



Economic Development Advisory Committee

Friday, May 18, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.
City Hall, Committee Room #2

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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|---------------------------|--|
| Councillor Bill Harper | - Chair, City Council Member |
| Councillor Mary Trentadue | - City Council Representative |
| Danison Buan | - Community Member |
| Mark Evans | - Community Member |
| Jorden Foss | - Community Member |
| Kendra Johnston | - Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association Representative |
| Lizz Kelly | - New Westminster Chamber of Commerce Representative |
| Catherine Williams | - Community Member |
| Julia Zhou | - Community Member |

MEMBER REGRETS:

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|---------------|--------------------|
| David Moulton | - Community Member |
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STAFF PRESENT:

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| Carolyn Armanini | - Economic Development Coordinator |
| Ruby Campbell | - Intergovernmental & Community Partnerships Manager |
| Blair Fryer | - Manager of Communications & Economic Development |
| Carilyn Cook | - Committee Clerk |

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

1.1 Additions to the Agenda of May 18, 2018

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Agenda of the Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held on Friday, May 18, 2018 be adopted.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favor of the motion.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of March 2, 2018

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the March 2, 2018 Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favor of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

There were no items.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Economic Development Plan Update & Action Item Prioritization

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications & Economic Development, stated that the Committee has been very involved in updating the City's Economic Development Plan which was last updated in 2007. He advised that the group would be reviewing the Plan's strategies and the targeted initiation dates of each strategy, adding that members should remain mindful of City resources, including staff time, and that some resource requirements may include the use of consultants, which would come at an expense.

Strategy 1: Market and Promote New Westminster's Competitive Advantage

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Fryer provided the following comments:

- The focus is on tech, green, and digitally creative businesses and is designed around assets found in areas around the City that may fit with smaller start-ups;
- For the new Official Community Plan (OCP), the City is looking at ways to facilitate the construction of 'the missing middle' through infill housing and townhouses, as well as reviewing the zoning bylaw and special employment areas (e.g. near the hospital, etc.) to address housing issues;
- The City has a number of "renoviction" policies, as well as a policy stipulating that a building with rental housing cannot be torn down unless the building is in extremely poor condition;
- The City cannot dictate rental rates as the rental market is based on what the system will allow;
- Timelines are general at this stage; however, staff would like to have a marketing strategy by the end of 2018; and,
- The term "local stakeholders" refers to business stakeholders such as Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), post-secondary institutions,

Arts Council, and Tourism New Westminster. One potential idea would be to have working groups with workshops held for the different focus areas.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- Affordability is a big issue for both established companies and start-ups;
- When comparing salaries and housing, small to medium businesses cannot compete with larger businesses; and,
- The City should continue to incentivize builders to include rentals in their buildings as well as possibly dictate, during the rezoning process, the inclusion of rental units, parking spaces, etc.

Strategy 2: Formalize the Leadership Role of the Economic Development Office as the Business Community’s Advocate at City Hall

Mr. Fryer advised that one of the concepts identified during the workshop outreach process was the need for the City to advocate on behalf of current and prospective businesses and stakeholders at City Hall. This would mean that a business experiencing challenges with various processes and procedures within the City may contact the EcDev office for assistance. The implementation of a business “hub” would also be beneficial in assisting businesses through the various steps required in starting and running a business in the City.

Mr. Fryer provided the following additional information:

- The term “hub” indicates a “one-stop shop” wherein someone could apply for a business license, relative permits, etc., all in one place, shortening the time between applying for a business license and opening the business;
- Prior to implementing a business hub, staff would need to audit and re-evaluate how City Hall currently functions with respect to assisting businesses, including identifying where the challenges are and how they can be corrected;
- A guide outlining the steps needed to open a business in New Westminster could be created as a supporting measure;
- The business licencing desk utilizes NAICS Codes (North American Industry Classification System) to code businesses by type, with some of the data available on Open Data;
- The City is working with Douglas College to possibly have business students research the topic; and,
- At some point, permit applications could be submitted 24/7 via the City’s website.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- The City's website could show the types of businesses currently located in the City, as well as up and coming businesses;
- A webinar/video on the City's website explaining the process of opening a business in the City would be helpful; and,
- The City needs to align regulatory processes with what businesses want.

