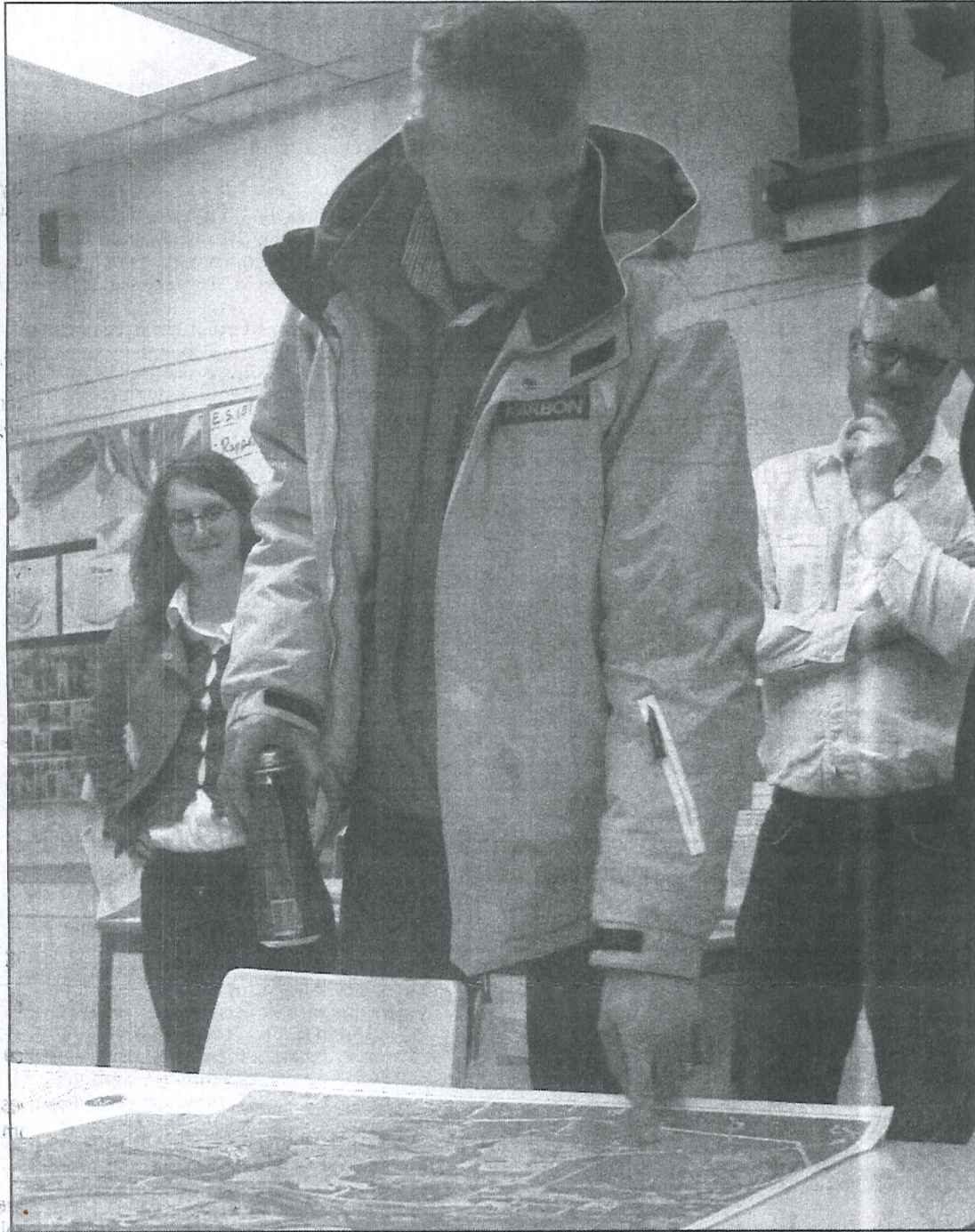


■ **INFRASTRUCTURE:** New gravesite to operate for next 30 years

New cemetery site proposed



SHIRLEY LIN Today staff

Ken Ball, interim manager at parks, recreation and culture with the municipality, explains the proposed site for the new cemetery at the open house Monday.

SHIRLEY LIN
Today staff

Real Martin Lands was deemed the most suitable choice for a new cemetery due to its location and physical attributes.

Access to the area, its soil conditions, and a potential for a parkland, were part of the eight to 10 criteria required for a new

gravesite that Real Martin Lands seemed best fitted, said Heidi Redman, landscape architect with LEEDS + Associates that's leading the planning and design.

