

Waskesiu Community Association Inc.
(Waskesiu Community Council)
Annual General Meeting and
‘Waskesiu 2020 and Beyond’ Community Action Plan
Report Card & Update
Hawood Inn (Kingsmere Hall) Sunday, August 7th, 2016

MEETING MINUTES

Jim Kerby, Chair
Cottage Owners Representative

Bryan Matheson
Member at Large

Randy Kershaw
Cabin Owners Representative

Nancy Wood Archer, Vice Chair
Commercial Lessees’ Representative

Janice MacKinnon*
Member at Large

George Wilson*
Member at Large

Brent Hamel, Sec.-Treasurer
Permanent Residents Representative

(*Janice MacKinnon and George Wilson were unable to attend.)

Present: 32 members and, representing Parks Canada Agency, Superintendent David Britton and Townsite Manager Gregg Rutten.

Community Council Chair (2015/2016) and Chair of the meeting – Jim Kerby

1. **Coffee and Refreshments** (9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.)
2. **Call to Order & Welcome** (Waskesiu Community Council Chair - Jim Kerby)
 - Adoption of 2016 AGM Meeting Agenda
Motion to adopt the Meeting Agenda as circulated made by Linda King, seconded by Mona Finlayson **Carried**
 - Adoption of 2015 AGM Minutes
Motion to adopt the 2015 AGM minutes made by Wayne Perkins, seconded by Jenica Ashlie **Carried**
3. **Waskesiu Community Council - Chair’s Year End Report** (Jim Kerby)

On behalf of the Waskesiu Community Council, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Waskesiu Community Association Inc.

My name is Jim Kerby. I am honored to be the Chair of the Waskesiu Community Council, and to be the Chair of today's meeting.

Since last year's AGM, your Community Council has been very active, and very productive. It has been a pleasure to work with my fellow Councilors on your behalf - and all of us are very ably assisted by our Administrator, Noreen Matthews. Noreen – you have been described as the "glue that helps keep Council working together" – and I couldn't agree more. Thank you.

The representative roles that the seven (7) members of Council fulfil are as follows:

Jim Kerby (representing cottage owners)
Randy Kershaw (representing cabin owners)
Nancy Wood Archer (representing the business community)
Brent Hamel (representing permanent residents)
Bryan Matheson (Member at large)
Janice MacKinnon (Member at large)
George Wilson (Member at large).

An important part of our plans today is to provide you - the Waskesiu community - with an update on what has already been accomplished during the last 12 months, what is being done right now, and what will be done in the future to continue to implement our Waskesiu Community Action Plan.

By way of background, back in 2013 the Community Council initiated a "visioning" process – starting first with Parks Canada Agency, and then with all of the key Waskesiu stakeholder groups. That visioning process was called “Vision 2020 and Beyond”. The purpose of Vision 2020 and Beyond was to collaborate on what we, as a community, wanted the Waskesiu townsite to look like, feel like, and be like, by the year 2020 - and beyond.

Given that we believed the Vision 2020 and Beyond process was one of the most important undertakings our community could pursue, we worked with all of the key stakeholder groups in Waskesiu and, in 2014, we held a very successful Community Open House with over 220 people in attendance. That Community Open House provided us with valuable insights, information and great feedback, helping to better shape a "shared vision" for Waskesiu.

At last year's AGM, our community enthusiastically endorsed the Community Action Plan – a detailed plan focused on "action", and designed to successfully achieve the shared vision of our community.

Today we will give you the first detailed update on our progress regarding "Vision 2020 and Beyond", and our Community Action Plan. More on that later in the agenda.

I would, at this juncture, like to cover just a few of the highlights of what has happened since 2015.

As a reminder, in 2015 the federal government announced an extra \$2.6 billion dollars for Parks Canada Agency nationally – with funds to be used for, among other things, completing deferred work in relation to Parks Canada assets/infrastructure. Our community, and PANP as a whole, was – thanks to the efforts of Superintendent Alan Fehr and his staff - in a good position to capitalize on that opportunity. Given that 2016 is Canada's 150th birthday, Council is hopeful that other positive announcements – including some grant funding – may become available to Waskesiu and PANP.

