

SAINT JOHN BOARD OF TRADE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & LUNCHEON

May 5, 2010

Mr. Michael Murphy

AGM:

Thanks you to everyone who is here with us this morning to participate in the 191<sup>ST</sup> Annual meeting of the Saint John Board of Trade. Before I get underway there is a group of great young men I would like to acknowledge;

HOW ABOUT THOSE SEADOGS, BIG WINNERS LAST NIGHT, WAY TO GO GUYS.

LUNCHTIME:

Thank you to everyone who is with us today, in particular I want to thank

Mayor Ivan Court who changed his schedule so that he could be with us.

Your Worship thank you very much.

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Back on track:

I would like to thank Kathy Craig for her tireless efforts, her positive manner and the way that she represented the Board and therefore all of us throughout this very busy year. Kathy as you know and I've learned we can plan what we want to do and make very good plans to boot; set schedules that make

perfect sense but then the wind changes and we are required to set sail in a new direction. Remember Oct 28? me either. However if someone asked what was announced on Oct 29<sup>th</sup> well I don't imagine it would take either of us or likely any of us gathered in this room more than a second to remember that was the date the Proposed sale of NB Power to Hydro Quebec was announced, that made for an exciting couple of months.

I also want to thank our board staff, Imelda, Carol, Erinor, Jennifer and Michele. Your dedication and commitment to what you do; the professional way that you do what you do; and all of your hard work is never missed.

We may not say what we should, which is thank you, and likely don't say it as often as we should either however you need to know your efforts do not go un-noticed. Knowing you are there behind us (and now me) is what makes our organization work as well as it does and allows us to move forward confidently. THANK-YOU.

Earlier Kathy gave an overview of 2009 / 2010. Quickly re-capping; In the fall of 2009 the big issue seemed to be the MOU to sell the assets of N.B. Power. In addition to that item through out the year there were ongoing discussions about a trade corridor, education, an English Medical

School, Horizon Health Network and recently the refurbishing of the Harbour Bridge. These aren't the only issues we dealt with they simply are mentioned to identify a few of the advocacy issues that we were called to respond to. In addition to the advocacy matters that received our attention we also hosted more than 40 events including monthly mixers, luncheons and major events like Big Splash and the Outstanding Business Awards. No wonder last year felt so busy! It was.

Who knows what twists and challenges await in 2010 / 2011. What is known is that our city is experiencing a time of significant activity, a lot is going on, everyone is busy. As I thought about what I could say or what I should say it occurred to me that not everyone has hours of time available to listen to me rant about what we already know, Saint John is very busy. This level of busy offers many opportunities. With opportunities comes challenge, what is the most important opportunity before us?

Is it: Water Front Development? Establishing Knowledge and Health Clusters? Medical education? Infrastructure Investment? Our Port?

Tourism? The Atlantic Gateway? To mention these initiatives is not to place them in higher priority than others they just happened to be thoughts that came to mind as I wrote. To get a more complete picture of the priority issues we are following I encourage everyone to read our Key Priorities and

Issues document. Copies of the document are available here, through our Board of Trade office, on our web site, and will be included in today's e-newsletter to members.

As I prepared for today's meeting, besides panicking, I thought -What should guide an organization like ours? What are we all about?

It's easy, well relatively easy, to think about all the issues that came along last year and in previous years; all of which needed our attention and will in some cases continue to receive our attention. However its more than that, more than reacting to hot button issues. Its being proactive, strategic and deliberate; its planning.

Our Mission statement says:

**“To contribute to a productive economic environment for business in Saint John. To provide encouragement, assistance and guidance for established enterprise, or those aspiring to become established in business.”**

Our City has started its work on the development of a new Municipal Plan; we all have a role to play in helping our municipal government craft this document. From the Board of Trade's point of view having a municipal plan will provide Saint John with a vision for its immediate growth and a growth strategy that will lead us into the future. A new and comprehensive

Municipal plan that conveys a strong and clear vision will encourage growth and investment in our community. This is one of the reasons that the Saint John Board of Trade has made the creation of a Municipal plan one of its top priorities.

There are other very important issues before us, which we can't, and won't lose sight of, for instance:

**Harbour Bridge** a key component of the regions transportation system. An immediate plan to deal with Harbour Bridge refurbishment has already been announced. What is required now is a long-term solution that addresses this bridges strategic role in the local economy, the provincial fabric and gain an understanding how a bridge can and does influence the development of a north south-trading corridor.

**Municipal Water Treatment**, clean water with reliable delivery is a minimum standard in today's world. Having a proper and reliable water source is expected; not having it is a deficiency.

**Industrial Parks**, Hard work by the Industrial Parks Commission has meant great headway has been made to prepare our Industrial parks for our future. We cannot assume the job is complete; to take advantage of a North South gateway we need to make sure we are well prepared to participate.

**Knowledge and Health.** We need to make sure we take advantage of every opportunity to grow our knowledge industries. A few years ago the discussion about an English Medical school and an ICT sector were just that discussions. Look where we are today. How much further can we go!

**Energy Policy.** This year has changed the water cooler discussions concerning an energy policy for our province. I believe the discussion has been healthy and has challenged all of us to think about energy sources, energy costs for residential and business users and challenges us to explore what we want and what we expect. We should all look forward to participating in the Energy Policy debate as we move into the months ahead of a Provincial election. Based only recent experience I'm sure there will be debate.

**Energy Hub:** Earlier this year I chaired our task force to review the Proposed sale of N.B. Power, that opportunity gave me a chance to think about our Energy Hub strategy. My take away was I truly enjoyed speaking about the Energy Hub however through the process I began to realize that I wasn't really sure what our Energy Hub was, what it is or what it could be, I have more questions than answers. Hopefully I will become a little smarter in the next year. If Tim Curry is here --- Tim there is your challenge! Make me a little smarter!

Then there is the Provincial election, I'm sure we will have a very busy summer. Imelda and team watch out!

Strategic Partnerships. I'd like to take a moment to speak about community partners. During my time in this City and time with the Board of Trade I've noticed that there are many partners in our community, with social, cultural and business interests at heart. We all have started or have already completed strategic planning sessions, all have been or will be completed to the highest standard and with best interests in mind. What do you suppose we could do if we took the best of the best - ideas and plans, shared those thoughts, found common interests and offered those to Plan SJ with the intention that these ideas and strategies might be brought into the Municipal plan. Would our city benefit if we shared our ideas and worked even closer together? I know we already share ideas and we do work together, but could we work together better and in a way that supports a greater plan for our city? Working together in a supportive way to assist **our** City develop **our** Municipal plan. I truly hope as a community that we can find a way to assist our Municipal Government through Plan SJ to define a plan, which will make it easy for persons and business' to choose Saint John.

I want to thank my colleagues at BMO Bank of Montreal. I know how much you already give me and I hate to mention however I must as I suspect there may be occasions that I will need a little more of your help.

I also want to thank our Board of Directors, to those who are already board members we appreciate your volunteer work. To those who have agreed to join our board congratulations, you have joined an experienced and high energy board, we look forward to your input.

When it was announced that I accepted a move to Saint John (a few years ago) a colleague asked me -- what did you do? I was a little taken aback by that question and frankly didn't know how to answer. My reply was I chose to move to Saint John, by his reaction I could tell that he didn't get it. I wasn't as sure about my choice then as I am now, I am sure I made the right decision. Jill and I have good friends here, our children grew up here and experienced the benefits of being in this community. I am proud to say I'm from Saint John.

In closing I would like to thank everyone who has joined us today. We have a great city and a bright future, here is to looking forward.

Thank you and have a wonderful afternoon.