

Tsawout First Nation ~ Tsartlip First Nation ~ District of Central Saanich Community to Community Forum 2006

Summary Report

Introduction

On March 28th and 30th (2006), representatives from the District of Central Saanich, the Tsawout and Tsartlip First Nations met for two evenings of relationship building, common issues identification and work planning. The Community to Community Forum followed on from a similar exercise undertaken in 2005 involving all three governments.

ADR Education (Jamie Chicanot) was engaged to help plan and facilitate the two evening sessions. This work involved meeting with the inter-council Community Forum planning group and settling on the format and agenda for each evening session. Once this was accomplished, the facilitators' role was to assist in the evenings' discussion and report out on the main themes and recommendations. This report summarizes and encapsulates the main areas of consensus, and highlights the common themes and issues raised by all three parties. It is not intended to be "minutes" of the meetings. It does boil down the main impressions and specifically emphasizes a set of next steps to continue building improved communication and collaborative work strategies.

Appendix 1 provides a list of attendees and includes the Agenda for the first evening session.

Executive Summary:

The Community to Community Forum concept is designed to build stronger relationships and greater connectivity between local governments and neighbouring First Nation communities. It does so by bringing together the political leadership to engage in dialogue, work-planning and issues resolution. The premise is that by building stronger relationships, greater chances for collaboration and cooperation can be explored and discovered. In the case of Central Saanich, Tsawout and Tsartlip, they were able to build on the achievements from the previous year's Forum. This meant that the following themes needed to be re-emphasized and further developed:

- Communication
- Support and Cooperation
- Commitment to follow-through
- On-going Relationship Building

Through the work of the inter-council planning group, it was decided that the main emphasis of the Forum should continue to build on improving communication and ensuring that common issues are identified with a plan for addressing them.

Two evening dialogue sessions were held (March 28th & 30th, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.). Council members for all three governments attended, as did a small number of community members and Elder representatives. In total, approximately 15-20 people attended each session to share a meal and get to know each other better.

The first evening was marked by a Feast catered by the Tsawout Elders Group. It was concerned primarily with increasing personal connections and establishing more awareness among the different councils and their members. In order to achieve these goals, participants were asked to provide a full introduction of themselves by addressing three central questions:

1. Who are you (back ground, cultural history, what you do)?
2. Identify a high priority issue in your community?
3. Talk about your expectations for participating in the C2C Forum?

The subsequent evening session utilized the positive momentum generated during the first session to begin delving into practical strategies for addressing issues of common concern. It was agreed that rather than actually attempting to “solve” the issues, it was more important to develop strategies and mechanisms that would assist in solving them. Once again, the critical importance of communication and a commitment to follow-through was repeatedly emphasized. Much of the evening was spent generating ideas and options that would allow the parties to address the issues and continue to build relationship and seek opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.

Evening Session #1 (March 28th):

As mentioned, the main purpose of evening #1 was to socialize, build relationship and begin identifying issues of common concern and opportunities for future cooperation and support. Extended participant introductions established a tone of connectedness, friendship and a strong desire to collaborate effectively. Commenting on issues of importance allowed all three councils to become better informed and educated about what is on the minds of their political counterparts. The session was opened with a prayer from a Tsawout Elder and an official welcome by Chief Allan Claxton. All councils also provided full staff contact lists to facilitate communication on a “portfolio basis” between the three communities. In addition, Robin Cooper (Tsartlip council member) facilitated a very enjoyable and interactive team building exercise which promoted strong leadership, effective communication and the importance of trust.

Some of the central themes from evening #1 included:

- The importance of communication, on-going contact and building greater levels of awareness between councils
- Recognition and respect for the diversity and autonomy of each community, while looking to maximize opportunities for mutual support and cooperation
- Strong desire to maintain distinct identities but remove walls and barriers

- Acknowledgement of generally good relations between councils and increased cooperation over the past year, particularly at the staff level (e.g. emergency preparedness, compost issue at Tsartlip etc.)
- Importance of action planning, and moving beyond “just talk” to actually doing things and accomplishing common goals
- The value of finding opportunities to come together, formally and informally, to maintain open communications and increasingly build trust
- Need for collaborative solutions to common problems
- Recognition that all three communities belong to something bigger; a shared environment that needs protection and careful stewardship
- Communication, communication and more communication!

The parties also identified a range of specific issues and topics of common concern. These issues were raised and discussed briefly, with the intent of creating strategies to address them on evening #2. The main issues included:

- Youth (drugs, crime and the need to invest in youth and their well being – reinforce cultural tradition and history)
- Policing (responses, relations and jurisdictions)
- The Environment (sustainability, protecting, preserving and restoring – e.g. Yos)
- Traffic and Road Safety (speeding, tour buses, school zones etc.)
- Need for greater communication at the political level
- Revisiting and the potential expansion of protocol agreements (service sharing, the inclusion of Tsartlip etc.)

Evening #1 also featured a short “Best Practices” presentation by Central Saanich Councilor Zeb King. The presentation provided an overview of the accomplishments and exciting outcomes of other Community to Community Forums undertaken across the province. It included highlights of other community accords, protocol agreements, and MOU’s entered into by community partners. This presentation reinforced the potential of working together, having a unified voice and looking for opportunities to support and cooperate. The evening ended with a short discussion on how to best use session #2. It was decided that the subsequent meeting would begin to establish strategies and approaches for addressing the issues of common concern and address the central themes raised by all three councils.

