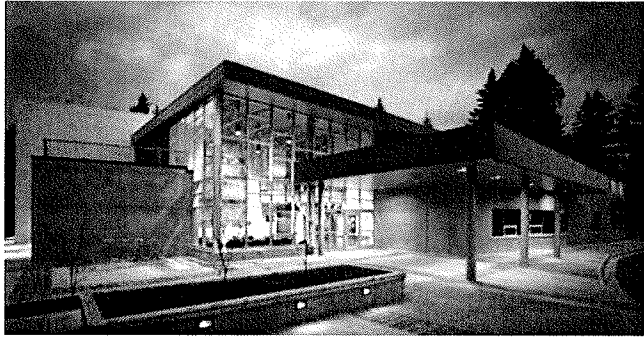


JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

October 31, 2008



The Oliver Woods Community Centre in Nanaimo earned TASK Construction Management Inc. a VRCA Silver Award.

General Contractor \$0 to \$15 Million

TASK Construction Management comes in under budget at Oliver Woods Community Centre

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correspondent

TASK Construction Management Inc. of Burnaby takes on many different types of construction, but there is no doubt they have become best known for their community projects.

They have done theatres, swimming pools, recreation centres and community centres. In fact, they have built more than 20 of them over the past dozen years.

Their latest endeavour is the Oliver Woods Community Centre in suburban Nanaimo, which won TASK a Silver Award in this year's Vancouver Regional Construction Association's Awards of Excellence competition. Their award is for a general contractor working on a project worth \$15 million or less.

The initial budget for Oliver Woods was \$10,950,000 for all design, engineering and construction costs. At the end of the day, TASK came in about \$800,000 under budget.

Some of those dollars were returned to the City of Nanaimo and some went into a few extras for the community centre.

It has become a common practice on TASK's projects.

It is the kind of finish that Task's owners and managers, John Hiebert and John Bowser like to specialize in.

Depending on the job TASK will operate as a construction manager, project manager or both.

In the case of Oliver Woods, they were both construction manager and project manager. The architect was CEI Architects. CEI and TASK previously worked together on about a half dozen projects.

The building is a fairly straight forward 36,000 square foot facility.

It includes two full-sized gymnasiums that can handle a multitude of sports and recreational activities.

In addition, there are multi-purpose rooms, a fitness studio, a wellness room, meeting spaces and a children's play area.

Space was also created for an RCMP neighbourhood detachment.

A few environmental challenges were dealt with.

The building abuts a wetlands area, as well as a fish bearing stream. There was also the inconvenience of a blue heron, which had chosen a tree on the property to call home.

These were dealt with one at a time with appropriate environmental sensitivity.

The stream was protected by a relatively new product called Delta Lock. In simple terms, it is a sand bag that is filled with a special growing medium mixed with seed.

When the Delta Lock comes into contact with water, the seed sprouts and a natural barrier is provided to protect the stream banks from erosion.

Other than the environmental challenges, the real story at Oliver Woods revolves around the TASK method of saving money.

They prefer to get involved in the budgeting of a project right from the start.

They stay involved by keeping a day-to-day eye on the budget throughout a project.

"Just so long as your architect doesn't get carried away with grandiose corridors and lobbies and items such as those, then costs can be constrained," said Hiebert.

"Every square foot you don't have to build saves you money."

It's really about keeping it simple.

"We like to work with the design team to simplify things and we like to do a constructability review on the fly as construction continues," he said.

"We like to make sure we aren't involving too many different building products. Sometimes a design is way, way too complex. The more trades you bring in the more complex it becomes and the more interfaces you create."

They used this approach at Oliver Woods.

Heibert said he saw the design was starting to get way too complicated.

"We said, 'this is not consistent with what makes sense'. We said, 'why not do this, do that, change this' and got it down to about three different building material types. I'm sure it's going to win some architectural awards. It's a gorgeous looking building."

Hiebert said owners should always choose proposals that best meet their needs and not select on the basis of lowest bidder among construction managers.

The construction management fees are so small compared to the overall cost of a project, that it is absurd if they make the fees the deciding factor, he maintained.

Oliver Woods is the third Nanaimo project TASK has completed in recent years.

The other two were the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and the Nanaimo Ice Centre.

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