

CREATIVE RESOLUTIONS IN-ACTION

EPISODE #2

Lanny McInnis

PRESIDENT AND CEO
THE MANITOBA HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



Episode Show Notes: creativeresolutions.ca/2

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Colleen Sklar: Welcome to Creative Resolutions In-Action podcast that dives into the real world of Manitoba with a mixture smart conversation, expert advice, behind the scene stories, and straight talk from leaders in government, business, industry, academia and civil civil society. Creative Resolutions In-Action: Manitobans Building Strong Communities.

Today I have the pleasure of sitting down with Lanny McInnis. Lanny is the President and CEO of the Manitoba Home Builder's Association, an organization that acts as the voice for the residential construction industry in Manitoba.

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Lanny, thank you for being here today. And you have a long history in our region along history with the development community, with the business community... And I'm just wondering what your thoughts are. When you hear your US talking about you know working regionally? What are some of the things that come to mind?

Lanny McInnis: This is a process that's sorely needed, and it has been needed for, for some time. Just in terms of improving Manitoba in the capital region, especially our competitive position, not just nationally but globally. We hear about it occasionally, where you see investment fly over us for a whole host of reasons. But the fact that we haven't got our homework work done, and and don't have information that investors are looking for when they're making investment decisions - especially around development - is something that we can change. We can't change geography, we can't change weather, but we can make Winnipeg and the Capital Region much more attractive to investment by making sure we've you've got her homework done, and can provide information to those companies that are looking at making spark investments.

Colleen: Yeah and that's absolutely it. We've heard time and again that, you know, investment isn't going to come unless we get our our house in order. One of the things I think about as we move this forward; it's going to require some change. It's going to require some new ways of looking at how we pull together and work together.



Are there some things that you and your colleagues are concerned about as we move forward developing a regional approach to land use and infrastructure and servicing?

Lanny: I think it's just natural when there is going to be change, and you don't know the details around the change, to be a bit apprehensive. I think the main concern at this point, because there hasn't been many details put out in this, is the apprehension that another level of bureaucracy is going to be added to the development process.

I think what we're looking for, from the Winnipeg Metro Region and the province, is a more streamlined approach that allows more certainty, less ambiguity, in terms of what can and cannot be approved by municipalities in terms of development.

And then what can really shore up and provide a greater level of confidence for those who are looking at making investments, whether it's major commercial developments, all the way down to infill-residential infill developments, understanding what what will be approved, because it supported by a plan, and development proposal checks all the boxes when it comes to what municipalities are looking for. That's really going to help drive that confidence when when it comes to promoting investment and drawing investment into the capital region.



Colleen: So as the The Home Builders and The Urban Development Institute and the development community; How do you see these groups facilitating the creation of kind of a new approach to getting ourselves organized? But what we're talking about; and I appreciate the fact that we can't have any more red tape; we can't have any more bureaucracy in the system; so really this is going to be about kind of moving something new in. How do you believe your organization and others in the Development Community can facilitate, or help, in moving this new approach forward?

Lanny: Well there's a tremendous amount of expertise in the industry that can be harnessed as this process moves forward. These are professionals who have been in this industry for a long time; have a wealth of knowledge and expertise that they can bring to the discussion that the Winnipeg Metro Region is having; that the city Winnipeg is having; that the provincial government is having, and the surrounding municipalities are having; when it comes to how do we put together a concrete overarching development plan for the Capital Region.

These are folks that are going to be incredibly important in that process, and can be a huge resource for the province and the Metro Region in terms of developing this type of plan. So I think the expectation from the industry is that they will be important contributors to the development of these types of plans.

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Colleen: That's excellent. We always say at the Metro Region here, that it's the developers and the builders who build our communities. We're all in this together and everybody wants what's best for this province and I think that's a really great to know that people will be working together and all contributing to the creation of this plan.

There's a lot of positive comments around the creation of this plan. But I've also heard a few concerns around the plan. There's some indifferent businesses that feel that perhaps they're quite good at navigating the current system.

And so they're kind of worried about, you know, all of a sudden, "I know how to deal with this system as it currently exists, how am I gonna know how to navigate the new system."

I wonder what your thoughts are on that?

Lanny: Well I think what it indicates is that from an outside perspective, we're likely not seen as a friendly market to invest in if you've got kind of inside knowledge of how the game works in Winnipeg when it comes to investment.

That means that likely it's a pretty tricky game to play; especially, especially if you're not here and you've got international to national investors looking at areas to grow their business and invest in.



