

Minutes for Policy Advisory Committee Meeting
April 10, 2014 at 1:00pm EST
Room: F303, Nipissing University Boardroom, North Bay, ON

Board Member Attendance:

Charles Cirtwill, President and CEO
Martin Bayer, Chair
Florence Bailey, Director
Therese Bergeron-Hopson, Director
Harley D'Entremont, Director
Dominic Giroux, Director

George Macey, Director
Hal McGonigal, Director
Doug Murray, Director
Madge Richardson, Director
Ray Riley, Director

Other Attendees:

Leonid Shafir, Policy Analyst

James Cuddy, Senior Policy Analyst

The Chair gives opening remarks and introduces the agenda.

1. Constraints on “Directors”

Charles speaks about the role of Director’s as per Schedule B, C and D of NPI bylaws. Directors should act in the best interests of the Corporation and not on behalf of their own local interests.

As per Schedule C of NPI bylaws, Directors should provide strategic leadership, but not engage in day-to-day operational matters. Priority policy areas are obtained from consultation sessions, and other broad engagement mechanisms.

The Policy Advisory Committee meetings are intended as an opportunity for Directors to engage in policy discussions free from the normal constraints on Directors. At these meetings they can speak freely as local advocates and issue experts since the conclusions of the meetings are advisory only and treated on par with input from other stakeholders.

2. Purpose of the Policy Committee

Charles outlines the Mandate of the Policy Advisory Committee:

- a) Discuss recent developments in policy and policy implementation in and affecting Northern Ontario;
- b) Provide input and advice to the CEO on policy issues of critical importance to Northern Ontario;
- c) Gather information about, and bring to the staff’s attention, speakers, researchers and stakeholders that would be of value to NPI’s work either now or in the future;
- d) Meet regularly with key community stakeholders to engage in frank exchanges about policy issues and policy implementation in and affecting Northern Ontario;

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- e) Work with staff to incorporate the information collected into the next annual plan and the biennial reviews of the NPI strategic plan.

Charles reiterates that Policy Advisory Committee meetings are NOT meant to determine NPI's agenda. Directors should be well aware of their constraints and the purpose of the Policy Advisory Committee.

3. Select a Chair for the Committee

Charles notes that currently no Chair has been appointed for this Committee. He then asks if anyone would like to volunteer for this position right now. With no takers, Martin volunteers to do so for this meeting only. Martin leads the meeting and discussion going forward.

At this time, Hal clarifies the proper title of this committee: Policy Advisory Committee.

Addendum – post meeting Harley D'Entremont volunteers to chair the committee going forward. Other directors respond positively to this suggestion. It will be added as item one for the next meeting.

4. Roundtable on urgent issues affecting Northern Ontario

Martin now offers Dominic and Ray a chance to lead the discussion. Both defer their ideas for the time being.

Harley –

Harley leads the roundtable discussion, focussing mainly on governance and structural issues of development agencies. He notes that there are a variety of economic development agencies in place now, or are being proposed – i.e., Fednor, NOHFC, REDAs, etc. How are do these various agencies compare to each other in terms of their mandate, organisational structure and authority? What type of governance structure for these agencies is most appropriate for communities in Northern Ontario? Should specific programs be tailored to unique regional challenges? Harley also briefly speaks about the role and importance of post-secondary education.

Hal –

Hal offers the following thoughts and ideas:

- i. Aboriginal people – identify & evaluate circumstances which advance or diminish the contribution of First Nations to the economic and social 'life' of the region. i.e. aboriginal youth are an underutilized (and sometimes unrecognized) component of the region's labour force.
- ii. Communities – prepare a regional catalogue of diagnoses of 'community ills' – physical and social – and realistic targets for physically or socially isolated communities so that government can prioritize and budget for necessary corrective measures.
- iii. Environment – encourage regionally-focussed investigations into the anticipated impacts & timing of ongoing environmental changes on communities, industries, infrastructure (i.e. roads, buildings etc.) & natural systems (i.e. forests, water resources etc.).
- iv. People – encourage investigations of policies/activities which encourage immigration into the region, particularly from outside Canada. (i.e. how can communities encourage and adapt to newcomers. Can/would some aboriginal communities serve as 'welcome centres'? Federal and

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provincial programs are directed to encouraging needed/skilled newcomers. How can these initiatives be tweaked or supplemented regionally?

- v. Infrastructure (Transportation) – Evaluate/solicit research & policies directed to goals and holistic systems rather than mechanisms. i.e. efficient & effective movement of people & goods in/out/across the region rather than competing specifics of road or rail or shipping or air – ‘put the cart(goals) in front of the horse(mechanisms)’ for a change.
- vi. Infrastructure (Communications) – Foster policies/initiatives which move toward the goals of efficient, effective and accessible information delivering communications systems in/out/across the region. (i.e. region-serving satellites, community-serving drones and other industry-serving ‘leading-edge’ technologies, which may often be at a pre-commercial high-risk phase.

