

# North Shuswap Incorporation Feasibility Study Group

## Minutes

August 8, 2016 1pm - NS Community Hall Board Room

Attendance: Jeff Tarry, Scotch Creek - Chair  
Jane Mastin - TRUE  
Terry Underwood - TRUE  
Bill Long, Scotch Creek  
Craig Spooner, Lee Creek  
Dave Cunliffe, Celista  
Dean Acton, Scotch Creek  
Jay Simpson, Lee Creek

Not attending: Sherry Taylor, Celista

### Welcome

25 members of the public attended the meeting. They were welcomed and thanked for their interest.

Call to order: 1:03 pm, August 8

1. Adopt Agenda - Motion by Jay Simpson/Dean Acton Approved
2. Adopt minutes of last meeting - June 27, 16 Motion by Jay Simpson/Dean Acton Approved
3. TRUE Presentation - See attached Kicker article  
A final report should be available in September.
4. Study Group Discussion - Questions were asked and answered during the presentation. All important points have been included in the attached Kicker article.
5. Questions/Comments from the public - Public comments and questions were entertained.  
A sign in sheet filled out at the start of the meeting showed 12 of 25 were in favour of 'moving ahead to the next step'; 2 of 25 were not in favour of moving ahead; 11 of 25 either needed more information or had no opinion at that time.  
At the end of the meeting, by a rough show of hands it looked like 18 were in favour, 2 against, and 5 were undecided or still looking for more infojane.
6. New Business - No new business was brought forward.
7. Set next meeting date - Due to unknown schedules, next meeting date will be determined by email.

Meeting adjourned at 2.33pm.

UPDATE: NEXT MEETING OCTOBER 3RD, 1PM, CELISTA HALL CLUBROOM

# North Shuswap Incorporation Feasibility Study Group

## Incorporation Progress

No “red flags” have been uncovered so far by TRUE Consultants in the initial study into the feasibility of incorporation for part of the North Shuswap.

North Shuswap Incorporation Feasibility Study Group received preliminary results August 8 from TRUE Project Manager Jane Mastin, senior planner responsible for the community overview and governance structure components of the study and Terry Underwood, responsible for elements relating to infrastructure issues (water, sanitary sewer, roads, drainage). Along with the Study Group, about 25 members of the public attended.

Mastin said they are looking at Scotch Creek to understand its composition and to compare it to other incorporated municipalities of similar size in BC. Funds for the study were raised by private individuals. The Columbia Shuswap Regional District provided staff resources to gather information.

The study is focussing on a specific section defined as the primary settlement area in the North Shuswap Official Community Plan. There has to be a starting point, she said, and it would make this initial study more difficult if boundaries were fluid.

The Scotch Creek OCP neighbourhood has 669 persons according to 2011 census, 1040 private dwellings and has seasonal fluctuations, growing to about 2,500 persons in the summer. The average age is early retirement age.

There are 161 registered municipalities in BC, 27 of these have a population under 1,000. Although some newer municipalities with larger populations were taken into consideration on some topics, the study mainly focussed on the 27, comparing budgets, services, sources of finances and assessed values.

Some of the 27 have been in existence since the early 1900s but the province has a track record of establishing new municipalities with West Kelowna, Barrier and Clearwater in 2007 and Sun Peaks in 2010. (Sun Peaks has 371 persons in the summer, growing much higher in the winter.)

The average total assessment of the 27 is \$85 million. In Scotch Creek, it is \$300 million. Only two of the 27 have higher assessed values. Exempt parcels including the provincial park, CSRD parks and Agricultural Land Reserve properties are \$14m, leaving over \$285m assessed values.

From the \$285m assessed values, \$1.7 million is collected in tax each year. Items such as school, hospital, RCMP and some CSRD services would come out of that total, leaving Scotch Creek about \$650,000 available to operate a municipality. Many of the other 27 are operating with a much smaller budget, she said.

Scotch Creek would also have other sources of revenue available to it. In other municipalities, 20 to 30 percent of operating income comes from transfers from federal and provincial governments.

Scotch Creek neighbourhood is in the average range for land area. The average length of roads for the 27 is 12 km. Scotch Creek has 15 km, excluding the Squilax-Anglemont which would continue to be maintained by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Underwood said no significant road upgrades or maintenance is needed and there are no bridges.

24 of the 27 operate water systems, 20 operate sewer systems and 14 have storm water systems. The municipalities function as utility managers and also look after roads, parks and community halls.

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Underwood said the highest priority for Scotch Creek seems to be a sanitary sewer system. There have been several studies over the past 10 or more years. The main driver is protection of groundwater but it will also give the community the ability to build a thriving community core. There may be grant money available to Scotch Creek to build a system or to the Little Shuswap Indian Band to operate a sewer utility for the community. Terry said there are definite advantages to moving a sewer forward as a municipality, which has better ability and flexibility to finance it with federal and provincial grants. Some recently built municipal systems have received 100% funding but is usually 1/3 province, 1/3 federal and 1/3 municipality.

Potential municipal assets would include regional district parks, Saratoga Water system, cash that has been collected in lieu of parkland and the fire hall/community hall.

Two items of note were that there is no building suitable for a municipal office. The other is that adopting the official community plan put a freeze on development, suggesting there is a portion of the population interested in the status quo. The interest of both sides would have to be merged.

At the next Study Group meeting in September, TRUE will give more information about a water system.

If the final report from TRUE looks promising, the next step is for the Study Group to advocate for a formal incorporation study. This would be funded and managed by the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and would include public meetings. After that, a decision would be made whether to take it to referendum or not.