

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.

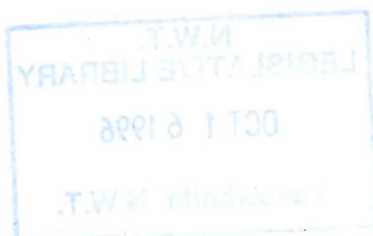
We respectfully request that we be permitted to at least complete the design of this Community Centre. We will include the actual construction of the facility on the 1997/98 Five Year Capital Plan for approval by the Assembly to follow the due process.

Yours truly



Tom Wilson
Deputy Mayor

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.