

PACIFIC AUTISM FAMILY CENTRE: ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

May 29th 2009.

The Advisory Group met on May 29th at the Century Plaza Hotel and provided continued advice on the planning of the PAFC. These are notes of the meeting.

1. Overall Update

Sergio provided an update on the project overall. The major work focus since the group had last met, had been a site search. The target is to secure a site by the end of July 2009. Work had also been undertaken on refining the space program and developing an outline governance structure for the planning design and construction phase.

2. Draft Space Program

Larry Adams (NSDA) presented the latest iteration of the space program for the centre which had been refined from the previous meeting. Discussion then followed on the future evolution of the program and building design considerations. The group provided the following comments.

2.1 *Serving British Columbia*

Building must be inclusive of the regions. The scale of the province and space between settlements is a challenge in BC for access to services. There will be more planning to meet this objective. The concept has been of a “hub and spoke” to ensure that regional needs are met. Some ideas are -

- Regional sub- centres – these may be rooms or small buildings.
- Two way video conferencing would be essential
- Opportunities for recycling or sharing other building/spaces in the regions – it is not necessary to build new
- All communities may not have the same model
- Regional programs and outreach workers are important
- Avoid duplicating existing capacity where services are working well

2.2 *Organization of services and building functions*

Must work for individuals with ASD.

Building design and operation must support key principles that have been established through the planning process. Three key principles in particular are

- Collaboration and integration.
- Mentoring building capacity
- Operating philosophy – openness and flexibility

Who moves into the building – what organizations - will be an important consideration in the design and meeting these principles

2.3 *Building Entrance*

The entrance is very important for functional and symbolic reasons. Design considerations are -

- Must be welcoming
- Easily demonstrate how to get to the various components and facilitate this
- Very important to avoid over stimulus for children before getting to assessment.
- Access must be safe and easy
- Some children and adults will need parking very close to the entrance

- The access to the auditorium for training will need to be managed. The arrival of significant number of people for training can have a negative impact and conflict with need for quiet space that is not over stimulating at entrance. Consider a separate entrance
- Building will be operating beyond 9- 5 and auditorium may operate after conventional hours.
- Infectious disease control is an issue to consider
- Accessibility for disabled children and individuals is a requirement
- Consider techniques for assisting in access e.g. photos

2.4 General Interior Considerations

- Make it easy for families
- Recognize the building is part of the real world too – the design must balance this and meet the special needs of individuals with ASD.
- Designing for psychological assessment - windows can be a problem
- Flexibility needs to be built into the design for the future to respond to new knowledge and treatment methods; the building needs to be able to respond to change
- There will be a variety of environments within the building
- Short term accommodation for families coming from the regions will be valuable
- Kitchens for collaboration not training
- Plan for “quiet spaces”

2.5 Technology

- An important part of the building and its services - technology must work
- Will need a technology wish list
- Technology will need to be planned – provide for the “state of the art”
- Funding will need to be important for both providing, operating and upgrading.
- Technology will be needed at the points of the spokes – in the regions
- Leasing is an option

2.6 Important Elements for future discussion

- Building Colours
- Lighting
- Way finding
- Furniture and Décor
- Security

2.7 Fund raising

- Philanthropic sources will be important
- A foundation is being established
- PAFC will need dollars for some innovative programs

3. Governance

Gwyn Symmons from CitySpaces introduced for consideration the outline report on governance that would go to the Board of Directors for approval.

The report was supported with a number of minor recommended changes and comments. These included

- Value in hiring the Executive Director/CEO early
- Consideration of parent reps who had specific relevant skills.
- Researchers are important
- Selections should have geographical considerations.
- Discussion and some changes on the number and representation of individuals on committees
- Developing more detailed terms of reference for Committee members
- Importance of continued communications
 - for example through Wiki.
 - A communications company may be necessary at some stage.
- The planning process recognizes key times for consultation and engagement
- Assistance with child care cost for some parent members may be necessary
- Interface role
- Committee members can communicate to their constituency /organization

Attendance

Clair Schuman

Tamara Kulsic

Mary Ann Falks

Karen Bopp

Lori Woods

Katy Kalynchuck

Georgina Robinson

Nancy Walton

Jim McLaughlin

Debra Anitfaev

John Esson

Wendy Lisogar-Cocchia

Sergio Cocchia

Larry Adams

Gwyn Symmons.