

BIOSPHERE SUSTAINABILITY CENTRE  
PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

A/ Elgin Consultation September 22, 2009

**1- WHAT WE LIKE about the proposed concept for the Centre:**

- a) The Centre would rejuvenate the area and bring everybody together.
- b) It would enhance the synergy around sustainability and everyone would contribute their energy.
- c) The Centre would serve as a focal point to help residents explore and celebrate the Biosphere and show it off.
- d) The proposal appears to alleviate our fears about resorting to tax dollars since it shows ways to offset the costs.
- e) It would provide space to learn and to create and to show off our work.
- f) It constitutes an opportunity to build a world class facility that can serve as a gateway to Eastern Ontario.
- g) There would be satellite offices across the Biosphere.
- h) The centre could attract people to not just get on a boat and then leave, but have people stay longer and spend some money in our area.
- i) The Centre itself would be a model of sustainability.
- j) The centre won't compete with other business but rather enhance them.
- k) The centre would designate our area as a destination and not just a pass through.
- l) It would create a destination marketing management organization (DMMO) which fits within the new provincial regional approach eg. the timing is right to create the Thousand Islands-Rideau DMMO.
- m) With the synergy created, we could see a springboard to new projects.
- n) The Centre would be a beacon for tourists coming from all over the world.
- o) The Centre could help clarify the respective roles of the various conservation bodies [at work in our area].
- p) We have a beautiful region of open space and waterways to promote.
- q) Sustaining our Biosphere is paramount and we could be an example of sustainability.

**2- OUR CONCERNS/SUGGESTIONS regarding the proposed concept:**

- a) The cost factor: can we get this project off the ground?

- b) We need representation from the general public and not just the partners: how can we get them involved and supportive?
- c) The Centre may be perceived as competition by some. We need to market it as complementary and show what the centre can do that is not being already being done. We could give a day pass to the centre that includes entry to other assets in the Biosphere as well.
- d) There is a lack of understanding about what a Biosphere is and its four pillars: we need to get a handle on how to market it.
- e) We need to help the public understand the concept of sustainability and how to live a sustainable life.
- f) How can we present this project to the public and get them interested?
- g) What is the Town of Gananoque's intention regarding the area surrounding the site?
- h) We need to build in to this process programming and management on the centre: what would make this Centre unique? How will we handle the governance? What are the goals?
- i) We should consider establishing a Foundation and developing a business plan, and involve people who have money. We could look at the Tupper Lake model and others.
- j) We need to demonstrate to potential [government] funders the opportunities for economic generation.
- k) The Centre should not be taxed at the regular rate; there should be some tax consideration at least for the first while.
- l) It should be an attractive place to go with low rents, etc.
- m) The Centre will give an experience of the Biosphere but how can we manage the Centre's sustainability?
- n) Local businesses may learn about sustainability from the centre.

B/ Brockville Consultation September 23, 2009

**1-WHAT WE LIKE about the proposed concept for the Centre:**

- a) The Centre could be an incubator for economic development and have lots of trickle down effects across the region.
- b) We have the potential to be unique in the world eg. the first sustainability centre located within a Biosphere.

- c) **The Centre would provide a focal point for a wide variety of interests, and constitute a common ground for the Biosphere network partners.**
- d) **The Centre would create a focus for the message of sustainability for our local people, and then for tourists afterwards.**
- e) **There is the potential for large spaces and for small spaces, and for a variety of tenants that would create some “spice”.**
- f) **The Centre would encompass all the pillars of sustainability and not just be a tourist attraction or small business development centre.**
- g) **The convergence of the two rivers makes this an attractive location and utilizes the West Bank.**
- h) **The proximity to the 401 makes the Centre more easily accessible for ourselves and for tourists.**
- i) **It seems like the appropriate ‘next step’ in the development or growth of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere.**

