

## Community Web Site Update

On 16 June 2014, we sent out our latest RFP (request for proposals) for the “Shores of St Ann’s” community web site to 5 Nova Scotia developers, each of whom was recommended to us. Of these, one immediately said that she could not respond, for lack of time.

As of the RFP deadline of 25 June, we had received three proposals. I did not hear from the fifth developer. We committed to (and did) informing responders of our decision by 30 June.

We planned to start the project on 4 July (and did so).

Budget-wise, our first contract attempt would have cost \$5,750.00 all in. We paid out \$1,500. This leaves \$4,250.00 in our original budget.

## The Proposals

Example sites were suggested by the proposer (I did not seek the examples out myself). Bid prices include HST and all other necessary costs. “Waiting to hear” means they did not fully respond in their proposals, and I sent followup questions. No-one did fully respond, but I got very fast answers from one fellow (questions out today, answers back today).

All three bidders are Cape Bretoners, Sydney or Middle River. All have done work for “names” in the Cape Breton tourism industry. Price range is fantastic, as usual. All responders were personally recommended or suggested by people we know who are aware of the problems we’ve had with time. (I have made no reference to our previous problems to any of these responders.)

- **Dan Trobak/Brandcrafted** Recommended by Tom Wilson Price: \$4,140.00  
<http://brandcrafted.ca/>

Can meet our deadline: YES  
Meets all our stated requirements: YES

*Examples:*  
<http://bigspruce.ca/>  
<http://visitbaddeck.com/>  
<http://goodwork.ca/>
- **Mike Shepherd/Launch Media** Recommended by Angelo Price: \$5,002.50  
<http://getlaunched.ca/>

Can meet our deadline: YES  
Meets all our stated requirements: YES (just about)

*Examples:*  
<http://davesampson.ca/> (this was HUGE; crashed my browser)  
<http://eastpointers.ca/> (“coming soon”)  
<http://www.crossfitperardua.com/>
- **Shawn Green/VMP Group** Suggested by Ian Green Price: \$14,122.00  
<http://vmpgroup.com/>

Can meet our deadline: YES  
Meets all our stated requirements: YES

*Examples:*  
<http://cbisland.com/> (slow loading sites)  
<http://golfcapebreton.com/>  
<http://boatingcapebreton.com/> (“coming soon”)

I ranked the responses on a weighting based on these factors:

Price/Time & schedule/Ease of maintenance/Training included/Vendor location/Accessible design/Mobile-ready design

### Scores:

Higher number is better. This is extremely rough, but shows trends toward matching our specification.

- 7 Dan Trobak
- 5 Launch Media
- 5 VMP Group

## My Thoughts

(from the working side of things)

After dealing with these folk briefly, my personal inclination is to Dan Trobak. He was very fast in all correspondence. His sites load quickly and with minimal size, and yet have plenty of images. I like the clean lines of his sites (while we have a design in mind, his visual approach will not fight with our wishes). And I vastly prefer his price.

Because we're sensitive to time, I will add that Mike Shepherd was pretty quick to respond, too, once we got going.

## The Votes

Each of us (Jamie and Rosie abstaining) submitted either one vote for preferred choice, or two votes, for "first" and "second" choice. The votes came out this way:

Dan Trobak:	5x#1
Launch Media (Mike):	1x#1 1x#2
VMP Group:	3x#2

We awarded the contract to Dan Trobak based on the number of votes putting him first. I note that his bid will bring us in at \$110 less overall than the original contract would have been.

## Contract

I prepared a contract encompassing the RFP and the agreed schedule and pricing, plus a confidentiality agreement, and delivered these to Dan Trobak in advance of our meeting on 4 July. Unfortunately, no-one else was able to attend this meeting, but Dan and I did discuss our hopes at length, and he introduced his own methods and approach. I showed him the web site the team discovered that most closely reflects what we would like to achieve. Dan is a formally trained graphic designer who has been creating WordPress web sites for about 7 years.

Dan delivered signed copies of the contract and confidentiality agreement, and I delivered a cheque for 50% of his bid price plus HST (\$1,800+270=\$2,070). I have since got signatures from our authorised signers on copies of these documents, and sent them to Dan.

Over the days after our meeting, I forwarded to Dan a picture of the listings page that was prepared by our last developer, because we had agreed that it includes everything we had asked for, needing only a look to match the new design from Dan. I sent him all of the photographs that we have so far collected, and the content that we have gathered. I have had occasional messages from him that indicate that he is on track to meet the next schedule point: a draft design by 4 August.

## Other

While Dan was setting up, he noticed that the domain had been hacked.

This meant that, if you visited the web site and looked for any page but the one that is automatically served, you would see a message from this hacker. The domain was left insecure by the last developer, and I don't know anything about securing WordPress. After much fussing and hacking of my own, I was able to make it look like this hacking thing was gone. However, we will need to be sure that either Dan secures the domain against casual attacks like this one, or we find someone who can.