The 10-acre proposed site is just west of Real Martin Drive in Thickwood.

"Looking at all of those (factors), Real Martins seem to be the best with all of those," she said during the open-house Monday

night.

The new gravesite will be built to operate for the next 30 years. A cemetery is also needed in Fort Chipewyan.

The other potential sites considered were parcels in Parsons Creek, west of Timberlea Field, north of Conn Creek, Abrams Land, Saprae Creek Estates, and south of Highway 69.

The municipality is on a tight timeline to build a new site as the downtown cemetery on Biggs Avenue is already full. Currently, the only choice for burial in the city is at the Abasand cemetery, which has about a four-year window remaining.

Now that a site has been proposed, there is still the issue of getting that piece of crown land from the government.

Although the date for construction hasn't been set yet, Redman says ideally they want it to start by 2012.

About a total \$7 million has been budgeted for the building of cemeteries region-wide, according to the 2011 capital budget report that lists the financial plan of the municipality for 2012 to 2017.

Back in January, municipal

■ **HYPNOTIC NAP**



SHIRLEY LIN

Two volunteers from the audience are in a deep spell after braving to be hypnotized by a show at Father Mercredi high school Saturday, hosted by the Fort McMurray Girls Club. The volunteers, under hypnosis, were asked to "find their animal" at a zoo, audience members. Throughout the show, the volunteers were hypnotized and awake to perform funny acts: one thought she was a singing diva while another kept switching backwards.

council approved a new strategy to deal with the issue, unanimously voting for a set of guiding principles and practices for new gravesites.

An open house for the public was held January and soon after the team began work with the landscape architecture firm, where several sites were selected for consideration.

A market research survey was conducted by the firm to see how many residents plan to retire here or use the local graveyards. About 20% of residents expect to retire in the area. The same percentage of people expect that they or a family member will be buried in the region. But that number is even higher for long-time residents (30%) and for those planning to retire in the area (40%).

Those surveyed also expressed interest in a green burial which surprised planners, said Redman.

"Green burial — we were surprised to see the interest of those we interviewed were so high. Green burial takes place more in a natural setting. So I think it would be a natural fit to have the option."

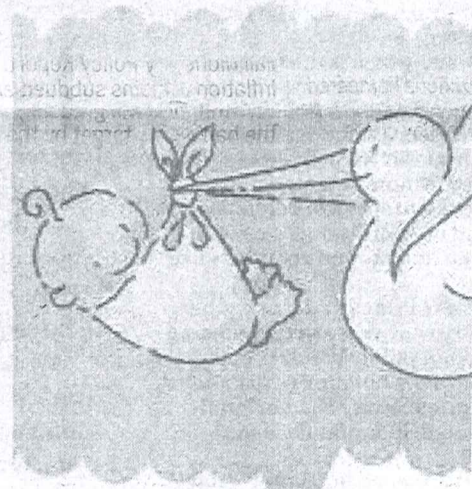
The Real Martin Lands area is a site that can fit a parkland, an idea the municipality has long talked about, she added.

Now, the team will conduct more geotechnical analysis of the site to identify exactly which parcel in the area is best suited.

shirley.lin@fortmcmurraytoday.com

New family members

Let **Fort McMurray Today** help you spread the word with our new, free Stork Report section.

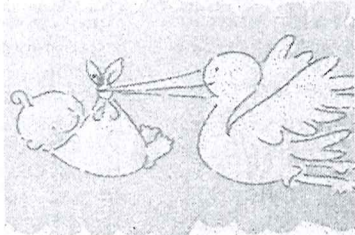


Just email your baby's full name, weight at birth, parents and grandparents' names to holly.miyasaki@fortmcmurraytoday.com with contact information to 780-790-1006.

To have a photograph of your new baby in our announcements section, call 780-743-8186.

Example:
JOHN JAMES SMITH, a 6 lb., 8 oz. baby boy, was born Sept. 27 at Northern Light Health Centre to proud parents Paul and Kendall Smith. He is welcomed by siblings Kendall and Emma.

Stork Report



Get your free Stork Report listing in the **Fort McMurray Today**. Just email your baby's name, parents' names, birthday, weight and siblings to holly.miyasaki@fortmcmurraytoday.com. To have a paid photo announcement published, con-

tact our classified department at 780-743-8186 ext 227.

CONNOLLY PATRICK DAVIS, a 7 lb., 15 oz. baby boy, was born Dec. 31, 2010 in Edmonton to proud parents Luke and Vanessa Davis.