
1. Civic leaders split over Games: 'Chance of a lifetime' in Squamish is 'questionable' in Port Alice

The Vancouver Sun

Wed 25 Sep 2002

Page: B1 / Front

Section: News

Byline: Craig McInnes

Source: Vancouver Sun

WHISTLER -- Civic leaders attending the annual meeting of the Union of B.C. Municipalities Tuesday were deeply divided on the 2010 Olympics, despite the fact that the provincial government has thrown its support behind the bid.

Delegates were told public support is crucial to the success of the bid.

"The International Olympic Committee will not give the bid to a province that does not want the bid," Marion Lay of the 2010 Logistics Society told the delegates.

But public support is far from certain if it was represented by the views expressed here by municipal leaders.

Some, like Squamish Mayor Corinne Lonsdale, see the Games as a chance of a lifetime, while others are appalled at the prospect.

Lonsdale said her community faces up to eight years of disturbances as the Sea-to-Sky Highway is upgraded and the 17 days of the Olympics "might be hell living in our community, but you know what?

"Squamish is excited about the opportunity that is given to us with this bid.

"I think it's an opportunity that comes once in a lifetime and we've got it now."

Gordon Goodman, executive director of the business development program for the Olympic Bid Secretariat said there will be opportunities for communities all around the province to participate.

"The motto is turning 17 days into 17 years of prosperity for British Columbia."

But many of the communities were not convinced.

Bruce Lloyd, a councillor from the northern Vancouver Island community of Port Alice called the bid "a questionable investment."

"I don't know if I would want to invest as a taxpayer," said Lloyd, who called on Premier Gordon Campbell to give people a chance to make that choice through a referendum.

Campbell has already said there will be no referendum, however, because support for the Olympics is part of the Liberal platform in the last provincial election.

In many communities, potential enthusiasm for the Olympics has been dampened by other policies enacted by the Liberal government since that election.

Mary Glassford, an area director in Cariboo Regional District, said she is a fan of Olympic sports but cannot support the B.C. bid because of the cutbacks in her community.

"The decision our board made is we can't support this Olympic bid if it means more withdrawal of services from rural British Columbia," she said.

UBCM president Hans Cunningham said a majority of members support the Olympics.

But rural communities feel they are being hit hard by the policies of the Liberal government and many, particularly in the north, don't see much benefit from the Olympics.

"When you are hurting at home, it's very hard to try and throw your support to something that's basically Lower Mainland centred," he said.

That is certainly the view of Rossland Mayor Les Carter, who said the Olympic bid is not relevant to his community.

"The Olympics is another stars-in-the-eyes megaproject and it's not what builds an economy.

"We would rather have a provincial strategy that supports the B.C. hinterland than another glitzy event in the Vancouver-Whistler area."

George Abbott, the minister for communities, aboriginal and women's services, acknowledged that communities have been hurt.

"I would not for a moment dispute that some of the changes we've made at the provincial level have had a detrimental effect at the local level," he said, while defending them as necessary to balance the budget.

But even in the Interior, there is some strong support for the Olympics

Jim Mountain, city administrator for the East Kootenay community of Cranbrook, fully supported the bid.

"What you've got to do is don't think negative, think positive about how these things can work for you. You've got to take an opportunity like this and be a little creative with this in your own community."

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Edition: Final

Story Type: Business; Sports

2. The Vancouver Province

Wed 25 Sep 2002

News A10

News Clare Ogilvie

(Note this story has also appeared in other newspapers)

WHISTLER -- The battle is heating up among community leaders over B.C.'s bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

"I think it will definitely make a difference to urban British Columbia but I don't see any benefits to us," Mary Glassford of the Cariboo Regional District said during a forum on the 2010 Games at the annual meeting of B.C. municipalities yesterday.

"I don't think there was one of us at our board who doesn't feel the Olympics are good because they are," she said later.

"But I think we need to be shown at the end of the day that to develop the Sea to Sky Highway won't take away from the issues that are faced in northern British Columbia or our region."

The Cariboo Regional District board is so concerned that it passed a resolution saying it's not in favour of the Games.

The regional district represents a broad area of central B.C. , including the communities of Williams Lake, Quesnel and 100 Mile House.

"We will be sending a letter to the premier outlining this," said Glassford.

"It wasn't an easy decision for any of us to make."

The Cariboo is not alone.

"The concern in my area is that all the money is going to development of infrastructure for the Olympics at the expense of developing infrastructure up in our area," said Val George of Terrace.

Whistler Mayor Hugh O'Reilly noted his community sends \$1 million a day to the provincial and federal governments.

"We provide tremendous funds to provincial and federal governments on an annual basis and there has been very little return in our community," he said.

UBCM president Hans Cunningham, of the Central Kootenay Regional District, hopes more information about the Games will help northern communities realize the Games do present an economic opportunity for them.

The latest poll results from the Olympic bid committee show 67 per cent support across B.C. for the Games. That's down from 75 per cent in June but up from an International Olympic Committee poll, released this month, showing 62 per cent support.

The International Olympics Committee will decide next July who gets the 2010 Games.

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Color Photo: (Mary) Glassford

WHISTLER

The Province

3. B.C. civic leaders divided over having Olympic Games at Whistler-Vancouver

CP Wire

Wed 25 Sep 2002

Section: Western regional general news

(note this story has been picked up by media outlets throughout British Columbia today)

4. WHISTLER, B.C. (CP) _ Civic leaders at the annual meeting of the Union of B.C. Municipalities were deeply divided Tuesday on the 2010 Olympics, even though the provincial government is supporting the Vancouver-Whistler bid.

Delegates were told public support is crucial to the success of the bid.

``The International Olympic Committee will not give the bid to a province that does not want the bid," Marion Lay of the 2010 Logistics Society told the delegates.

Some municipal leaders, such as Squamish Mayor Corinne Lonsdale, see the Games as a chance of a lifetime, however, others are appalled at the prospect.

``Squamish is excited about the opportunity that is given to us with this bid," Lonsdale said. ``I think it's an opportunity that comes once in a lifetime and we've got it now."

But Coun. Bruce Lloyd of the northern Vancouver Island community of Port Alice called the bid a questionable investment.

``I don't know if I would want to invest as a taxpayer," said Lloyd, who called on Premier Gordon Campbell to give people a chance to make that choice through a referendum.

Campbell has already said there will be no referendum, saying support for the Olympics was part of the Liberal platform in the last provincial election.

Mary Glassford, an area director in Cariboo Regional District, said she is a fan of Olympic sports but cannot support the B.C. bid because of the Liberal government's cuts in her community.

``The decision our board made is we can't support this Olympic bid if it means more withdrawal of services from rural British Columbia," she said.

UBCM president Hans Cunningham said a majority of members support the Olympics.

But rural communities feel they are being hit hard by the policies of the Liberal government and many, particularly in the north, don't see much benefit from the Olympics, he said.

George Abbott, the minister for communities, aboriginal and women's services, acknowledged that communities have been hurt.

"I would not for a moment dispute that some of the changes we've made at the provincial level have had a detrimental effect at the local level," he said.

But Abbott said the cuts are necessary to balance the provincial budget.

(Vancouver Sun)

Keywords: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SPORTS