

Village of Masset Regular Council Meeting of August 28, 2023

Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held August 28, 2023 in the Council Chambers.

Present:	Mayor:	S. Disney
	Councillors:	J. Currie, T. Carty, B. Johnston, B. Pages
	CAO:	J. Humphries,
	Intern:	A. Olee
Absent:	CFO:	J. Brown

CALL TO ORDER

The Village of Masset acknowledges the un-ceded traditional territory of the Haida Nation on which this meeting is held.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Johnston to adopt the agenda as presented.

CARRIED

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Council Meeting Minutes July 10, 2023

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Johnson that the July 10, 2023 Council meeting minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

MINUTES AND REPORTS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

NCRD Board Highlights August 2023

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Carty that the NCRD Board report be received and filed.

CARRIED

PETITIONS AND DELEGATES

1. Concerned Citizens of Masset (working name)

Meredith Adams Spoke on behalf of the Concerned Citizens of Masset.

Village of Masset Regular Council Meeting of August 28, 2023

August 28th, 2023

Thank you Mayor Sheri Disney and Village of Masset councillors for hearing the voices of the Concerned Citizens of Masset this evening, speaking with regards to North Arm Transportation Ltd.'s development plan for a land based waterfront fuel storage facility in central Masset.

My name is Meredith Adams. I moved to Haida Gwaii in 2001 from Bella Coola. Three years ago I relocated myself and my family from our home on Tow Hill Road home into Masset. My two children have been raised here since birth. I work as a paramedic and a small business owner and serve as a volunteer for Marine Search and Rescue. My history involves years of working as an environmental activist with both small grassroots organizations and big NGO's, on global and local campaigns. My interest in choosing Haida Gwaii as my home stemmed from the beauty of the place, the safety that I feel here, the land that sustains its people and the perceived social, cultural and political drive towards positive change. I'm grateful every day to be able to live, work, play and raise my family in Masset.

Since the information came to light about the new fuel storage facility development at what was formerly known as the Omega site I have been in constant conversation with residents from all communities on Haida Gwaii and also gathering with concerned citizens to try to understand how this plan came to be and how we might be able to support the relocation of this tank farm to a more suitable location. As many of you know the plan as it stands is to begin construction in October 2023 (Phase 1) to place ten 80 000L horizontal tanks on the waterfront properties at the end of Main St. The fuel barge known as the Grizzly Fueller will remain in place at the municipal dock. Phase 2 would include the removal of the old Omega building, installation of additional tanks (for a total of approximately 26 tanks) and the removal of the Grizzly Fueller. Phase 3 would involve repair to the existing wharf and relocating the delivery pipe and the fuelling station over from the municipal dock.

The Grizzly Fueller barge has a 1.2 million litre capacity. The anticipated total capacity of the tank farm if all three phases of the project reach completion will be **2 million litres** of diesel fuel, jet fuel and fuel for other uses stored on the waterfront in downtown Masset, fronting the main commercial area of town and flanked closely by many residences. The proposed large increase in capacity accounts for North Arm's interest in becoming the sole provider for all of the fuel volume required to keep the BC Hydro generators running.

In North Arm's own presentation they admitted that the Omega site was initially deemed not viable and when questioned, North Arm president Matt Stradiotti said that the site wasn't suitable due to its proximity to residents and businesses. North Arm maintains a crown lease at what is known as the Rivtow site. This site was deemed not viable because of the prohibitive cost associated with its development. In conversation with Matt today he described how the increase in cost to North Arm for developing this site could only be justified if Haida Gwaii's population were far greater, with higher demands for fuel. We

also spoke about Lot 65, the OMVC reserve land located south of Masset. North Arm and OMVC, who have a Joint Venture business relationship, had been negotiating this site since 2018 and Matt expressed that the slow timing of those conversations , along with increased costs, was the primary reason that North Arm decided to circle back to the Omega site, which i'll remind you they had originally deemed unsuitable for this project. The transfer of ownership was on November 18, 2022 and the purchase price for these 5 central, waterfront lots totalled \$670 000.

