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Vol. XL No. 161 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1980

Region favours

The seven year effort to bring worthy cultural facilities to the North Peace took a leap yesterday when the board of the Peace River-Liard Regional District voted to approach the ministry of municipal affairs to request permission to hold a referendum in the area on a proposal put together by the Community Centre Committee.

It could lead to a start to construction as early as this fall.

The CCC has produced a plan for a combined theatre and library which will cost just under \$3.1 million. Making the presentation to the regional board on behalf of the CCC yesterday, Bob Bennetts predicted that all parts of the northern community would be able to make use of the complex, which would have a first year operating cost of \$224,000.

The motion to go to referendum was passed unanimously. So too was a motion that the facility should be administered

by a facilities committee of the regional district.

Regional representatives will go to Victoria in early February to make presentations on the project to Evan Wolfe, provincial secretary (through whose department they hope to receive grants to cover a quarter of the cost,) and the municipal

weeks.' The party will probably consist of Hannam, Fort St John representative Joanne Mucci, administrator Moray Stewart and the mayors of Fort St John and Taylor.

If the referendum request is approved, voting would probably take place in April, allowing working drawings and tenders to

Will seek referendum

affairs minister Bill Vander Zalm, whose department will approve the referendum proposal.

Board chairman Dick Hannam commented that this seemed advisable in order to expedite the project. 'It's a fairly sizable package and we don't want it sitting on somebody's desk for

be prepared for a foundation start in the latter part of the year.

THE PROJECT

The combined facility would be sited on a 4.2 acre parcel of land donated to the project by the City of Fort St John, for the duration of the building.

It will be to the immediate

ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

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CCC proposal

north of the Totem Shopping Mall, now under construction and to the east of the Rotary Health Clinic.

The theatre will have 420 seats, a loft, a proscenium of 32 feet, four dressing rooms and a lighting or projection booth. By extending three sections of seats to different levels, the design allows an area for easy access of the handicapped without ex-

tensive ramps. This also permits the foyer to rise to three levels providing an attractive lounge and refreshment area. A large workroom behind the stage will allow set construction and rehearsals to proceed while the theatre is in use for other performances.

The Library will encompass 10,600 square feet, with a central circulation desk, adequate

receiving and working area, a public meeting room and a room for audio visual facilities. An attractive atrium on the south wall will provide a sun filled green haven for quiet reading on a winter day. The accent on south windows and sufficient insulation for our severe climate will make the facility economical to heat.

(Continued on Page 2.)

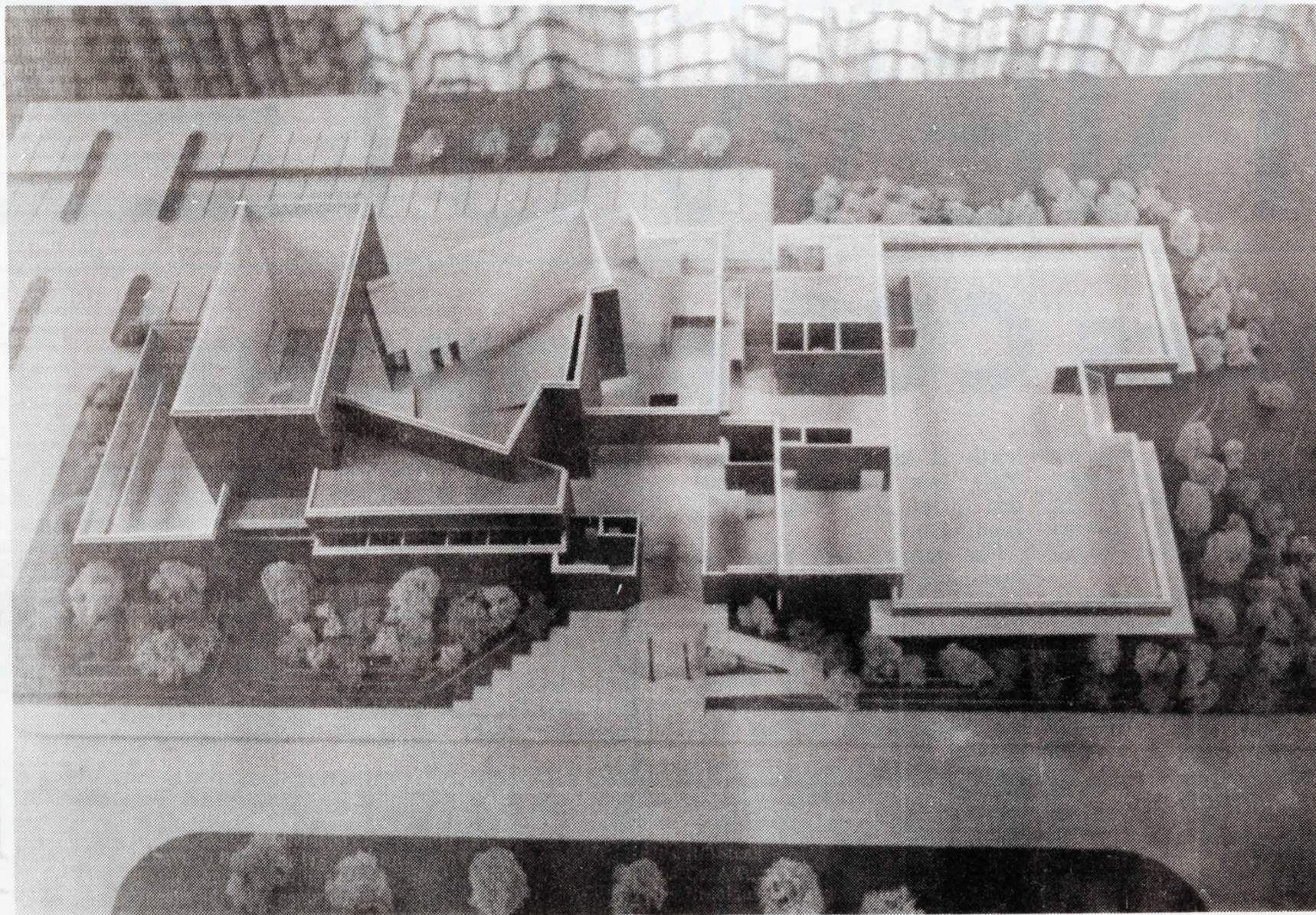


BOB BENNETT'S SPOKE ON behalf of the Community Centre Committee on Tuesday at the Regional District meeting in City Hall. Before him sits the model of the project,

