

City moves closer to working agreement with Samsung

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Mayor Dan Marchisella talks with representatives of Samsung Renewable Energy Inc., senior manager team, business development Sean Kim (centre) and company president Seung-gul K. (Eskay) Lee following the company's presentation to Elliot Lake council at its meeting Monday evening. Kris Svela for ElliotLakeToday

The city will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Samsung Renewable Energy Inc. which could open the door for local projects related to renewable energy and energy storage.

Council approved the memorandum following a high-level presentation by Sean Kim, senior manager, team lead, business development and company president Seung-gul K. (Eskay) Lee.

Kim's presentation dealt with information on the multi-national, South Korean-based company and work it is doing in green energy projects. Samsung has almost 10,000 employees and has offices in some 50 countries worldwide.

It first became aware of Elliot Lake through contacts with Pele Mountain Resources which also has an agreement with the city for the development of green energy projects.

Kim said he was “honoured” to make a presentation to council about potential joint projects in Elliot Lake.

The company has been doing renewable energy projects since 2004 and has since been working on similar projects in Ontario since 2009. It is now focusing on projects that are based in communities and has undertaken a renewable energy and energy storage project in Summerside, P.E.I.

“We believe this is a great opportunity. This area hasn’t been developed as much as in southern Ontario, but we see a lot of potential in northern Ontario,” Kim told council.

Samsung Renewable Energy Inc. is the arm of the main company working on renewable energy projects and deals with projects involving solar and wind energy and energy storage for later use.

“We are one of the major energy developers in the world,” Kim said.

Some of the expertise Samsung would bring to any project is an evaluation of provincial or federal funding programs and how they would fit in with community-based projects. The company would also bring expertise on the technical side of projects and suitability in making its technology fit with individual projects at a local level.

“We are specialized in finding out the good fit funding programs and utilizing it for community benefits,” he said, adding that potential funding programs have been announced by the federal government that could fit community projects.

Kim said Samsung is using its experience in the development in Summerside as a “reference point” for similar projects it would undertake in Elliot Lake and other communities.

Kim said with the Summerside project, the company hopes to eventually, “create one smart and stand-alone electricity and electronic system in that community.”

The end result, according to him, would be a community that is basically self sufficient in its energy needs to create “a smarter, greener community.”

Kim said the company is interested in bringing its technology to the \$41 million multi-recreational sportsplex the city plans to build. He said he believes the project would be a key starting point for efforts to make the community green.

“The recreational centre is... something we can actually focus on to start our smart city project from,” he said, referring to what the first phase of a total city project would be.

“It’s an extremely exciting opportunity,” Mayor Dan Marchisella told council after the presentation. He noted that any project would be on a long-term basis with no formal decisions imminent.

Kim said any project would also include local contractors and businesses. He added that any decision on looking for government funding would utilize Samsung's reputation.

"This is quite a long way to go, but we're welcome to share our vision, our expertise and our values," he added.

"I'm very encouraged by this proposed partnership. It gives our city a renewed sense of vision for the future," Coun. Luc Cyr said. "I'm looking forward to having more discussions."

It was a feeling shared by other councillors.

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