I would like to dispel the idea that anyone is suggesting that North Arm end its business ventures in Masset. In all of my conversations over the past 6 weeks not one person has suggested that North Arm should leave Masset. Everyone recognizes that we are dependant on fuel and that North Arm has provided good service here for decades. Our concern is with the proposed location in central Masset and our request is that the viability of the other sites be revisited. When speaking with people in support of the Omega location I ask “ Would you also support the project outside of town?” and the answer is invariably yes. So rather than creating division and vitriol amongst community members I believe there is a way to work together to land on a solution that works for the majority of Old Masset and Masset’s residents and maintains North Arms viability on Haida Gwaii.

Having had many conversations with members of every community on this island i'd like to convey some of the concerns from residents.

1. Personal safety is the primary concern. Concerns with regards to the site being central and within an identified Tsunami hazard zone. Concerns with increased truck traffic and emissions from trucks compromising air quality and road safety. Concerns with regards to disaster and lack of resources for disaster management. From one concerned citizen :

“How much has the VOM done to secure our safety now and in the future should this go through? I'm curious as to whether North Arm has to show proof of insurance and their extent of coverage should something go wrong. I would also like to know where the gases (freon , ammonia) from the refrigerators and other materials from the first demolition were taken.”

2. Environmental safety with regards to the immediate environment (increased truck traffic, fumes, erosion , etc) and the greater environment (waterways, food harvesting areas, animal habitat). We all know how ineffective any clean up would be if a spill were to happen in the inlet. We do not currently have the capacity on HG to deal with significant loss of fuel into our waterways , especially with an 8 knot current in the inlet.
3. Loss of usable space for community enhancement and development. Masset should be working in line with the Integrated Official Community Plan, adopted in 2017, to create a vibrant and healthy community that improves the quality of life for locals and

attracts new residents to our town, like teachers, nurses, doctors, etc. Furthermore, tourism is a rapidly growing sector of the local economy. Developing the townsite with more inviting facilities and services would be of greater economic benefit than a tank farm.

4. Lack of economic benefit to the community. While North Arm purports some economic benefit to Old Masset through their Joint Business venture , Matt Stradiotti was unable to speak to any direct benefit to the municipality suggesting that at the end of the project there “may be a few more jobs”. In Matt’s words today he explained that the most significant part of North Arm’s revenue stems from fuel and freight delivery to Masset. From a business perspective it is unrealistic to think that if the largest part of North Arm’s revenue comes from freight and fuel delivery to Haida Gwaii that they would pull out of here altogether should they not see this expansion project to completion.

The Village of Masset, with support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, drafted and adopted its Integrated Official Community Plan (IOCP) in 2017. The intent of an IOCP, through extensive community engagement, is to “set the direction for the future of the community”. I only just read the whole document myself and encourage other people to do so. In essence the plan speaks to sustainable development “ which means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. What I’m hearing from people is that this town needs a daycare, this town needs affordable housing, this town needs to find a way to attract and retain teachers, doctors, nurses, families, etc. This town needs more indoor recreation. And yes this town needs diesel. But does it need a 2 million litre fuel storage facility on the last sizeable parcel of waterfront in the middle of town? We are living in anxious times with unprecedented weather events displacing people from their homes and destroying whole communities as a direct result of a rapidly changing climate spurred by our global use of fossil fuels. To allow a 2 million litre fuel tank farm to be placed in the centre of our town is a direct insult to the Haida Gwaii Clean Energy Declaration signed by hundreds of islanders in 2017.

We feel disappointment that, prior to the commencement of the project, the council neglected to inform and consult the public about North Arm Transportation’s plans to develop our towns remaining commercial waterfront as a fuel storage facility; and we urge the Mayor and Councillors to work with North Arm Transportation, Old Masset Village Council, the Council of Haida Nation and the Concerned Citizens of Masset to relocate this project to a more suitable location.

In finishing I would like to read out the petition for relocation that we have been circulating since July 28, 2023. To date we have over 400 signatories to this petition.

Respectfully,
Meredith Adams

A petition will follow.

2. Kirk Thorgeirson

Thank you honourable Mayor and council for allowing me the opportunity to speak today on the petition against the Northarm Transportation fuel storage site.

