back on their findings.

6. Building design, and specifically those elements related to the operational elements of the facility, must follow industry standards and best practices to ensure that the building can support operations over its anticipated 50-year life span.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID is committed to providing the best quality and value to sustain the long-term operations of the Fire Department. The CBID has engaged subject matter experts in design and construction to ensure all necessary considerations are included to ensure a 50-year or better life span of the facility.

7. The design process moving forward should reflect value engineering principles as an integral element of these processes to ensure the best fiscal as well as operational outcomes are achieved.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. As with recommendation #6, the CBID has engaged subject matter experts in both the design and construction fields to ensure the best practices are included in this project. While the CBID does not feel official "LEEDS Certification" adds value to facility, the principals and practices with regards to energy efficiency and environmental impact are considered a high priority.

8. The Board should investigate the feasibility and cost to connect the new fire station to piped water and sewage systems. The analysis should include investigation of potential partnerships and other users that may bring down costs for the fire station and provide expanded community value.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID sees value in the ability to have the facility connected to a community water system. The CBID will be investigating the costs associated with connecting to the Cowichan Bay Waterworks system as well as the CVRD sewer system. The Trustees did discuss the low property density in our specific location and the concerns with costs associated. The CBID will be exploring the possibility of cost sharing these connection fees with our immediate neighbours. Once this information has been obtained, the CBID will evaluate each connection separately and determine the feasibility of each.

9. The Board should investigate the potential to access Covid 19 Recovery grants as well as other programs that may help reduce the local cost of the fire station as part of its financial planning process.

Trustees Response:

Trustees agree with this ASC Recommendation. The CBID is committed to ensuring the best value is provided to our community and the project is pursued with the lowest possible impact to our taxpayers. The CBID, as an Improvement District, is typically not eligible for grant funding the same as Municipality is, however the CBID will seek any grant funding that may be available. Once the CBID has applied for and received a response they shall inform the ASC of that decision.