

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Shuswap Theatre Society
Jan 14, 2010

7:15 Call to order: Julia Body

Welcome to all.

Confirmation that all members have voting cards.

Read out agenda

Theatre Board members (all present)

Julia Body- President

Kim MacMillan- Vice President

Ellen Gonella – Secretary

Denise Green – Treasurer

Cathy Lake

Monica Kriese

Patrick Allwood

James Bowlby

Building Committee Members present, including credentials (as outlined during the proposal)

Jake Jacobson- Committee Chair : long time theatre member, building manager for years, construction supervisor of current building.

James Bowlby- long time theatre member, Board member, has extensive grant application experience as well as non-profit fundraising and building experience

Cilla Budda – building manager, long time theatre member

Doug Leatherdale- financial manager, fund raiser, and member of Rotary

Margaret Soon Holland - project manager, semi-retired architect

John Coulson- Calgary city planner for 35 years

Jamie Wright (not present) - long time involvement with a local school of dance and Rotary

History of Shuswap Theatre: James Bowlby

Brief overview: From humble beginnings in the old hotel theatre, to the gym of the old Jackson school, to a leased building in Tappen, to the current site, the need for a dedicated theatre space is necessary to the healthy operation of a theatrical group and Shuswap Theatre is no exception. This has taken courage and dedication and vision in the past and we will need to have all of those to continue in the future.

Current State of the present building: Cilla Budda (building manager)

The building is showing signs of it's age, including underlying structural damages done by nearby construction over the years. There are many cracks which continue to worsen.

There have been numerous requests for rentals by outside groups over the years but most of those interested have had either timing conflicts with Shuswap Theatre rehearsal/performance schedules, or they have required space on stage or in seating capacity that we simply do not have.

Board's recommendation: Julia Body reported on the recommendations that the Board made to this meeting at its meeting of November 30th, 2009:

1. That the Society endorse the vision to “build a theatre that is about 20,000 square feet with a seating capacity of 599, sprung stage floor, orchestra pit, electrically operated fly tower, full rehearsal stage, and ample space for 2 dance studios and 3000 square feet of long term lease space, estimated construction cost of \$6-7 million

(Quoted from the Nov 22nd Report of the Theatre Building Committee)

2. That the Theatre Building Committee be empowered to spend up to \$25, 000 for conceptual drawings.

Project Outline: Jake Jacobson

The current needs of Shuswap theatre are not being met in terms of space and equipment. The Building Committee was given the mandate to come up with solutions. They came up with 9 options with the bottom option to do nothing, the next to paint, etc... and working up to the top option of a state of the art facility. They were asked to go forward with exploring the top option with the following principals guiding them:

1. that Shuswap Theatre maintain control of the space
2. that Shuswap Theatre have priority booking
3. that Shuswap Theatre continue to have a permanent home

To this end the Building Committee has presented the Board with several options for a new facility (taking into consideration the concerns and problems other communities have faced when designing and running comparable facilities) and has suggested that the Society continue to support and actively pursue the option to build an up to 20.000 sq ft theatre, with seating for up to 599, rehearsal space, a fly tower, lots of storage, office space and dance studio space.

In order to keep down operating costs (a major cause of inflated rental costs that have made it too expensive for many small theatre companies to use their own community spaces), long term leases are a viable and desirable option. This would hopefully cover the day-to- day expenses and keep the Theatre independent from major operating grants.

There is a business plan in draft form, but without a building site (necessary for architectural plans and grant applications), there is only so much that can be specified.

The general breakdown of building costs would have the Federal government putting in 50%, the Provincial 25% and the Theatre and community raising the remaining 25%.

In order to move ahead, the Society is requested to empower the Committee to continue it's exploration of sites and specifics for the option recommended by the Board in the following motion:

Motion:

Moved by Kim MacMillan and seconded by Jake Jacobson that the Shuswap Theatre Society pursue the construction of a new building under the guidance of the Building Committee, guided by the following *vision*:

1. 18-20,000 sq ft in size
2. a flexible seating capacity of up to 599
3. a sprung stage floor
4. an orchestra pit
5. an electrically operated fly tower
6. a full-size rehearsal stage
7. allowance for ample storage, set construction, costumes, foyer and meeting space
8. space for at least one dance studio
9. approximately 3000 sq ft of space for long term lease to other organizations
10. construction and all related costs (including the purchase of land, if necessary) not to exceed eight million dollars (not including the value of any donated or leased properties)
11. providing a permanent home for the Society
12. an organizational structure that ensures the Society will have priority booking for stage time at no cost

It is further moved that the Society membership be consulted at key points in the process, specifically to include the selection of the site.