As many of you are aware, my family and I have a long 62 year history with fuel supply in the Village of Masset

Northarm Transportation has fulfilled a vital service supplying fuel to Haida Gwaii since 1996, when Petrocanada abruptly ceased fuel supply to Masset. This transition between suppliers was a difficult time for local residents, the commercial fishing fleet, and the cannery processing facilities as fuel supply was forced to Prince Rupert. While the move to green energy is desirable and ideal, this recent history drives home how important this still is to our way of life. Northarm has spent considerable time and capital researching the physical and financial viability of alternate locations before settling on the site in question

I'd like to take this opportunity to address the points of concern of the petition directly, beginning with the close proximity to Masset Residents and business's. Bulk Fuel Storage and Commercial facilities have existed in this area for over 60 years without incident. The majority of the residences are located on the far side of town. For years the selected site has remained untended, the dilapidated office building, dock, and old cannery warehouse are a significant eyesore for downtown Masset's waterfront. Northarm has proposed to develop and maintain the property, providing lower-profile fuel storage, landscaping, and open for cooperation with local artists to revitalize the location while continuing to promote our local economy; all great benefits to local businesses.

Environmental concerns about the proximity of the facility can turn to current testing and remediation of the original tank farm area. Testing has shown the sloping landscape and local stories of dated environmental practices of the day are known to have contaminated the entire downtown core, very little, if any has resulted from bulk storage. With recent advancements in remediation and the evolution of environmental practices, an updated facility would reduce the current impact to the environment and increase safety.

Moving onto the proposed incompatibility with the Masset Community Plan, the adopted community plan emphasises a need to maintain the commercial and industrial base of the community. Paraphrasing from Page 15 and 16 of the 2040 Masset plan: "All goals are equally important and inter-dependent...short-term trade-offs between them may...be necessary, where steps closer to some of the goals may mean steps away from another... Industrial areas are well-utilized by appropriate uses; they are well-maintained and buffered from adjacent land uses. Commercial and industrial activities use land and resources efficiently, protect natural areas, and are working toward eliminating emissions to air, water, and soil." The Community plan commits to a balance; we need to consider that balance here.

Page 19 indicates that "areas with the heavy industrial designation are intended to accommodate... storage and operational needs that tend to cause noise, emissions, and/or

visual impact...(However), Zoning regulates appropriate site sizes, setback distances and range of uses to ensure...industry can operate effectively and minimize impact.”

Northarm appears to be well within this designation and able to design within zoning bylaws in agreement with the 2040 Community Plan.

Point 3 of the petition indicates a concern for an increase in greenhouse gas emissions throughout town. Fuel consumption and delivery is a consistent quantity, moving the storage to land and increase of fuel storage does not introduce more greenhouse gases. Furthermore, moving storage to a more distant location could further increase greenhouse emissions due to transport distances.

Point 4 references a concern that the project ignores recommendations of the Haida Gwaii Coastal Flood and Erosion Study. These studies rarely provide specific recommendations unless an area is at critical risk and the general nature of this study is evident. Referencing the complete 267 page study available online. Recommendations from 5.4 Steps towards Adaptation involve “adaptive planning.. to reduce the vulnerability of exposed critical infrastructure and services and identifying natural hazard exposures and vulnerabilities” but further note that “These recommendations are not definitive... They are intended as general suggestions and themes” . The observed sea-level rise projections on page 92 of the report for the year 2100 in the Masset region is just over 14 inches(a span of 77years). During the full lifespan of the proposed northarm site, adaptive facilities can be accommodated in full support of the recommendations of this study. In the pursuit of green energy over this time span, perhaps the bulk fuel storage may even be discontinued and removed

The 5th and final point noted by the petition is that there is a failure to acknowledge the Haida Gwaii Clean Energy Declaration. This statement confuses reducing our use of fossil fuels with where these fuels are to be stored until we do. In this context the point is irrelevant as fuel storage is needed and consumption continues until alternatives can be found. As stewards of these Islands , in order to best honor the Haida Gwaii Clean Energy Declaration, we should strive to provide facilities that meet the highest quality and safety guidelines available to protect our community. Facilities that can be built by Northarm while we are waiting for this transition to green energy to become effective.

Petitioners have expressed that the property should be developed by the Village of Masset. While this is appealing, the purchase, demolition and remediation of the property is extremely cost prohibitive. A conservative estimate of \$700,000 for the purchase of property and \$800,000 again for removal of existing infrastructure and development could pose a significant tax burden to the residences of Masset.

