



Board Meeting Summary Report

November 15th, 2010

Meeting Date: October 21st, 2010

As this is the first Summary Report from MIEDS in this new post-meeting approach to maintaining regular communication with our member Communities, we have provided a general synopsis of MIEDS background and recent initiatives.

MIEDS as an economic development organization works to help set the climate and conditions for successful business development and economic diversification on Haida Gwaii. We do not grant money or operate businesses directly, but rather seek to address critical gaps and develop the tools that local businesses and entrepreneurs can benefit from and take advantage of to make wise business decisions when developing a new opportunity or expanding their existing operation. Towards that end we have been working on:

- a. Haida Gwaii Agriculture Strategy – Food safety and security is very important to our communities. This is an island wide strategy that will look at available land for agriculture use, what food is currently being imported, what is being grown locally now, and what might be feasible to grow locally in the future. It is moving along well, utilizing local consultants.
- b. Haida Gwaii Trail Strategy – Whether it is for our own health, tourism, or as alternate transportation, trails are important local infrastructure. This project brings together the information and documents prepared in the recent past in combination with stakeholder and public input to develop a single strategy for the Islands that addresses sustainable development and use of trails, common standards for all trails on Haida Gwaii, and a mechanism for the communities to prioritize projects and see the overall picture. Funders typically have needed to see a strategy for the islands in place before contributing to ensure that the infrastructure is a priority for the Islands and that maintenance plans are in place.
- c. Community Investment Profile – this is a document developed in conjunction with Northern Development Initiative Trust that lays out the infrastructure, population, and skills of each community and the islands in general. It collates our infrastructure and demographic information to help attract investment to the Islands for economic development.
- d. Regional Economic Development Implementation (REDI) Plan – This is a overarching projected aimed at addressing key economic development gaps and, in particular, creating a benchmark of our progress on Islands to address the priorities that were identified in the 2006 Community Viability Strategy. By revisiting the priorities in the Community Viability Strategy with the various organizations involved in community economic development on Haida Gwaii we will be able to see for the first time how we are collectively progressing to address them, as well as providing an opportunity to update our priorities.
- e. Value Added Symposium – This has been a desire of the board for some time, but it has not yet developed largely due to difficulties in getting the necessary funding so far. This symposium will focus on the resources we have available to us locally, what skills we have or need on island, and what economic opportunities might be feasible; particularly in light of the recent increase in local control over significant volumes of timber.

- f. We are also working to coordinate a meeting on island with the Port of Prince Rupert to give local people an opportunity to learn more about opportunities for overseas shipping.
- g. Tourism Advisory Committee – We have been providing the staff and support funding to the tourism industry through the formation and facilitation of the Tourism Advisory Committee under MIEDS. This Committee is largely self-directed through broad representation from the relevant local stakeholders. Its job is to set the annual project priorities for tourism promotion on Haida Gwaii and to act as a technical advisor to staff working on projects. It is also responsible for promoting the Additional Hotel Room Tax initiative for the Islands.

MIEDS has also been active in assisting people to develop skills island-wide:

- a. We have continued the High School Job Readiness project that QC Councilor Kris Olsen started under Planning 10 and asked MIEDS to take on last year. This is a valuable program that develops employable skills within the secondary schools through the students acquiring a variety of relevant certifications.
- b. Board Development Workshop is an obvious need, as so much of our local development depends on societies and volunteers without a great deal of formal board training and experience. In collaboration with several other local organizations, MIEDS coordinated a one-day workshop on each end of the Islands. The workshop was facilitated by Bill Beamish and Ron Poole. The comments back are of a resounding success with 25 participants on the South End and 14 participants on the North End. With so many more volunteer board members on the Islands, it is very likely that another workshop will take place.
- c. To increase the outreach from this workshop, we have also created a resource page on the MIEDS website for any non-profit society board members to access. Listed on the page are the seminar notes from the facilitators, the handouts and an additional “primer”, website links, and assistance in developing a mission statement.
- d. Research into strategic planning funding is also available on the website: see “if you are a health or social service agency there is Partners in Organizational Development (POD) <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/grants/PODGrants.htm>”
- e. We are also maintaining a current list of all non-profit societies for the islands.

MIEDS is also where the Communities can develop joint projects with our neighbours. Minister of Forests Pat Bell has offered us a Forestry License to Cut (FLTC) of 25,000 m³ of wood yearly until the Annual Allowable Cut is determined, at which time the Communities have been offered a Community Forest Agreement for 80,000 m³ that will be in partnership with BC Timber Sales. The board decided at the previous meeting to use the FLTC as a means of testing the working relationship with both BC Timber Sales and Taan Forest Ltd. by having BC Timber Sales develop the harvest area to the permit stage for us so we can then work with Taan Forest Ltd. to log and market the timber.

Please check out our website (www.mieds.ca) for other information and highlights.