**2- OUR CONCERNS regarding the proposed concept:**

- a) **The Centre may under achieve its potential; it needs a full spectrum of activities such as research centre, boutiques, etc. to meet all the needs of the partners.**
- b) **Will the Centre need to sell its soul to pay the rent? Or will we become another Muskoka?**
- c) **We need to involve families and children in order to become a role model for health and wellness. We should create early learning opportunities and bring in school children.**
- d) **There may be some competition with the Maritime Discovery Centre.**
- e) **How to find a governance balance within the partners.**
- f) **The physical location may pose a problem. There is a parking lot there that would need to be naturalized.**
- g) **The Centre needs to be accessible on land by walking and cycling and on water by paddling. Maybe we could park the buses at the Casino and shuttle people over. The entire site should be a model of sustainability.**

**3- OUR SUGGESTIONS for the Centre**

- a) **Naturalise the parking lot.**
- b) **Make the Centre appeal to all ages through galleries, extension activities, etc.**
- c) **Incorporate health, children, social services, and aging society: make the Centre totally inclusive.**

- d) Link the Centre to the whole community and build in outreach to the neighbourhood- have a 'virtual roof'.
- e) Consider the building as having spokes on the landscape under the virtual roof.
- f) Be sure to include people involved in transportation, waterways, ship and boat people, families outside Gananoque across the Biosphere.
- g) Engage children the way we did with the recycling issue: start with the children and they will get the sustainability message across.
- h) Document this whole process as a model and use it as a template to educate and bring in other communities. Promote it as a 'transition town' model.

**C/ GANANOQUE Consultation September 24, 2009**

**1- WHAT WE LIKE about the proposed concept for the Centre:**

- a) The fact that we are re-using an old building.
- b) It is exciting to see a development that creates and doesn't just exploit: it takes the best of the community but doesn't attempt to commercialize it.
- c) The centre is not a political entity but belongs to the whole Biosphere.
- d) We in Gananoque would be the hub.
- e) The project shows leadership in alternate ways of developing and using new technologies eg. energy, etc.
- f) It would be a focused centre of varied information that would clarify the roles and interests in the community.
- g) We like the fact that it is a sustainability centre build on all four pillars.

**2- Our CONCERNS regarding the proposed Centre:**

- a) We need to have measurable indicators for all four pillars of sustainability.
- b) Can the Centre really be financially stable and sustainable?
- c) There is a public perception that the Biosphere is only concerned about the environment. We need to show how the four pillars are inextricably linked.
- d) We must maintain the apolitical nature of this project.
- e) The centre should have a net positive tax benefit to our citizens and not be a burden on taxpayers.
- f) The final consultant's report should be through so that nay-sayers cannot derail the project.
- g) Is our community large enough to financially sustain the Centre?

- h) We have a concern about the traffic problems that might be created around the Centre.**
- i) There appears to be a lack of youth involvement. Perhaps we need a youth committee?**
- j) How can we ensure that the Centre is a learning centre?**
- k) Who will be the future owner of the Centre? Who will be responsible?**
- l) We should not lose the history of the historic hub that Gananoque once was.**

**3- Our SUGGESTIONS concerning the proposed centre:**

- a) We should consider the further development of Local Flavours and the establishment of a farmers' market.**
- b) The Centre should include a museum on the culture and history of Gananoque and the area.**
- c) The Centre should be a centre for sustainability studies.**
- d) We need to simplify the definition of sustainability into layman's terms: eg. People, planet, prosperity, preservation- the four P's.**
- e) We need to educate people about what sustainability means.**
- f) We should quantify the term of sustainability into tangible and measurable benchmarks. Get the community to develop its own indicators as seen in the Whistler 2020 model.**
- g) The Steering Committee should represent all of the geographic areas in the Biosphere.**
- h) There should be vigorous, active branding of the Biosphere vision in the local media.**
- i) We should keep the public involved in this project from start to finish.**
- j) The Centre needs to appeal to all ages.**
- k) Perhaps include an Elder Hostel: a place to stay and to have learning opportunities.**
- l) We should include in our consultation Queen's, St Lawrence College, School Boards, Libraries, etc.**
- m) We should consult Public Health and Social Services to see how they might be involved.**
- n) The artists community could be used to interpret the vision for the Centre to the community.**
- o) We should also include in our consultation the historic societies.**
- p) We need to consult not just middle class people but also those who are deprived and rural folk as well.**