



School District No. 50

Haida Gwaii

TOWN HALL MEETING



DISCUSSION ON

- Tahayghen: Recognizing/Cultural Celebration Ceremony & Future Plans
- School Name: Discussion/Recommendation for the Board of Education
- Totem Poles: Recognition / Cultural Celebration Ceremony

Public Discussion: OPEN to the PUBLIC:

Superintendent Carey Stewart
Secretary Treasurer Kevin Black
Manager of Operations Lao Peerless
Steering Committee Members
Public Input

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm
Date: March 1, 2021

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://sd50-bc-ca.zoom.us/j/65190814651>

**NOTES OF THE TOWN HALL - STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD VIRUTALLY VIA ZOOM
ON MARCH 1, 2021**

Superintendent Carey Stewart welcomed the group at 5:35pm

Opening Prayer - Adeana Young provided an opening prayer

Mr. Stewart reviewed the goals for the meeting:

- Tahayghen: recognizing/cultural celebration ceremony
- Tahayghen future plans
- Totem poles: recognition and ceremony
- School name discussion

Mr. Stewart thanked the steering committee members for their time and commitment on such an important undertaking.

Mr. Stewart noted that currently the students of Tahayghen will move into Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Secondary School space and become a K-12 school.

He noted that to open up the first discussion point around the goal is to look to recognize or celebrate the former building that Tahayghen was housed.

Open discussion on all topics took place

Recommendations, comments, and questions:

- Connect with Jaskwaan Bedard and ask for guidance on the proper protocol for closing down a school. Proper Haida protocols. Check with Auntie Sharon Mathews -cultural protocols do guide our community.
- Per Jaskwaan - The name Tahayghen is held in high regard in our community. It was a topic of conversation with our elders. It was an anglicized version when it was first written down.
- It was also noted that the name Tahayghen was officially given by Emily White when the school opened, and she was a daughter of Charles Edenshaw.
- Consult with different elders.
- I would like to have both names.

- A question was asked in the chat about who owns the building
- It was suggested to turn the building into a food processing plant.
- Kevin Black noted that SD50 owns the building, but the crown owns the land
- It was noted that this is contested in the grand scheme of land ownership in the province.

It was noted that Jim Hart carries that name today with regards to Tahayghen

- It was noted that gym space is important to the community beyond school use. It would be good to try to have existing collaborating to keep it open and assuming responsibility.
- Has there been a call for Expression of interest for the building.

Comment:

Noted that the school district should not spend any funds on maintaining a building that is not used for educational purposes.

- It was noted that this is the goal of the school district upon divesting themselves of the former building.
- Sharon Mathews - it is nice to have Jaskwaan and Candace here – I am thinking about what the old people would do when picking a chief it would be the Aunties that would need to be included. Different Aunties that got together to make this decision. It was suggested to get hold of the Aunties for advice.
- It would be nice to continue the name of Tahayghen as it relates to a real person, recognized by community members - makes a stronger connection to the community and the school. Once amalgamated can start fresh with the correct spelling and pronunciation of Tahayghen. Old but new again

Totem Poles:

Mr. Stewart noted the district is looking for feedback for cultural celebration and ceremony with regards to a potential totem pole at the school. He noted maybe a new totem pole and carved in the front of the building. Perhaps right in front of the school.

- Sharon Mathews commented on the one for GTN – it was so exciting to have one then in the gym a big dinner was put on afterwards a potlatch it was so exciting. Watching the carver and the students was exciting.
- This time I see us looking into the future and see what it will have an honorable name and totem poles. This is a completely different meeting that took place a year ago.
- Actually - there was a plan 10 or 15 years ago to have a pole made for Tahayghen - unfortunately once the pole was donated the carving fell through. It would be nice to plan for a new pole for the 'new' school. GTN has one that is older, SKA has one inside I believe...
- It was noted it takes about three months to get a log, the application process, a possible bid for a carver, are there funds for this it would be a great transition.
- The pole process could be started but doesn't necessarily have to be ready by November 2022. Could be a three year or five year plan. Fundraising, Gwaii Trust, AFG grant, donations, etc..could fund it.
- It was noted as a visitor here seeing a pole raising here brings good feelings and I would support a pole created for this school.
- Adeana Young noted that we may have to start looking into a totem pole quite quickly. An expression of interest should a totem pole be risen.
- Mr. Peerless noted options around a 12-15 foot totem poles.
- Adeana Young noted that the board is looking for feedback and that there is no set size of totem poles and that suggestions are welcomed.
- There was discussion about previous totem poles and having students help in the process
- One other question was asked if Colleen was planning a potlatch in June for the school 50 year celebration.

Answer: Yes a 50 year celebration is planned for Tahayghen

- Another possibility would be large front wooden panels, carved and painted on either side of the front door. I saw a school in Bella Coola that had large ones at their entrance, and it was beautiful.

DRAFT