During the last fiscal year, Prince Albert National Park benefited from more than \$29 million in federal money to improve our marina, roads and trails. The investments, which were announced last July, included:

- \$15.3 million to resurface a portion of Highway 263 (the Scenic Highway);
- a \$7.4-million rehabilitation of the Waskesiu marina;
- a \$3-million rehabilitation of access to the GreyOwl Site;
- a \$1.5 million improvement to the townsite's water main;
- \$500,000 to repair 35 kilometers of trails around the townsite; and
- \$2 million for the second phase of an environmental project to rehabilitate grasslands, maintain health of the Sturgeon River plains bison population and work with First Nations and Metis people to help connect visitors to the Park.

A great deal of work has been completed at the Waskesiu Lake main Marina, and even more work will be done there this fall and next spring to replace the existing docks, and add new docks that will accommodate about 100 additional boat slips. This is a major injection of new capital into Prince Albert National Park for the benefit of our community.

Significant work on the Kingsmere road, the Kingsmere River boat launch, and the trail to Grey Owl's cabin, is also underway.

August of 2015 saw the first Waskesiu Lakeside Music Festival – a festival that will be repeated again this year on the last weekend of August and, we hope, will become an annual event drawing (eventually) thousands of people to our community. Admission is free – so please support the Lakeside Music Festival by your attendance, by inviting your friends to Waskesiu, and by agreeing to volunteer. Remember – this is far more than just building facilities and other infrastructure – it's also about the look and feel of Waskesiu, while trying to bring more visitors to our Park outside of the June 15 to August 15 window.

Last summer also saw the first ever "Crown the King" swim competition from Trippes Beach to King Island – put on by the PA Triathlon Club.

Parks Canada upgraded Beaver Glen campground – and has electrified all of the campground sites.

The Community Hall had new high speed (and very efficient and quiet) fans installed - thanks to the combined efforts of the Waskesiu Foundation and the Waskesiu Chamber of Commerce. More upgrades for the Community Hall are currently being planned.

On the negative side, Canada Post elected to close our local post office - Council worked very hard to change their minds. Regrettably, we were unsuccessful, and we now have outdoor community super mail boxes installed near the old Post Office building. The old Post Office building will soon be released by Parks Canada, as part of an advertised, open bidding/request for proposals system.

During the fall of 2016 we found out that Alan Fehr, who was our PANP Superintendent for approximately 8 years, was heading to Jasper to take on the role of Superintendent there. Alan, like many Superintendents before him, was an important part of our community - and we wish him well in his new role in Jasper.

Back on the positive side of the news, in March of 2016 we were introduced to David Britton, our new Field Unit Superintendent. A sincere welcome to Waskesiu David – we are very pleased to have you here as part of this wonderful community.

The spring of 2016 also saw a very important reorganization of the Waskesiu Chamber of Commerce, and the creation of the Waskesiu Recreation Association. The new Waskesiu Recreation Association is off to a great start – so please help them enhance recreational and event offerings in our community. One easy way is to recycle your returnable cans and bottles – as all of the proceeds from recycled containers placed in the green and blue bins around the Park go to the Waskesiu Recreation Association to take care of facilities, provide recreation offerings, and put on community events.

Council believes there is a great deal to be proud of in Waskesiu, and as such we decided that we would invite the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada to make a visit Waskesiu. Guess what – he has agreed to pay us a quick visit later this month.

The Waskesiu Foundation – a tremendous Waskesiu community success story that we want to share with the Parks Canada CEO – just topped \$2 million of funds raised in our community. An amazing story, and a great success. This year's annual Waskesiu Foundation dinner – yet another success – raised funds for the new Endowment Fund created by the Waskesiu Foundation. Planned giving has also seen success, with over \$350,000 of planned giving donations identified thus far.

The Waskesiu Recreation Area renewal project continues to make progress – with significant contributions coming from, among others, Parks Canada Agency, the Waskesiu Foundation, and 13+ hole sponsors already identified for the new mini-golf facility.

The tennis courts were resurfaced and painted – including two new Pickle Ball courts – and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Gordon and Jill Rawlinson family for, once again, making such an important contribution to our community.

The Waskesiu Foundation and the Waskesiu Community Council both updated their websites – both of which now have a fresh new look and are now mobile friendly. The Community Council also adopted a new logo – symbolic of a "red deer" (an elk) – the literal meaning, in English, of the Cree word "Waskesiu".

