

Successful Municipal Practices: Responding to New Challenges



Tools for Change

BETTER MUNICIPAL BUSINESS PRACTICES: Strategic Planning Workshop The RM of Eriksdale

The Rural Municipality (RM) of Eriksdale is located in the Interlake region and is home to more than 900 residents who earn their living from farming, fishing or the tourism industry. Council understands the importance of creating strong, vibrant and affordable communities and appreciates that a strategic plan and a united vision are necessary to maintain viability into the future.

In 2007 Council agreed that a strategic planning workshop, facilitated by an experienced consultant, would be an effective and cost efficient way to establish a vision and long term goals for the municipality.

In order to find a consultant that would be a good fit for the community and its goals, Eriksdale asked the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) and the Community Futures Interlake West to provide names of possible consultants. The municipality then issued a request for proposals from interested consultants that detailed their approach, the time and personnel required, and the total cost to facilitate the workshop. Two proposals were received, and the successful consultant was chosen based on the criteria of a practical approach, municipal experience, budget, and chemistry with the community and Council.

Council believed that workshop participants should include all members of the municipal Council and staff, representatives from the local hospital and school board, a former reeve of the RM, a former resident and twenty citizens. This broad range of participants would bring forward a variety of viewpoints on the future direction and goals of the municipality. To prepare, prior to the workshop, all participants were asked to consider several questions prepared by the consultant and designed to generate ideas and facilitate discussion.

A one-day strategic planning workshop was held on March 13, 2008. Participants discussed their perception of the current state of the municipality, and their visions and goals for the future.

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*Strategic
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effective
workshop for
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Innovative ideas and “outside the box” thinking were encouraged, and participants were asked to be honest in their evaluations and objectives. Once goals were identified, participants shared their thoughts on ways to achieve the goals and developed measures to gauge achievements.

Eriksdale Council believes that its strategic planning workshop was a success. Council gained a keen understanding of the community, its assets and opportunities and the wants and needs of the citizens. The exercise was affordable, at a cost of less than \$1,000, and provided the municipality with five clearly defined priorities for the future:

- Establishing a public-private partnership to construct a professional health centre for clinics, health services offices and a wellness centre. The centre will be built on land owned by the municipality in close proximity to the existing hospital.
- Renovate the Hospital and add ultrasound equipment and cancer care services in partnership with the Regional Health Authority and Manitoba Health.
- Create new cottage lots and housing developments by working with developers.
- Upgrade the public park through funds and grants.
- A market plan to promote the RM as a tourist destination, and a safe and affordable community to live, work and raise a family.

Building and sustaining a strong, vibrant and affordable municipality where citizens are proud to live, work and do business has always been the goal of Eriksdale’s Council. Through strategic planning, the municipality has a clearly defined list of priorities to help achieve that goal into the future. Council is pleased with the success of the strategic planning workshop and agrees that strategic planning is necessary and economically feasible for any municipality, large or small.

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For more information on better municipal business practices, Successful Municipal Practices, and the Tools for Change program, see the Association of Manitoba Municipalities’ website, at www.amm.mb.ca.