It is further moved that the Building Committee be empowered to spend up to \$25,000 for the conceptual drawings needed to commence the fund raising for a new building.

Building Committee credentials outline: Jake introduced each of the Building Committee members present and described their credentials – see notes after the member's names above

5 Prospective Sites (a site is necessary in order to move on): Jake Jacobson

1. J.L. Jackson site – not readily available, but in desirable location
2. Haney Village – free land, and welcomed by Museum Association but out of town centre.
3. City owned lot by Recreation Centre – possibly donate land and lots of parking, but not in town centre
4. Current property in addition to Bart's – good location, but not free land

5. Current property in addition to Bart's and Bill Laird's strip between Lakeshore Dr and Bart's – good location, not free

All avenues are being explored.

Questions and Discussions of Motion (the questioner is listed with the question, the answerer is indented)

Lois Archer-Duel: What is the \$25,000 for?

Jake Jacobson: a quote for up to that amount has been given to do site specific architectural plans for a building with all our wish list – for grant and fundraising purposes – NOT an engineered plan

Peter Buxton Carr: Is \$8 million enough?

Jake: we'll build only up to the amount we can raise

Rich Daniels: what is the construction timeline? Will we miss a season?

Jake: 2 years in total for construction. How it will effect the season will depend on the site and if we are taking out the current theatre or not (and if so if we find another spot to do shows)

Tracy Stacer: Where is the \$25, 000 coming from?

Denise Green (Treasurer) We have \$21,000 in our savings account and have secured a \$10,000 Line of Credit. The \$25,000 is a ceiling quote for the conceptual drawings, hopefully we won't spend that much on this part of the process.

Tracy Stacer: If we aren't spending the money on the drawings until we get a site secured how do we hope to secure land without a down payment (if we're using our savings for the drawings?) If we don't get free land how do we hope to raise money to secure the land to be sure enough to spend the \$25,000 on the drawings to raise the money for the building?

Jake: Many of the considered sites would be donated land. For the others letters of agreement on a set price could be drafted so that the funds could be raised based on them and we could go ahead with drawings to assist with this.

Kim MacMillan: What are the requirements being considered when looking at hiring an architect to do the drawings?

Margaret: This is a serious consideration and a few of the criteria (not a complete list) includes: availability throughout the whole process, history, ability to work with a competent project manager from our group to maintain a hands-on and local aspect to the project. 6 architects have approached the Committee with interest.

Lois: What is our current building worth?

Jake: Assessed value \$300,000 including equipment that can be transferred to the new facility

Fred Green: What do we still owe on the building?

Denise Green: \$22,000 to the City (a grant that was recalled)

Anne Skelhorne : What would the \$8 million cover?

Jake: That would cover the whole building and all the fixtures and new instruments, etc.... the plan is to use the current lighting and sound equipment in the rehearsal space.

Denise Reimer: Does the site option of current space plus Bart's and Bill Laird's property give us enough room for adequate parking?

Doug Leatherdale: according to code we'd only need 225 stalls and that would be doable within that space.

Randy Arsenault: Many architects have jumped on the "green" bandwagon but do not have actual experience/expertise in this area. If we are looking at having green options we should keep that in mind.

Jake: There is now certification for "green" architects and guidelines for certifying a building as "green", that is something that we are looking at. It may not be worth getting the certification for the building, but doing the building based on those guidelines to get the benefit from doing so.

Cilla Budda NOTES: when the Society took out a \$200,000 mortgage on the current site it was overwhelming and horrifying and yet it is paid down and seems paltry now. There are serious capacity concerns with the current building and this would open up a lot of rental opportunities.

Jake NOTES: the 599 seats would be partially in the balcony, partially on the floor and there would be a movable partition in the floor section so that a more intimate space can be created (not a cavernous space for smaller uses).

Dennis Roberts: What is the projected revenue of the operating space?

James: this is very speculative, but, if we bring in comparable rentals to Vernon we're looking at approximately \$120,000 per year (with a booking agent/TD/manager optimizing rentals). The main goal is to cover the regular operating costs with the leases.

Lois Archer-Duel: Would there be a full-time in-house Technical Director?

Jake: All rentals of the space would require a Theatre approved technician be on site and factored into the rental cost. (We do this now to a certain extent). Staffing will depend on the needs of the space.

Call to vote on motion: Julia Body

Count: 34 yays

2 nays

Majority rules, motion is carried.

Move to adjourn: James Bowlby
Adjourned 8:17pm