

Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation

Questions That Need To Be Answered

What Are The Outstanding Issues?

What May Be the Village's Liability In This Matter?

Will Taxpayers' Dollars Have To Go Up In Order To Pay Off This Liability?

This is my last posting as Editor of the Anmore Alternative News. I sincerely appreciate all the support I have received from readers during the past few months. Many thanks.

Since my appointment as Editor of the AAN was temporary, it is now time for me to pursue new challenges and ventures.

As my last editorial, I am writing about an issue that I realize is quite controversial, but, as a concerned resident of Anmore, I feel obligated to address it so as to create an awareness within the Village.

Background (History) of the Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation

1. The Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation (AREF) was the brainchild of former Mayor Weinberg.
2. At some undisclosed date, Legal Counsel for the Village recommended the creation of a charitable foundation of the Village of Anmore, under the authority of the BC Municipal Charter, "as the most appropriate vehicle to facilitate the implementation of the Anmore Renewable Energy Project " (AREP).
3. January 2005: Anmore Council approved a motion to establish the Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation (AREF), with a mandate to develop the AREP.
4. June 28 2005: The Mayor and six trustees signed the Trust Deed, which established the Foundation.

The Deed identified the following:

- 'Charitable objects' i.e. the scope of activities that the Foundation would undertake to realize the AREP
- The organizational, administrative and financial authority of the Foundation.

The Foundation was listed in the Canadian Registered Charities, Canada Revenue Agency.

The Trustees were identified as:

- **Dr. Hal Weinberg***, Mayor of the Village of Anmore, Professor Emeritus Simon Fraser University
- **Mr. Keneth McEwan***, QC. (Lawyer)
- **Mr. Lee Vischloff***, VP Argon Research Technologies
- Mr. Mel Steemson, Operations Technical Manager, BC Hydro
- Mr. Ken Juvik, Watershed Forester, GVRD
- Mr. Kevin Pickell, Software Engineer.

*** Formed the Foundation Steering Committee**

5. Date unknown: AREF contracts with Renaissance Power Corporation (described on its own web site as a “privately-held corporation”) to provide Project Management for the Feasibility Study. Renaissance Power Corporation’s President, Doug Colby is Treasurer to the Independent Power Producers Association of BC. The Renaissance Power web site at <http://www.renaissancepower.ca/index.php/about/> still lists the Anmore Renewable Energy Project as its only specified project as of February 15, 2010, even though the Foundation is no longer in existence (See below #15).
 - To date, it appears that there is no copy of the Feasibility Study nor confirmation that it even exists.
 - To date, a copy of the contract with Renaissance Power Corporation appears to be unavailable.
 - To date, no minutes of the “Steering Committee” pertaining to “Project Oversight” appear to be available.
6. April 2006: BC Ministry of Environment contributes.....\$75,000.00.
7. June 2006 (approximately): Financial contributions from the BC Municipal Finance Authority\$15,000.

Financial contributions from the Independent Power Producers Assoc... ..\$ 4,000.
Financial contributions from the IndigoEnergy Systems..... \$ 2,000.
Financial contribution from BC Municipal Finance Authority..... \$15,000.
8. July 19th 2005: University of Victoria offers “in kind”* support, ‘valued’ at\$14,000.
9. October 5th 2005: Simon Fraser University offers “in kind” support valued at\$ 8,000.
10. Date unknown: BCIT offers “in kind” support, ‘valued’ at.....\$15,000.
11. July 2007: Jodi Norrison, a "Fund Raising Consultant", is retained at a cost of**\$6,000.**
12. April 2008: Letter from Mayor Weinberg to Metro Vancouver stated that the trust had already obtained \$250,000 in cash, and asked for an additional \$8,000.

13. June 2008: Metro Vancouver approved the request for \$8000.00.

14. September 2008: Independent Power Producers' web site [http://www.ippbc.com/EN/members_in_the_news/renaissance_power & day4 solar project lights up anmore. cfo to speak at ippbc conference./](http://www.ippbc.com/EN/members_in_the_news/renaissance_power_%26_day4_solar_project_lights_up_anmore_cfo_to_speak_at_ippbc_conference/) carried a report from the Vancouver Sun by Scott Simpson, which stated that the Anmore's solar panels were already delivering electric power to the Village of Anmore. The Report stated:

There are 20 panels worth a total of \$35,000, producing a total of 3.5 kilowatt hours of power, and through the Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation, the Village expects to find itself in a break-even point with BC Hydro.

The Village buys firm power off the BC Hydro grid in order to assure itself a steady baseline supply of electricity, but Hydro is buying back all the intermittent juice that the solar panels generate from daylight.

There's enough power flowing from the solar array to cover the Village's electricity bill in its entirety. Editor's Note: Is this a true statement? Please see Editor's Note below.

There are 43 other micro-generating solar projects with "net metering" contracts to sell electricity to Hydro, but Anmore is the first B.C. municipality on the grid.

"Conservation of energy is important but the future of our society and that of others on this planet depends on increasing access to energy," Weinberg said. "And the only way that can happen is through the development and use of technologies for the production of energy.

"This demonstration project is only one example of our community's commitment to the environment and to alternate energy and hopefully will provide other communities and governments to lead in development of alternate energies."

Editor's Note: It has been stated by Administration that "The solar panels save approximately \$8.00 a month."

15. On July 7th 2008, Principals from Renaissance Power Corporation made a delegation to the Belcarra Village Council, citing the "**Village of Anmore's Renewable Energy Demonstration Project**". Note this is how it appears in the minutes of that meeting. The **Foundation** is not identified as such.

