

Alecia Boddie, Community Planner: Introductions / Opening remarks / Presentation with slide show and historical references of last referendum, c. 1995 as well as frequently asked questions on upcoming referendum plebiscite.

Door Prizes – gift certificates– 3 @ \$100 certificates

Questions from attendees (answers provide by Darren Flynn where otherwise indicated):

In regards to voting in general, is there an advance poll or option for proxy, if so how many proxy votes can you have?

Yes, there will be advance polls as per the Elections Nunavut brochure that we have available here tonight. There will be advance polls from April 25 to May 5 from 12 noon to 7 pm at the returning officer's office. There will be a mobile poll for people who are not able to get out to voting stations, that will be on May 2 from 9 am to 11:30 am. On the voting day, May 9, the polls will be open from 9 am to 7 pm. I am not sure about the proxy situation of if there will be one. There is a special mail-in ballot, but you have to contact Elections Nunavut on this to apply for a special ballot. The information I have given you, by the way, is from the pamphlet that is available at the door.

You have the standard lease and the equity lease right now, please explain the difference.

Robert Chapple: With a standard lease, the person who is leasing pays an annual fee to use a lot. When the term of that lease is over, the money that was paid stays with the owner of that lot. With the equity lease, the lease holder is making annual payments that are credited to the value of the land. If the equity lease holder sells their home, the equity or value of the land can be added to the sale of the home.

If there was a yes vote, would you have to negotiate with council to convert the lease?

Council and the City [of Iqaluit] administration can put those procedures in place which would reflect the current process.

If someone has an equity lease, there is an option to transfer to fee simple title [in the event of a yes vote]?

Yes, once again, this would be done through the municipality, in this case the City of Iqaluit.

What would happen if the equity lease is not paid in full?

You would have to pay the remaining amount on the lease to transfer to fee simple title.

What happens to those home owners who have paid the lease if the yes vote should go through?

If you have an equity lease that is paid in full, there will be the cost of the lawyer's fees, [City of Iqaluit] administration and fees for transfer at the Land Titles Office that would be additional costs.

Should there be a “no” vote, how long will it take before the next referendum?

It is stated in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement that after 20 years from the original vote, which we had in 1995, that another vote should happen. This vote will determine if municipalities could sell municipal lands. In accordance with the Plebiscite Act, it would be another 5 years before another vote can occur. This would happen if there was a “no” vote. If there is a “yes” vote, there will not be another referendum.

Has CGS considered what a yes vote would do for the price of lots being sold? (Refer to question Frequently Asked Question #31). Is there any analysis on the price of homes in general?

The government's policy is that it discourages speculation. A lot is sold for development costs only, what it takes to survey land, install utilities and so on. Once a lot has been sold, the municipality can still have the authority to impose zoning bylaws to restrict the kind of development that can occur on that lot.

Referring to question Frequently Asked Question #24, there is no enforcement via equity lease. If there is a yes vote, can the land still be sold by lottery? How would you prevent speculation?

It is our opinion that the council can control the sale of lands as they see fit, they can enforce development through municipal by-laws. With regards to speculation, it is unlikely that private buyers will buy land and let it sit there undeveloped, generally speaking, an investor will want to have a return on their investment and they can't do that if they leave the lot undeveloped. In any event, the council can impose a time period in which development must occur; if development does not happen in that time, they can expropriate the lot to make that available to someone else.

Senator Patterson: Thanks for doing this, you are doing a good job on the consultations. Do you have any information on how this all started? Why did the negotiation of Nunavut Land Claims Agreement decide to restrict alienation of lands at the time of the NLCA?

It was decided that it would be in the people's best interests to restrict land sales at that time. There were many issues to resolve and that is why the 20 year period was built in to reflect changes that might occur over time.

What about cabins, how will this affect the land that cabins are on?

For cabins that are within the municipal boundary of the City of Iqaluit [municipal] council can change its by law to reflect recreational land use. Regardless of a yes or no vote, that ability is there now and that would not change in the results of this vote. It is important to remember that before any land can be sold, it has to be surveyed and documented; this would have to happen before the land where your cabin is can be sold to you or anyone else. People should vote the way they feel on this, we are not promoting one side or the other. The issue on cabins is that people have the ability to lease only. In the event of a yes vote, those lands may be surveyed and sold at some point in the future.

Mayor Redfern (comment): If you build on land there is a “no adverse affect” rule in place in Nunavut. That means that if the land you are building on is not leased, you can be asked to move that cabin – “squatter’s rights” are not recognized in Nunavut.

I see this movement as benefitting those who have and not those who do not have; those with the means will buy the land and those who cannot will be shafted like in Yellowknife. This concept is very new to a lot of Inuit, how will you ensure that Inuit will be informed?

We are conducting public consultations, we have issued PSAs, there is a website, we have done advertising and interviews with media. Everything that we have produced has been released in all the official languages of the Territory. I understand that you are concerned that we should do whatever is possible to share information, but at the end of the day, people do need to inform themselves on the issues as much as they can. If the public requests special information sessions, such as elders, we can arrange that.

Has the Department of Community and Government Services in its approach considered radio shows for those who do not have internet?

We have done this in communities and we hope the media will carry this in their news coverage to reach as many people as possible.

Will the City of Iqaluit be able to generate income taxes from sale of lands?