In conclusion, history shows us how unprepared we are for a lack of fuel security, such as occurred during the departure of Petrocan in 1996. The 2040 Community plan denotes the importance of marine industries that employ our community and rely on this supply to feed our economy moving forward. To do so, it is imperative that we support our local businesses and future prospects. I ask the Village of Masset Council to not support the opposing petition based on their points of concern that involves extensive research (A 267 page erosion study and 60 page 2040 community plan and energy declaration). I feel that the signers of the petition were not provided with sufficient information to make

an informed decision to support the points of concern. As an island, we proudly celebrate our vast beaches, forests, Haida Culture, and maritime heritage; what better way to showcase these attributes than by coexisting with our industries to create a welcoming community that reflects our identity and hospitality. With this in mind, I request the Village of Masset Council to allow Northarm to continue with the current path they are on with no interference.

Included were 120 letters of support.

51 Residents/Business Owners of Masset

34 Residents/Business Owners of Old Masset

28 Boat Owners/Fishers/Clam Diggers

26 Residents of Port Clements, Towhill, Skidegate, Daajing Giids and other areas

NB: The above tally can be singular or a combination of any of the above

Mayor Disney opened the floor for public comment.

Ralph Stocker - Old Massett inquired about the tank capacity.

Kirk Thorgeirson - Masset advised the capacity will be 1.6 million litres

Councillor Johnston explained the tanks are self-contained, a tank within a tank with an internal safety feature to alert any leakage.

Margo Hearne - Masset asked if Council were prepared to answer any of the letters of concern sent including the letter sent from the Sanctuary Society.

Councillor Pages replied that this session was to listen and answer questions and any responses to previous inquiries will come at a later date.

Kirk Thorgeirson - Masset commented that North Arm's plan complies with current zoning and environmental laws.

Ralph Stocker - Old Masset wanted to know how often the barge will come to reload the tanks.

There was no information available.

Jody Grange – Masset inquired about the requirement for North Arm to carry liability insurance and whether this is possible due to the findings of the erosion study and would the taxpayers be responsible for the cleanup of any accident.

Jim ?? – residing between Port Clements and Masset referenced other communities who have suffered gas spills and the inherent dangers involved in fuel storage.

Kirk Thorgeirson – Masset stated that taxpayers will not be financially responsible to clean up any spills and gave some history of spills being remediated.

Mayor Disney stated that Suncor will remediate the spill at the end of Main Street before title to the property is turned over to the Village of Masset.

Gavin Hooton – Masset asked if Council will consider relocating the tank storage given the presentations and concerns brought forward by concerned citizens and drastic weather events that could threaten the environment.

Mayor Disney replied that the purpose of the meeting is to hear concerns.

Peter Hamel – Masset stated that North Arm had experienced a spill 18 years ago and flushed the spilled diesel into Marie Lake. He reiterated that Council has not responded to concerns and would like to hear back regarding the concerns.

Jody Grange – Masset would like to know why Council has not responded to her letter of July of 2022.

Meredith Adams – Masset asked when Council were made aware of North Arm’s plan to build a tank farm on the old Omega site.

Councillor Carty replied that Council learned about the plans the day before North Arm presented their plan to the public on July 18, 2023.

Councillor Pages replied that bylaws regarding use must be adhered to.

Meredith Adams – Masset asked what kind of involvement the Village of Masset has regarding use of the property.

Meredith Adams – Masset wanted to know if the IOCP is binding.

CAO Joshua Humphries indicated the IOCP is being used as a governing document.

Meredith Adams – Masset asked if the new owners are responsible for any necessary remediation for the site.

Mayor Disney indicated many of the concerns are being investigated and cannot be answered without more information.

Margo Hearne – Masset is concerned about Council not responding to a letter sent in July 2022 regarding the tank farm proposal and Council not considering the letter being “legitimate”.

Mayor Disney replied that we had no official information until July 18, 2023 when North Arm sent Council a preview of their intent and as such were not in a position to comment.

Moved by Councillor Carty, seconded by Councillor Johnston that the verbal reports from the public question period be received.

