

Council Report

Report Date: February 9, 2021
Meeting Date: February 16, 2021

To: Council
From: Mayor Simpson
Subject: Reconsideration of Resolution 21-09-88

Purpose

Mayor's request that Council reconsider its decision to not fund the feasibility study for the standing wave amenity in the City's approved Waterfront Plan.

Summary

Council's deliberations regarding the February 2, 2021 Administration report #31/2021 – Quesnel River Whitewater Recreation Opportunities, and its rejection of the staff recommendation to fund a feasibility study for the standing wave(s) in the City's Waterfront Plan was based on some misleading statements and/or inaccurate understandings of the concept; failed to take into account a number of critical considerations; involved circular reasoning; and, appeared to not recognize that money specifically for projects such as this is already in the City's budget.

For example, the statement that the proposed wave(s) are in a location that may interfere with the North-South Interconnector project gave the impression to the public that we had already decided on the location without taking the Interconnector into account, while in fact no such work has been done. The schematic depicting the standing wave(s) in the Waterfront Plan is for illustration purposes only, as are all the other renderings of the various components of the Plan. For example, the RV Park/Campground that was submitted to Province for funding is not the one depicted in the Waterfront Plan. The actual locations for any standing wave(s) in the Quesnel River would be determined by the feasibility study.

The question of liability raised at the previous meeting would also be addressed in the feasibility study. However, Councillors should all be fully aware that this question arises with respect to all amenity investments the City makes and all of the City's infrastructure, programs, and services. For example, Council has made major investments in trails and has a grant application in for a major bike park; these trails and the bike park have similar liability issues to a standing wave(s), yet Council has approved the grant applications and matching funds for the trail projects. The City, as a Corporate entity, is able to address the liability of this potential new amenity and tourist attraction and Council should inherently know this to be true.

The concern about whether expending money on a feasibility study only to find out that something isn't feasible or won't be approved is an inherent aspect of conducting any feasibility study. To suggest that Council not fund a feasibility study in case something isn't feasible is simply circular reasoning. The suggestion that we approach the regulatory bodies with no plan and no idea of what is possible is simply a recipe to get to no. Our success as a Council in obtaining approval from regulatory bodies (such as BC Parks for the Dragon Mountain Trail Network) is illustrative



of the work that will need to be done if we are to realize the potential that a standing wave(s) in the Quesnel River would have for our community's future economic development. We need to be clear about what we're asking the regulatory bodies to consider, which requires us to do our homework, which requires we conduct a feasibility study.

Finally, Council appeared to have the impression that the \$40,000 for the feasibility study would require new money, which is not the case. Upon approval of the 2021 Operating Budget, Council will have \$141,422 in Council Initiatives and another \$50,000 for project development and planning. The funding request from Council was simply to use \$40,000 from funds Council has already specifically set aside for projects such as this.

The reason the City of Quesnel has attracted significant grant funding and is seen as a leader in innovation in this field is because the previous Council funded the foundational strategies and plans and laid the groundwork needed to have "shovel-ready" projects ready to submit as grants became available. The nominal investments Council made in the past in our branding strategy, wayfinding/placemaking/hosting strategy, trails master plan, housing strategy, and waterfront plan have garnered millions of dollars in grant funding to our community.

The \$40,000 required for a feasibility study for the standing wave portion of Council's unanimously approved and adopted Waterfront Plan is a nominal investment that could potentially see us attract major grant funding in the future, enabling us to build a unique and game changing amenity in our community and further assist us to realize our brand promise as a fun and innovative community that continues to attract visitors, residents, and investment.

Council needs to demonstrate leadership, which involves risk, and approve funding from Council Initiatives to conduct a feasibility study for the standing wave component of the Waterfront Plan.

Recommendation

THAT Quesnel City Council reconsiders its February 2, 2021 decision of Resolution #21-09-88, and approves the use of \$40,000 from the Council Initiatives budget to complete the Quesnel Standing Wave Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan.

Statutory Requirements

1. Community Charter, Section 131 - Mayor may require council reconsideration of a matter
2. Council Procedure Bylaw 1889 - Section 26 – Reconsideration
3. Robert's Rules – 11th Edition – Section 37 – Reconsideration

Attachments

1. Resolution #21-09-88 – February 2, 2021 Regular Quesnel City Council Meeting
2. Administration Report #31-21 – Quesnel River Whitewater Recreation Opportunities – Previously attached to the February 2, 2021 Council Agenda.