The City of Iqaluit is the only taxing authority (tax-based) in Nunavut right now, the other Hamlets are not tax-based because they do not have the population base to support that. Whether the land is being offered on a lease or fee simple title, the process of generating income through property taxes is still available to the City of Iqaluit.

I don't agree with the May 9 voting date, it is not a good time due to traditional seasonal hunting and with the [Victoria Day] holiday weekend, it is not a good time. Can that date be changed?

That date cannot be changed, it is the date set by the Executive Council of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. As I described earlier there is an advance poll from April 25 to May 5, there is a mail-in special ballot and there is also going to be a mobile poll on May 2. In light of this information, May 9 is not the only date that is available for the vote. Having said that, people will have many opportunities to vote and they should do their best to take the opportunity to vote. This is an important issue, people should participate in this.

I am looking around and I see that there are very few people who are present – will there be another public meeting in Iqaluit?

Yes, there will be a second session on March 23, 2016. I encourage everyone here to talk about this, make this a part of your discussions during your breaks at work, at home and among your friends and family. I know there are probably a lot of things going on this week, but I would like to see a better turn out for the next meeting.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit should be included in the upcoming referendum, is that being considered in your referendum information?

We are trying to be as inclusive as we can. The process of community meetings is providing important opportunities to discuss this and that is a reflection of the Inuit Societal Values that are a part of the mandate of the Government of Nunavut. We are including the official languages in all our communications to reach as many people as possible. We are also working on getting a telephone line which the public can use for questions. Again, and I mean this a respectful way, we can plaster the walls with posters but we can't force people to read them.

As a NLCA [Nunavut Land Claims Agreement] beneficiary, I want to participate in the voting so that I can cast my vote in an informed way. If I'm going to buy land, how much will I have to pay for it? Will it be expensive? Can someone else buy the land under my house?

If you own your home and you are in good standing with your lease, you cannot be forced to sell your land to someone else. That lease is a contract between you and your municipality. If you cannot afford to buy the land, you would continue to lease or find a way to make an agreement to pay for it through the council or with support from a banking institution.

On the subject of the zoning, is the City [of Iqaluit] the authority on the boundaries. Could I sub-divide my own lots?

Right now, that is possible in the lease system, it is possible for a private buyer to buy a large lot and sub-divide it. It will be up to the city to determine zoning in the event of a yes vote. The boundaries would have to be determined by a survey and be properly documented.

How about changing the zoning from residential to commercial?

This referendum does not affect that, again, that is an administrative function of the City of Iqaluit.

I don't think there has been enough info to stress what it means to lease or own land.

We will make a note of this concern and we are doing our best to communicate this issue. It is important to recognize that this is what these consultations are about, we are putting the information out there - but it is up to people and the media to discuss this and get those conversations going.

A lot of the land in Iqaluit is owned by large corporations or international corporations – how are they involved in this?

This plebiscite vote is designed so that residents of Nunavut vote as per the requirements for voting with Elections Nunavut. The corporations you are talking about are leasing the land right now, so the City [of Iqaluit] has already allowed that, it will be up to the City [of Iqaluit] to continue to determine how land can be developed within its municipal boundaries.

I am scared by this and I am sure there are many more who are, especially those who are unilingual and are not readers. Is there a video about the land referendum which can be shared? The possible implications of this would be very important to share in a video.

No, we don't have a video, but we can look into this. We have looked into doing an audio presentation and will look into doing a video.

What is the determination for voting, resident individuals or resident corporations?

Resident individuals who are eligible to vote with Elections Nunavut will be able to vote in this referendum.

What is the majority vote determined by?

It is determined by a 50 per cent plus one of those who actually cast a vote. It's the majority of whoever shows up to vote, so again, that's why it is important that people participate in this. If 40 people show up on voting day in the City of Iqaluit, well then, the results of their vote will be the results that will determine the outcome of this referendum for the City of Iqaluit.

Would it possible to do a pros / cons list of the yes or no vote?

We have done this with our frequently asked questions documents and implications of yes vote information sheet [available at <http://www.landreferendum.gov.nu.ca/>].

Mayor Redfern (comment): Even with a yes vote it will take time for Territorial legislation to be amended and municipal by laws to be amended and for fee structures to be put in place. If there is a yes vote, this will not be available on May 10, it will take time to put this process in place.

How about vacant lots?

You cannot get a mortgage on a vacant lot. You would still need to finance the development of a lot in whatever way that is available to you, be that a loan or with savings or with a program that might be available.

Can you post this information through the post office?

Yes, that is in our plan after we are finished with the community meetings at the end of March [2016].

What is the role of CGS – you are mandated to inform the public?

That is correct, CGS is the Plebiscite Authority. It is important to note that the implications of what happens after the vote is decided are ultimately up to the municipalities [in Nunavut].

If the City [of Iqaluit] came up with a plan, would you publicize that as well?

No, we cannot do that because it pre-judges what the results of the vote will be. We will not be able to do the planning until after the results of the vote are in; if it is a yes vote, then the changes will have to take place. If it is a no vote, then we continue with the current system as it is. As we mentioned earlier, we have produced an implications of the vote document and we will distribute that.

I just want to make a statement: I grew up in the time where Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit says that I borrow this land for my use for my descendants – A yes vote automatically contravenes this principle because of the individual ownership of land.

Thank you for sharing that, I think that is an important piece of information to share at this meeting.

End of questions: Door prizes drawn and given out.