CARRIED

VERBAL REPORTS OF COUNCIL/CAO/CFO

Councillor Johnston attended a Gwaii Trust Audit Committee meeting and reported that Gwaii Trust has received approximately \$3,000 income return from a mortgage fund with holdings in Enbridge and other petro chemical companies and suggested the funds could be invested elsewhere.

Councillor Currie attended a MIEDS meeting.

Councillor Pages attended a Northwest Regional Hospital District meeting, and a North Coast Regional District meeting.

Councillor Carty attended a GMDC meeting and an orientation meeting for new GMDC board members.

Mayor Disney attended a North Arm presentation and has been meeting with the public regarding the presentation, a meeting with CHN, a GMDC meeting, Coffee with Council meetings with Old Massett, Protocol Table meetings, has been elected to the Haida Gwaii Museum Board, has met with physicians regarding emergency services at the Northern Haida Gwaii Hospital, a VIRL meeting, a BC Hydro net metering meeting, a meeting with BC Ferries, SD50 daycare meetings.

Moved by Councillor Johnston, seconded by Councillor Currie that the verbal reports be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

NB-1 Library Parking Variance

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Johnston that the proposed parking variance for the new Masset library be supported as presented.

CARRIED

NB-2 LGCAP Year 2 Survey

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Carty that the LGCAP Survey be received.

CARRIED

NB-3 UBCM Northern Health Invitation

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Carty that a meeting request be sent to Northern Health during the 2023 UBCM convention.

CARRIED

NB-4 UBCM Official Opposition Meeting Opportunities

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Currie that a meeting request be sent to the Official Opposition during the 2023 UBCM convention.

CARRIED

NB-5 Accessibility Committee

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Johnston that CAO Joshua Humphries be appointed to the Accessibility Committee.

CARRIED

NB-6 Airport Zoning Regulation

Moved by Councillor Pages, seconded by Councillor Johnston that the Village of Masset inform the Province of the intent to establish a bylaw regarding airport zoning regulations within the next two years.

CARRIED

PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

Mayor Disney inquired about any interest shown in the past regarding purchase or use of the Omega site.

Councillor Pages indicated the site was abandoned by Omega approximately 15 years ago and requests from Council over the years to remediate hazards have largely gone unanswered. Council only heard July 17th that North Arm had purchased the property.

Kirk Thorgeirson - Masset explained that S & S Seafood purchased Omega assets.

Councillor Johnston stated that there had been interest from one US group but no follow up and noted that there have been no questions or complaints from the public regarding the Omega site since it was abandoned.

Kirk Thorgeirson inquired about how the Park to Pier plan will be funded.

Councillor Pages explained that there will be different funding streams in the form of grants and senior levels of government supporting the plan.

Kirk Thorgeirson – Masset inquired about the number of tourists visiting.

Mayor Disney explained that the first million of the sixteen million dollar plan will be used to revitalize the pier.

Councillor Pages explained that a lot of the funding will be coming from grants.

Kirk Thorgeirson – Masset wanted to know how the Village can sustain itself without help from the First Nations.

Council explained that a large portion of our funding is through grants and revitalization of the downtown core is necessary.

Meredith Adams – Masset asked if the North Arm plan will bring any economic gain to Masset.

Mayor Disney stated that it is fueling the airport and the hydro plant.

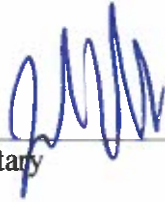
Meredith Adams – Masset asked if these benefits be the same if there was an alternate site, Lot 65, and would that area benefit the town more by developing it for tourists and residents.

Councillor Johnston stated that the Park to Pier project could stimulate the local economy without eclipsing other ventures already in place like the Farmers Market which is locally driven and managed. He reiterated that the tanks are on the water now and explained the new tanks will be on land and can be electronically monitored for spills.

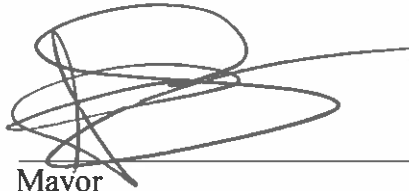
ADJOURNMENT/TO CLOSED MEETING

Moved by Councillor Pages the meeting be adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Village of Masset Regular Council Meeting of August 28, 2023



Recording Secretary



Mayor



Certified Correct, Administrator