Efforts have also been made to improve the wireless communications in the townsite – iNet2000 and SaskTel are both making new investments, and we should see the benefits of that work by next year – if not before.

To Parks Canada – including among others - Acting Superintendent Norm Stolle, Townsite Manager Gregg Rutten, and our new Superintendent David Britton - I and our entire Council have really appreciated our working relationship. While there will inevitably be disagreements from time to time, the fact is that we share many common goals – including enhancing the Waskesiu experience, protecting our environment, trying to keep our business community strong, and increasing visitation to the Park – all of which makes it easier to collectively, and respectfully, work together to achieve the desired goals.

In conclusion, thank you for being here and participating today. More importantly, we commend you for your interest in and commitment to this wonderful community that we all love.

We encourage you, and all of Waskesiu's residents (both seasonal and permanent), our visitors, and our business operators, to continue to share your views with Council on how to improve, and continue to enhance, the Waskesiu experience. Your dedication to Prince Albert National Park, the townsite of Waskesiu, and our community, is greatly appreciated.

4. **Financial Report** – Randy Kershaw

- **Presentation and Adoption of 2015/2016 Financial Statements of the Corporation:**

Motion: “That the Financial Statements for the last fiscal year of the Corporation, in the form prepared by Virtus Group LLP and presented to this Annual General Meeting, be and the same are hereby approved and adopted.”

Motion moved by Brian Morgan, seconded by Derwin Arnstead Carried Unanimously

- **Waiver of Appointment of Auditor / Appointment of Virtus Group LLP to prepare Review Engagement Financial Statements:**

Motion: “That the Corporation dispense with the appointment of an auditor for the current fiscal year and appoint Virtus Group LLP to prepare the Corporation's financial statements for the current fiscal year on a review engagement basis, with Virtus Group LLP's remuneration to be determined by the Board of Directors of the Corporation.”

Motion moved by Herb Pinder, seconded by Herve Langlois Carried Unanimously

5. Parks Canada Update – David Britton, Prince Albert National Park Field Unit Superintendent

Mr. Britton introduced himself to the meeting, including discussion regarding his career and personal background. David is originally from Ontario, and spent the first fourteen years of his career working in Ottawa, mainly in Parks Canada Agency's national office. For the last five years, he has been working for Parks Canada in the field, most recently as the Superintendent of Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories.

Updates

- Successful summer season, Canada Day, Children’s Festival, Lakeside Music Festival
- No significant visitor safety or law enforcement incidents
- Visitation - strong numbers

Infrastructure

- Highway 263 – nearly complete, just shoulder drop-off and line painting to finish
- Marina – paving complete, dock component tendered, installation of new docks scheduled for the fall-spring
- Kingsmere – closed for remainder of season, work delayed due to weather, anticipate completion this fall
- Sewer force main – installation scheduled in October
- Water treatment plant controls – installation scheduled in October
- Seasonal staff trailer park washrooms – construction underway, work to be finished in fall
- Design work associated with renewal of trails, campgrounds, beach houses is ongoing
- Four-way intersection – options analysis underway
- Next funding deadline in October – will likely request funding, for additional projects.

Conservation & Restoration Funding

- Reconnecting Grasslands, Bison and People project continues, main accomplishments this year were 900 ha prescribed fire near South Gate to restore native grasslands and upgrades to trails on the West Side.

Looking Forward

Canada 150

- Anticipate significantly higher visitation
- Beginning planning work to manage volume and plan for enhanced events
- Re-opening of the Nature Centre will be part of the 2017 celebration of Canada 150

Management Planning

- PANP will be developing an updated management plan next year
- Scope is the whole park, but Waskesiu will be an important component
- Will not deal with townsite issues at the level of detail of the Community Plan, which was approved in 2015.

6. Waskesiu '2020 and Beyond' Community Action Plan – Report Card (Jim Kerby / Brent Hamel)

A presentation by Jim Kerby and Brent Hamel was given updating the status of the Waskesiu Vision 2020 and Beyond Community Action Plan and its Implementation Strategy. A copy of the presentation will be placed on www.waskesiu.org.