George –

George presented the following issues:

- i. Transportation – Similar to Hal, George feels a solid transportation plan in the North is necessary for a strong economy.
- ii. Northern Voice – George believes that we should try to understand the voice of Northerners better (i.e., advocacy initiatives). He questions why movements – such as REDAs – received a large amount of support in the beginning, but fail to deliver any meaningful progress. Even after pouring over a million dollars into REDAs, the excitement behind the movement burnt out. What is the reason for this? Is it the mechanism of the REDA itself that is ineffective? Or is the Northern voice (advocacy) being drowned out by time it reaches Queen’s park?
- iii. Wealth Transfers – Seek to understand the current inflow and outflow for natural resources. George suggested the creating a word map of the movement of the benefits of such resources. What is going out and what is coming in?
 - a. Revenue Sharing –
 - George suggests that revenue sharing needs to consider the boom and busts of natural resource wealth in Northern Ontario. Is the NO vulnerable to the resource curse and/or Dutch Disease considering that the region’s economy largely depends on resources from forestry and mining?
 - George also believes that the cycle of natural resource wealth boom in busts on Northern Ontario is slowly declining. That is, the booms are smaller and the busts are larger, resulting in a decline in the net worth of these industries. These are critical issues which apply to revenue sharing of resource extraction.
 - Lastly, he talks about the recent paper written by Jack Mintz (2013) called “Repairing Canada’s Mining-Tax System to be Less Distorting and Complex”. George says that the royalties Northerner’s receive from resource extraction is said to be 10%, but in reality it is really 2%. George suggests either: i) creating a fund that can be using to transfer wealth effectively during times of boom and bust or ii) tweaking the tax system to consider boom and bust cycles.
- iv. Far North Act – George suggests this should be assessed.

Doug –

- i. Mining Competitiveness and Regulatory Burdens - Recent studies suggest Ontario is now 38th in terms of mining competitiveness. Have regulatory measures effected Northern Ontario’s

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competitiveness and/or innovativeness when he comes to extracting resources? Does the Far North Act hinder NOs competitiveness? Additionally, how are these studies ranking particular regions – i.e., what metrics are being used? And is there good reason to restructure our practises in the North?

- ii. Labour and Skilled Trade Shortages – Statscan says that in general this is not a problem, but Doug believes that regionally speaking Northern Ontario is in danger of this. He suggests we compile the opposing studies to understand more fully what is going on. Is labour mobility a problem?
- iii. Ring of Fire Development Revenue Sharing and Prices – Will RoF development put pressure on communities through increased housing prices and other inflationary effects, especially for those people working for minimum wage and not in the resource extraction process? There should be a plan or strategy to share the revenue from RoF development. Additionally, how will affordable housing be affected by a mining boom?
- iv. Mining Taxes – Are they a hindrance to competitiveness? Are they good or bad? This ties in with mining competitiveness and regulatory burdens.

Therese –

Therese was mostly concerned with medical and social issues that are affecting our communities;

- i. Home Health Care – How to effectively and efficiently serve health care to seniors at home? Opportunity to analyse the initiatives of Red Cross and CCAC. Charles mentions that recently NPI was approached to conduct an assessment of training paramedics rather than nurses to take on in-house senior care issues.
- ii. Rural and Remote Health Issues – Whether or not it is effective to have small local hospitals in Northern communities. Long-term health care in these areas have been especially difficult to supply. Should well-equipped paramedics replace small hospitals?

Florence –

- i. Resource Revenue Sharing as discussed earlier is also on Florence's list of urgent issues
- ii. First Nations – Why is funding from Aboriginal Affairs being cut to first nations council? Florence suggest measuring budget spending patterns and fiscal flows in FN communities to understanding how money is being spent. This will give a better idea of whether funding cuts are justified and/or new spending policies should be implemented.
- iii. Communications Infrastructure – Similar to Hal's recommendation. Currently fibre optic cables are being laid directly on the ground. Is there not a better approach? Communication infrastructure is key to effective commerce in the North – having a proper communications infrastructure plan is necessary.

Madge –

Madge offers the following recommendations:

- i. Health Care – NSWPB recently published a report on Health Human Resource Study which is being used to move their health care plans forward – this could be a partnership opportunity in health care policy.
- ii. Construction – What is the outlook for Northern Ontario (ie., major sectors, projects and opportunities)?

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- iii. Job Training and Matching – NPI could help to identify various programs for internships in trades in other countries. Liaising between job seekers and opportunities – this could tie in with labour mobility studies.
- iv. Immigration and Emigration – Understanding the optimal mix of people coming in and leaving the region. What is the best mix of permanent and temporary workers/residents?

Dominic –

- i. NPI Impact – NPI should continuously reflect on their long-term impact. This means having a clear plan with respect to research conducted. Additionally, NPI should try to be nimble and streamline their focusses
- ii. Exciting projects – choosing exciting research projects and assignment will help NPI to gain exposure.

Martin –

- i. Aboriginal demographics – Aboriginal communities are largely comprised of youth (35 and under). What will this mean for issues such as health care and job opportunities?
- ii. Municipal-First Nation Partnerships – Martin suggests that there should be greater cooperation between services within Municipalities and First Nations. For example, partnerships and collaboration initiatives in fire protection services, police, etc., can result in more efficient and effective systems and services.
- iii. Energy Policy – Assessment of the Green Energy Act – has this affected regional prices?
- iv. Industrial Infrastructure – Is lack of resource export infrastructure? Should the federal government be investing more into Northern Ontario's resource extraction?
- v. Dispersed Energy Generation – Research and expand on this idea and link it to RoF development. Considering the remoteness of the RoF and its lack of energy supply – might this be a solution?

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:30pm.