see overleaf. The board voted unanimously to request permission to hold a referendum on the proposal.

*In includes
DJP*

General



THE THEATRE AND LIBRARY complex proposed by the CCC would encompass a 420 seat theatre and a 10,500 square foot library. This model, which

can be inspected at City Hall along with the plans, has lift off roofs which enable the interior layout to be visualized.

Region favours . . .

(Continued from Page One.)

The Community Centre Committee predicts that extensive use of the theatre will include local productions by Workshop Players, Stage North, Chinook Theatre, the Festival Association, the Concert Series, school and church programs, dance and music recitals, conventions, seminars, lectures, political rallies and similar public affairs. The operating budget includes a full time manager who will promote use by touring companies and performers.

COLLEGE OUT

The proposed facility represents a scaled down version of the plan which the CCC first started to formulate three years ago. That had involved Northern Lights College and the proposal was that college facilities such as class rooms, workshops, pottery studios, dance studio etc should be added to the basic library-theatre complex.

Bob Bennetts explained that the college and the CCC had had to separate, albeit amicably, as the CCC application was just rolling along too fast.

'We expect that they will include these other things in their final building, when they get it,' said Bennetts.

FINANCING

Moray Stewart, regional administrator, commented yesterday that it was the growth in Fort St John that had made the project possible.

'The cost will be met by two grants of \$400,000 each. The balance will have to be mortgaged and the mortgage paid by means of a mill rate,' said Stewart. 'Frankly, when I first heard

about this, there was just no way. Fort St John's assessment was about \$10 million. Now though, it's \$50 million and the city is very well able to take the lead in financing.'

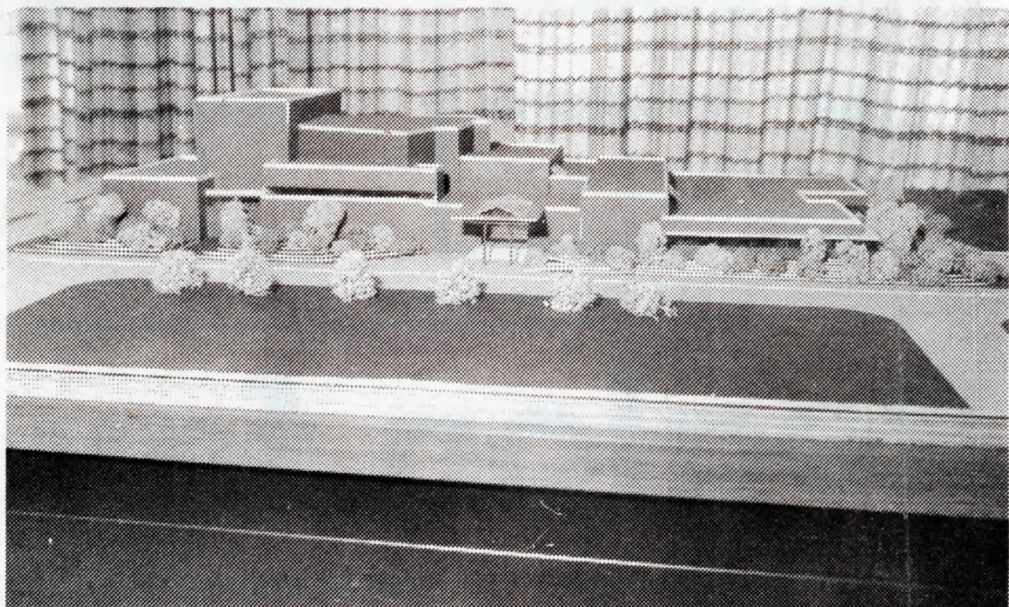
Although Fort St John is expected to provide sixty per cent of the funds, the referendum will also be held in a benefitting area which, with Fort St John, encompasses 27,000 potential users. The districts are Taylor, Sunrise Two Rivers, Baldonnel, the Airport, Swanson Lumber Road, Cecil Lake, Goodlow, Flatrock, Clearview, Boundary Lake, Montney, Upper Pine, Pineview, Fish Creek, and Charlie Lake. Those regions nearest to the city will pay a higher mill rate than those remote from it.

No firm figure has been calculated for the mill rate yet, partly because the raising of funds locally could substantially reduce the amount that has to be amortised.

Said Sue Popesku, a CCC organiser, 'We are starting today on a massive fund raising drive, and the target is half a million dollars. Provincial law says that we have to do our figures on the basis of amortizing the total amount not covered by the grants, but the more we can raise around here, the better. We shall be calling on large companies to assist us here, as an investment in the project by them, will actually return them a dividend in greater staff satisfaction and a willingness to stay in the community.'

A model and plans are now on view in City Hall.

ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS SECTION ONE, PAGE TWO
FORT ST JOHN, BC, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1980



DOES THIS LOOK good to you? This is the general shape and arrangement of the

proposed theatre library complex. See it at City Hall.