7. Question and Answer Session

Member Comment: There is a concern about the decrease of affordable accommodations in the community. Lakeview, Kapasiwin, Bakers Bungalows are all changing and will not be affordable for the average visitor. Encouraged PCA to be diligent to encourage and be proactive to provide accommodations that are affordable.

PCA Reply: PCA is very aware of the concern and is currently in discussion with Council.

Member Comment/Question: The member echoes the above comment – it is like the elephant in the room. Why, in the Financial Statement, is the land rent revenue \$100,000 less than last year and less than the year before?

PCA Answer: Probably because the newer commercial leases are now based on a percentage of gross. Plus the Waskesiu Golf Course is now based on a lower percentage of gross than was the case in prior years.

Member Question: Is the revenue reported split between residential and commercial leases?

PCA Answer: Yes.

Member Question: When trying to book sites at the beginning of the year for Beaver Glen and Red Deer Campgrounds, they are totally booked up within minutes. Does PCA have any plans to expand these campgrounds?

PCA Answer: There are plans underway. There are conceptual plans in the works for larger sites in Beaver Glen. There are no plans to enlarge Red Deer. Enlarging the overflow campgrounds plans are in the works as well.

Member Comment: Agrees again, it is about offering more affordable accommodation and encourages PCA to expand both trailer parks and camping spots.

Member Question: Due to the large size of many of the RV's in the Red Deer Campground, the number of boats parking on Waskesiu Drive is a huge issue. There is worry about safety, especially of children. Suggests PCA recommend visitors should park their boats in the new parking area at the Marina.

PCA Answer: Currently a parking strategy for the townsite is in the works, including signage so people know exactly where to park. The parking strategy is part of the Waskesiu 2020 and Beyond Community Action Plan, with progress already made in relation to the Marina -townsite is next.

Member Comment: The vehicles and boats parked on the cabin streets is very congested. Suggests PCA develop a special parking rate at the Marina for short term parking.

Member Question: What is going to happen this year with the urban reforestation? The Park does not need to do anymore of the railed areas to protect the newly planted trees - it looks terrible.

PCA Answer: The railed off areas were originally designed to protect the deciduous trees from the wildlife and the elements. The rails will be coming down as part of this year's Arbor Day activities.

Member Comment – The townsite entrance sign on Highway 264 is not easy to see. There are too many distractions when visitors are arriving. For example – wildlife in the ditches, visitors slowing down to take photos, wildlife running across the highway, and so on. Suggested a much larger sign, right at the turn into the townsite with a large arrow.

PCA Answer: Looking at installing signage warning of the wildlife.

Member Comment: Townsite activities are very important to the community. For example: Wednesday Night Bingos attract nearly 120 people every week. It is affordable entertainment, targeted at families and is supported by volunteers. Bingo leads to the culture of the community. These are the kind of things that bring people here.

Member Question: What is happening to the main beach breakwater?

PCA Answer: PCA is aware of its deteriorating condition. They are looking at it as part of the infrastructure renewal program.

Member Comment/Question: Congratulations to everyone on all initiatives being undertaken. Has anything been decided on release of the properties on Prospect Point?

PCA Answer: Nothing has been decided.

Member Question: What is the status of the announcement made last year for the placement of free WI-FI hotspots throughout the Waskesiu townsite?

PCA Answer: These were originally meant to be specifically in the campgrounds. PCA is not aware of anything happening in Waskesiu or anywhere across the country in this respect. They will, however, follow up on that point.

Member Question: Why are there trees tagged with pink ribbons along the waterfront on the Kingfisher Trail?

PCA Answer: Years ago, PCA started viewscapes in the townsite. There were initial trees chosen to be removed to create a viewscapes. Nothing more has happened and PCA is not sure of the status of the program. The pink ribbons do not indicate the tree is marked for removal, they indicate the tree is part of the mapping program for viewscapes.

Member Question: With the removal of old tall trees on streets in the cabin and cottage area, is there a plan or information available suggesting choices of trees residents should use when replanting – i.e. suggested species?

PCA Answer: This is something that the Waskesiu Seasonal Residents association could address. It is up to the lease holder on what to plant. This could be added to Vegetation Management.

Member Question: Does PCA help with the cost of replanting in these areas?

PCA Answer: If the trees are on Park land, the Park pays. If the trees are on the lease holders lot, the lease holders pay.

8. Adjournment

11:54

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Jennica Ashlie