# Village of Fort Simpson

EGAT AND THE STATE OF THE STATE

Post Office Box 438 Fort Simpson, N.W.T. X0E 0N0

Telephone (403) 695-2253 Fax (403) 695-2005

October 7, 1996

Hon. Manitok Thompson Legislature Building Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2L9

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Re Fort Simpson Community Centre

Date Rec'd. 3 1936 00045 052

OTHER MIN. INFO. Copy to Referral to DResp. for Minister's Signature OBriefing Req'd.

DResp. on behalf of Minister OTHER INITIALS / SIGN.

N.W.T. LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

OCT 1 6 1996

Yellowknife, N.W.T.

We are very disappointed to see the Motion 17-13(3) of October 7, 1996 asking for the deferral of our Community Centre.

Our Council has not been consulted at all on the matter during this debate and with all due respect to the Members and the Press, the background and facts of this reallocation of funds do not seem to be clearly understood, as we see them.

In brief, the funds reallocated to the Centre were approved in the Five Year Capital as the Alternate Island Access Road Project (#7351791), for construction in the 1995/96 fiscal year. The funds were carried over to the 1996/97 fiscal year and reallocated through the Finance Management Board. No other community's projects were affected.

There was full consultation with the Minister of MACA, our MLA and the government department concerned. Subsequently the documentation and background material was presented to the Finance Management Board to gain their approval of the reallocation.

The original project of the Alternate Island Access Road was rejected by a public plebiscite vote, indicating that it did not have wide community support. Therefore the public and the Tri Council (The Village, First Nation and Metis Nation) were asked to recommend the highest priority item that was not presently covered under our 5 Year Capital Plan. The guidelines given were for a very compelling project that enjoyed wide community support, and that could be built within the Capital Budget figure already approved by the Assembly for the Access Road, as we clearly understood that there would not be any new money. The often talked of Community Centre was proposed.

...2/

In our view we are practicing Community Empowerment. The members of our community are giving us, the elected officials, direction as to their community's needs. This is grass roots democracy in action. In contrast, this Motion is suggesting that a local Community decision that changes an approved Capital project, must again go back to the Legislature for further approval. The root of Community Empowerment is surely that the community has the right to make changes depending on the local needs, within the guidelines provided. Flexibility is required in this transition time to allow each community to develop. It would seem that the procedure outlined in the Motion is community enablement, not community empowerment.

We were not aware that all projects must first be on the Five Year Capital Plan, neither were we aware that any changes in projects should also be approved by the Assembly. In fact we were advised that we could request a reallocation of funds from the Access Road project to another project, both by staff and elected representatives.

Attached is a summary of the reasons for a much needed Community Centre in Fort Simpson and an overview of the project.

We respectfully request that we be permitted to at least complete the design of this Community Centre. We will include the actual construction of the facility on the 1997/98 Five Year Capital Plan for approval by the Assembly to follow the due process.

Yours truly

Tom Wilson

Deputy Mayor

Tom Wellson

cc NWTAM



# FORT SIMPSON COMMUNITY CENTRE

#### An Overview

# History

The planning for a new Community Centre began in 1984 as a Complex to house new First Nation offices, commercial office space, an Exhibition Hall and Community Hall. The survey work and preliminary design work was completed, but due to a lack of finances the Complex was not built. The need however did remain, which has been partially met with the conversion of the upstairs viewing area overlooking the community gym and natural ice arena.

It is small for many of the feasts, dances and bingo events that are held there. The steep stairs prevent handicapped and the elderly from attending functions. Our community of approximately 1200 people makes frequent use of the Hall. There are no large gathering places at ground level to house these events.

## The Community Hall

Over the years the Community Hall has been thought of as a Complex. Only with the recent possibility of actually building a Community Centre did we seriously look at the more economic solution of adding on to the existing Gym and Arena. We also limited our focus to the greatest needs, which are a gathering place for larger events (on average two per week), a community kitchen and a foyer/display area to meet, visit and celebrate our heritage.

To prepare a conceptual draft proposal for presentation to MACA and the Management Finance Board we retained Ferguson Simek Clark. Their suggestions were further clarified by the Tri Council over several meetings, and finally presented. Since then we have further developed the proposal through models and drawings.

The Community Hall would seat 300 people. But there would be a sliding partition between the Hall and the Gym to allow for large dances and community wide events seating twice that number. The Community Kitchen would be large enough to cater for these feasts and events.

## Working Together-Community Empowerment

This is the first major project that the Tri Council has worked on together. We have been encouraged to work together on community wide initiatives, as part of the Government's thrust for community empowerment. This project is important to us as a joint project as well as the obvious need of a Hall.