16. July 12th 2008: Canada Revenue Agency sent a notice that the charitable status of the AREF had been **revoked** for "**Failure to file**", in other words, the Foundation's Officers failed to file the required annual financial reports.

17. September 8th 2008: Item 14.5 (Correspondence Received) of the Belcarra Village Minutes read: Dr. Hal Weinberg, Chair, Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation. September 2, 2008, requesting that the Village of Belcarra enter into negotiation with the Anmore Renewable Foundation, to join the foundation as a partner with the Village of Anmore.
18. November 18th 2008. From the Minutes of the Village of Belcarra Council Meeting: Information Item 14.7, Karen-Ann Cobb, Village of Anmore, November 3, 2008, regarding the invitation to join the Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation.
19. December 2008: A completely new Council is elected in the Village of Anmore. Re-elected Mayor Weinberg made several references to the AREF in his inaugural speech, in which he stated ***"Anmore is protected from any financial obligations..."***
20. Mayor Weinberg began the process of creating the various Village sub-committees. Councillors Palmer-Isaak and McEwen accepted the vacant positions of trustees on the Board of the Anmore Renewable Foundation.
21. September 14th 2009. The Received Minutes of the Anmore Village Environment Committee Meeting, co-chaired by Councillors Isaak and McEwen, broke the confidentiality of the September 10, 2009 in-camera meeting of the Village of Anmore Council by stating: ***"It was reported that Anmore's Renewable Energy Foundation is no longer and other than discussions regarding what will happen with the solar panels, the project has concluded"***.
22. As a result, the discussions of the September 10th 2009 in-camera meeting became public domain, whereby Mayor Weinberg had announced his immediate resignation as a Trustee of the Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation and whereby Councillors Isaak and McEwen also resigned as Trustees.
23. Attending the in-camera meeting by conference phone had been Guy Heywood of the Renaissance Power Corporation. He informed Council that there is an outstanding balance payable to the Corporation of \$20,000.
24. In an October 23, 2009 publication by TenderInfo, titled "Canada: Anmore Green Power Project in Jeopardy", it stated,

"Funding problems have stalled a renewable energy project in Anmore and Mayor Hal Weinberg said he will seek the assistance of the village to re-charge the initiative.

The village had planned to build a small power generation plant and education centre on land next to Buntzen Lake that would produce hydrogen using water, wind and solar power.

But, a dispute between Western Economic Diversification Canada (WEDC) Program has halted funding on the project and the foundation's charitable status has been revoked.....

But Weinberg said he still believes the project is viable and he will be presenting a motion to council asking the village to work with WEDC to resolve its funding problems.....

The dispute arose when WEDC, which promised \$120,000 for the project, said it had overpaid the foundation by \$20,000. According to Weinberg, the organization is alleging that because solar panels were moved from Buntzen Lake project site to the village hall, the foundation broke the original agreement approved by WEDC.....

A \$34,000 withdrawal, which was supposed to be used to pay the company that installed the panels in April 2008, was not approved.

Since the company has not been paid for the installation work, it has not signed off with BC Hydro, meaning the panels have not been generating power.

Weinberg said the foundation does not have any money to pay back the \$20,000 to WEDC. "

25. At the last Council meeting of December 2009 whereby Mayor Weinberg officially offered his resignation as of December 31, 2009, he stated that he did not ask for much, but asked Council to pass a resolution to work with WEDC to resolve its funding problems and take over ownership of the AREF. He stated that money can be made from the Project. However, the solar panels remain disconnected from the grid and, thus, are incapable of producing any revenue. With this in mind, the Village cannot sell any power to BC Hydro. The reason why the solar panels remain disconnected from the power grid appears to be that the Contractor has not been paid for his work to date.
26. When questioned about the AREF at this above Council meeting, Mayor Weinberg did not respond, but left the Council Chamber.

Outstanding Questions

1. Mayor Weinberg claimed that \$250,000 had been raised for the Anmore Renewable Energy Foundation. What has happened to that money?
2. What is the true extent of the liabilities of the AREF?

Is it \$40,000 (for the solar panels)?

Is it \$60,000 (for the panels and the outstanding balance to Renaissance Power Corporation)?

Or is it more, because the conditions of the Western Diversification Contract were not met and the AREF is, therefore, required to repay the money to the Government?

3. Why were Financial Reports not filed in accordance with the rules of the Canada Revenue Agency?
4. Where are all the studies that were supposed to be produced "in kind" by University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University and BCIT?
5. The Foundation was supposed to be at arm's length from the Village (to protect residents from liability). Yet, three village elected council members were Trustees of the Foundation. Moreover, one or more members of the Village Administrative Staff performed services on behalf of the Foundation. Were the Village Administrative Staff paid for their services? If so, by whom? Was the Village at arm's length for overall liability?
6. Who requested or instructed Village staff to provide administrative services to the Foundation and why was the current Council not informed of this involvement?
7. What will be the effect on the reputation of the Village in future fund-raising ventures if it is shown that it did not manage its affairs with proper books and payment of liabilities? Municipalities **need** to borrow money from time to time. How does this affect the Village's credit rating?
8. Can the solar panels generate enough electricity to create a meaningful revenue source (even if the panels were to be connected to the grid) when the location of the panels have now been moved to being adjacent to the Village Hall?
9. Where is the water power generation as this would have been the largest generating source ?
10. Was there information withheld that might have questioned the viability of this undertaking?
11. Will this matter result in an investigation?
12. Will the residents of Anmore be held responsible for any or all of the liabilities?
13. How many of our tax dollars will have to increase in order to pay off this liability? Where will the money come from? The Village is already stretched for funds to cover its ongoing commitments.

Written By: Camille Tribe, Editor
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