It's a signal to me that maybe Winnipeg has some hard searching to do when it comes to looking at how we can be more competitive. And I think that's what the province has really directed us all to look at when it comes to how are we going to work together collaboratively to come up with an economic development and planning strategy for for the Capital Region.

And because we're starting down a new path, and it's a collective path, it's natural that some existing businesses might be apprehensive, but at the same time if if this leads to a much clearer, much more streamlined planning process, it's going to benefit everyone - not just local companies, but other companies are looking at making investments here and that's for all of our benefit.

Colleen: So it's interesting: since 2015, we've been talking to site selectors, economists, and experts from other jurisdictions. And what they've told us is, we have to work regionally. We have to get our land use and servicing in order if we want to be competitive on the global stage, or in the international market, or even the national market.

And so when I hear that, I hear your comments about that, it really drives home the fact that we have to work together to get this done - to make sure that we're building our economy, and so I guess as it goes, we're kind of in this together.

Lanny: Absolutely. **Planning can't end at your municipal boundary and taking a regional approach is, and we've seen it in other places**

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that have really taken the lead on this, benefits not just the major municipality in the capital region, but all of the municipalities.

And just because some something is planned and developed and built just outside side of Winnipeg doesn't mean that Winnipeg won't benefit from it. And so this is not a zero sum game. Growth outside the perimeter does not equal a loss inside the perimeter, and that's a real perception and a mindset that needs to change when it comes to how not only the City Winnipeg but collectively the Metro Region looks at a planning and development.

Colleen: Excellent. Totally agreeing. It looks like we're going to have to be a working together as we develop this path forward to create this competitive, aligned, regional approach to economic development and land use planning

So Lanny, you've been doing this work for a long time. You've been in this industry for many years. I know in your role with the Home Builder's, you've been in for a couple of years. But what motivates you to do this work?

Lanny: That's a great question really. I think my motivation is about building a better place for for my kids to grow up and live and hopefully stay. I'm a born and raised Manitoban. Winnipeg has been my home only since 1999. And so my youth was spent outside of Winnipeg and I decided to make Winnipeg my home. I could have went virtually anywhere in Canada for for work, but decided that it was the place for



me to live, and make my home, and start a family, and that's what my wife and I have done. And so really, that's my biggest motivation - it is how do I work with with my colleagues, how do I support my members in building a better Winnipeg in Manitoba. And that's really the lens that that I look through when advocating on behalf of my members, or making recommendations to them in terms of some of the things that industry needs to think about. That's really how I look at it.

00:10:09 - 00:13:29

Lanny: And luckily for me that's how our members look at it as well, because they see their roles as building, not just your house, but building your home, building community, and building this province.

Colleen: Yeah. We've got work cut out for us to get this regional plan done, and as we've talked, we're hoping it's gonna be a collaborative process working with business, industry, academia - I have a very close relationship with the universities - and the experts in planning. I'm just wondering what do you think - how do you think the province as a whole will benefit from the Metro Region getting its house in order, so to say.

Lanny: I think the biggest benefit will be - and if if the plan is put and done correctly, and properly, streamlines the process, doesn't added bureaucracy and that there is political buy-in from the municipalities - we'll no longer be the kings of lost opportunity. That Investment will look at Winnipeg and the surrounding area as a place where they invest in confidence and plan for their growth. And that's really what we hope

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to achieve - a plan for growth, not just for or the Capital Region, but for the province in general and as the bulk of of the economic activity in Manitoba is located close to Winnipeg and the Capital Region, it's vitally important for all of us, as Manitobans, that our economic center is performing well.

And so, by taking the step, having a much more concrete plan for economic development and growth, it should allow us to create an investment environment that breeds confidence. And that's really what we're hoping to achieve through this,

Colleen: And I thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me about this today. And over the last few podcasts we've been kind of ending with asking all of our participants a question - and the question is if you could sit down and talk with anybody who would it be, and what would it be about.

Lanny: Might be getting a little sentimental on on this but If I could sit down and talk to anybody I would probably pick my late father and just have a general chat about everything.

Colleen: Well thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. And thank you all for joining us today on Creative Resolutions In-Action.

If you enjoyed this episode, please be sure to check out episode one Blazing the Trail where we sit down with former Winnipeg Mayor Susan Thompson for straightforward and pointed discussion - a call to

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leadership about what is needed for long-term planning in this province.

Join us next week for episode 3: Driving Manitoba, where we sit down with Chris Lorenc of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and talk about the importance of collaboration and building transportation and trade infrastructure needed to grow Manitoba's economy. Creative Resolutions In-Action: Manitobans Building Strong Communities.

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