Evening Session #2 (March 30th):

This dialogue session focused on creating a work-plan and implementation strategy designed to address core issues of common concern. In order to actualize the “doing of things” rather than just the “talking about them”, a clear plan for next steps and follow-up was developed. Realizing the importance of on-going communication, collaboration and mutual support, the group worked out a way to ensure these goals would become practical strategies.

The evening began with an opening prayer from a Tsartlip Elder (including a historical community overview) and an official welcome from Chief Chris Tom. The facilitator developed condensed a list of common issues needing attention and action. The core issues included:

- **Youth**
- **Policing**
- **Traffic/Road Safety**
- **Protocol Agreement**
- **Communication/Further Meetings**
- **The Environment**

The next task was to determine *how* the issues would be addressed. In general terms, to further the spirit of fostering on-going communication and relationship building, it was decided that small tri-council working groups be established to deal with specific portfolio issues. Staff would be involved on an as needed basis. In addition to these smaller, less formal working groups, it was decided that more frequent tri-council meetings be conducted. It was also agreed that an application for another Community to Community Forum be prepared and developed for 2007 to reinforce the commitment to on-going cooperation and communication at the political level. Developing a short-term strategy and starting small (with achievable goals) was considered most important.

In specific terms, the following action items were agreed to by all three councils:

- **Develop a new tri-governmental working system** – an oversight committee will be organized to provide leadership (including setting terms of reference) for smaller issue-specific working groups (typically comprising one member from each council).
- **Continue and expand the current working group** who planned this year's C2C Forum. They will initiate the new working system by implementing an action plan to address the specific, high-priority issues identified through the Forum. Their first breakfast meeting took place on April 3rd, with the expressed intent of addressing the subjects of Policing and Protocol Agreements.
- **Intention to organize and conduct a meeting to address policing issues** (e.g. youth – drugs & crime, response/jurisdiction, switchboard difficulties, treatment of Band members, etc.). Liaison Person: Robin Cooper (Tsartlip Council Member). Gary Nason, Administrator for Central Saanich will follow-up with Saanich Police Chief.
- **Apply for funding from the Union of BC Municipalities to conduct another Community to Community Forum in 2007.**

- **Schedule tri-council meetings on a bi-annual basis** to stay informed, remain connected and keep the lines of communication open. The next meeting will be held on Oct. 12th and will be convened by staff and hosted by Central Saanich.
- **This report will be forwarded to the three councils** as a summary briefing.

Conclusion:

This year's Community to Community Forum was characterized by an on-going desire to improve communication and ensure that issues get addressed at a working level. The importance of being informed, remaining connected and not being "caught off guard" were all considered very important. There is a strong desire to look for increased opportunities for support and cooperation, with increasing recognition that there is significant power in a unified voice. There was consistent acknowledgement that commitment and follow-through are required so that dialogue translates into action. The continuation and expansion of the current C2C planning committee is evidence of that commitment, not to mention an agreement for bi-annual, tri-council meetings and another C2C forum next year. There are a range of important issues to address and a strong desire to handle them in manageable pieces so real progress can be achieved. It will be important to work hard at ensuring the momentum and positive results of this year's Forum lead towards greater cooperation and enhanced communication.

Appendix 1:

List of Attendees (combined from both evenings):

<u>Tsartlip</u>	<u>Central Saanich</u>	<u>Tsawout</u>
Chief Chris Tom	Gary Nason	Chief Allan Claxton
Robin Cooper	Chris Graham	Gwen Underwood
Patricia Paul	Zeb King	Lou Claxton
Rex Grant	John Garrison	Bernie Calvo
Marie Cooper	Alastair Bryson	Frank Pelkey
David Paul	Susan Mason	Maryanne Sam
	Robert Thompson	Harvey Underwood

Agenda (for evening #1 - March 28th):

Opening and Welcome – Chief Allan Claxton, Tsawout Elder

Introduction to the Evening Session – Facilitator; purpose of the forum, brief recap of previous year's work, overview of the agenda

Dinner and Extended Participant Introductions:

- Who are you (background, cultural information)?
- What is a high priority issue in your community right now?
- What do you hope to gain by participating in this C2C Forum?

Group Exercise in Team Building – Robin Cooper (Tsartlip)

Impressions from the Exercise (1 representative from each Council)

C2C Best Practices – Zeb King (District of Central Saanich)

Looking ahead to Session #2 – Facilitator

- Tsartlip Recreation Building (March 30th 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.)

Closing Comments & Farewell

**COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY FORUM
(Tsawout First Nation/Tsartlip First Nation/District of
Central Saanich)**

March 28th and 30th, 2006

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF EVENT EXPENDITURES

Preparation of UBCM Grant Application and Request for Quotation for Consultant/Facilitator Services	\$250.00 (Provided in-kind by District of Central Saanich)
Consultant/Facilitator Fee	\$3,210.00
Catered Dinner Meals (2) – March 28 th and 30 th , 2006	\$750.00
Facility/Venue for Meetings (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ March 28th, 2005 ➤ March 30th, 2005 	\$500.00 (Provided in-kind by Tsawout First Nation) \$500.00 (Provided in-kind by Tsartlip First Nation)
Flip Charts (2)/Name Tags/Pens	\$100.00 (Provided in-kind by District of Central Saanich)
Photocopying and Submission of Final Report and Related Materials	\$100.00 (Provided in-kind by District of Central Saanich)