

Expo Legacy project praised

Daily News staff

The Expo Legacy was the subject of a number of meetings last Thursday, one of which involved a government representative who can recommend grant monies be given to the project.

Tara Douglas, Regional Co-ordinator for the Museum and Galleries Assistance Programme for the Department of Communications, was on a 10-day tour of the western provinces looking at possible funding projects. She was given the grand tour of the old Bay building on Thursday while the situation of the proposed art gallery was described to her.

At an Expo Legacy meeting last night Douglas commended the "very creditable" efforts of the group working for the overall cultural centre.

Douglas was impressed with the amount of funds that were raised in such a short period of time, saying the half-million dollar commitment made last year by the department of communications was "virtually unheard of" for a community this size.

Douglas thought the use intended for the building was sound but suggested a functional study be done for the art gallery. The study, she said, could determine things like what focus a public gallery should take, what programs they could incorporate, how much space it

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would need, how much money it would take and where those funds could be found.

Grants from Douglas's office could pay up to 50 per cent of the study costs and, according to Expo Legacy Committee chairman Sue Popesku, the government would probably look more kindly on providing grants to the project if the study was done.

Douglas's office can also provide grants up to 50 per cent for the costs of equipment for environment control, storage of art pieces, security or lighting — items that would not normally be incorporated in a building. The art gallery will be needing a vapor barrier to keep the right humidity, special heating ducts, special security doors for receiving large pieces of artwork, special lighting and storage for its permanent collection, among other things.

Popesku says Douglas's office is just one of many avenues of funding the Committee is exploring.

Facilities chairman Vonnice Dixon will be meeting with an environmental control expert and the architects later this month to go over gallery standards and designs.

Meanwhile, working drawings for the overall project are to be prepared by the start of May. Tenders will be let short after this, and construction is to commence by June 1.

Council supports project

By WENDY COOMBER

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What some thought should have been an easy motion for the aldermen to make turned into a heated hour-long debate over the Expo Legacy project.

But council finally voted to support in principle a letter for more funding for the project.

Mayor Pat Walsh asked council to pass a motion supporting a letter he had written at Sue Popesku's behest to Municipal Affairs Minister Rita Johnson. The letter asked for access to money granted under the downtown revitalization plan.

The grant could mean \$30-thousand for awnings and facades for the building.

GOOD LUCK

Alderman Peter Vandergugten wished the committee luck in their efforts but voted against when the rest of council voted to support the project in principle.

Bodnar, the downtown revitalization committee chairman, was upset that no one else had seen the letter, although Walsh told him that he had put a copy of the letter in his basket. The letter was written in haste, said Walsh, because Popesku was leaving for Victoria at once.

The building committee for the new arts centre introduced their architect, Ron Howard of Howard/Yano Architects, to city council last night to explain the phases the building will undergo and how much it will cost.

Alderman Dave Bodnar expressed a number of concerns he had about the project, mainly regarding the funding and how they could proceed without all the funding in place.

John Herron told council they had enough money to finish Phase I. Hopefully by the time Phase I was finished, they would have enough money to wrap up Phase II, he said.

"We're doing it in phases so no one gets hurt financially," said Herron.

Popesku said that she knew of many people who were waiting to see construction begin on the building before they would contribute any money. She said she was quite confident that all of the money they needed would be raised before this time next year.

Vonnie Dixon said the building committee didn't want to wait for inflation to eat into the building funds they already had, which they would be doing if they waited for all the money to be in place before proceeding.

Bodnar thought that a number of questions needed to be asked regarding this grant and whether other businesses could access it.

"I think we'd be foolish to go ahead with this when we don't know enough about it," he said.



EXPO LEGACY building committee gathered with architect after recent Nut 'n Bolts night held to explain the project.

Tenders have been advertised and should be awarded soon.

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