Strategy 3: Build a Fertile Environment for Growth and Expansion of Business Through Ongoing Collaboration and Engagement with Key Stakeholders

Carolyn Armanini, Economic Development Coordinator, informed members that staff would like to revisit the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR) to ensure appropriate representation on the Committee.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- Lizz Kelly, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce (NWCC) representative, stated that with respect to Item G (Mentorship), the NWCC has hired a summer student to create a mentorship program for Women of New West to work alongside Douglas College. Once the final report on the initiative is complete, they would be happy to share it with the Committee to use as a starting point;
- Catherine Williams, Community Member, advised that Douglas College is also hoping to do a pilot initiative that would include both business students and business leaders, and they are very open to doing a call to faculty for assistance with the initiative that Ms. Kelly spoke of previously; and,
- Kendra Johnston, Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association Representative, stated that Item A of this strategy tied in well with Item F of Strategy 2, regarding implementation of regular meetings as a way to ensure that the timelines fit together.

Strategy 4: Drive Continuous Innovation in Delivery of City Programs, Projects and Processes Through Implementation of Intelligent New West

No comments were received on this item.

Strategy 5: Leverage IDEA Centre to Attract and Retain Business, Promote Investment and Support New Employment in Health Care, Education and Tech and Creative Sectors

Ms. Armanini reminded members that this item, which addresses collaborating with stakeholders to implement the IDEA Centre road map, is ongoing.

Ruby Campbell, Intergovernmental & Community Partnerships Manager, informed members that the City is in on-going negotiations with Fraser Health, some of which depend on the expansion of the Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH) and the new Official Community Plan that would follow. Therefore, an email was sent, approximately six months ago, advising task force members that meetings will be postponed until things start moving forward and information can be shared publicly.

Ms. Campbell shared that the RCH Foundation has signed onto the Board once again and that the Board will be looking to hire an executive director once things start to move forward. Staff are committed to keeping people apprised of the progress on the project, noting that a meeting could be scheduled for some time in September; however, members were invited to contact Ms. Campbell at any time for an update.

Strategy 6: Communicate to Business the Value Proposition of Locating in New Westminster

Ms. Armanini stated that these items are proposed to start in 2018. The Committee would work with Tristan Johnson, Planning Analyst, to get the items moving forward so that the implementation of the Plan can be communicated to the community and monitored.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Mr. Fryer advised that the baseline metrics were first completed in 2016 and are currently being updated for 2018 and will include the last two-year period.

4.2 Smart Cities Challenge Application Update

Mr. Fryer shared that staff, guided by Patricia Jecks, the City's Intelligent City Project Coordinator, had created a challenge statement for New Westminster to submit to the Federal Government's Smart Cities Challenge, after collecting input from the community through a survey and workshop. The City's challenge statement outlined the goal to become the most digitally democratic city in Canada by utilizing technology to engage marginalized members of the community, and enable these residents to connect with each other and their civic government.

The application is currently being reviewed and, if short listed, the City would receive \$250K to further develop the idea and then proceed into the final selection process. Results will be released in the summer, and those communities that are given the opportunity to develop their ideas further would then have the chance to win \$10M.

Mr. Fryer also announced that the Open Data initiative led the City to be recognized by the Public Sector Digest as being the sixth most open city in Canada and number one in the size category (with a population of 100K or less). Additionally, an Open City Champion Award process was held and Councillor Harper was recognized in Ottawa as a 2018 Open City Champion.

Councillor Harper remarked that, ultimately, bringing the Open Data Program to the community was done by staff, and he commended Mr. Fryer and Ms. Jecks for their work on the initiative, stating that it is really the City that won the award. Mr. Fryer acknowledged that leadership also played a big part in this success.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 New Business Update

Mr. Fryer provided the following update to members:

- The old BC Penitentiary building was sold to an entrepreneur who will be utilizing the site for their company, Accordios, which is a virtual reality marketing firm that creates completely immersive digital campaigns enabling the user to experience what is being marketed as if they were there. The Company is in the process of hooking up to BridgeNet, the City's open access fibre network, which was a critical part of their decision to move to New Westminster;
- David Sarraf has been working for the last year to renovate and restore the interior of 659 Columbia Street back to its heritage status, including uncovering three heritage arched windows on the top floor of the building that had been covered by cinder blocks since approximately 1967. Mr. Sarraf will be leasing out six to eight delineated offices in the building; and,
- The property owner of Queen's Park West is looking at a potential tenant for the space at Fifth Street and Sixth Avenue, and more information will be provided when confirmed.

In response to an enquiry from another Committee member, Jordan Foss, Community Member, announced that a summer replacement for Tej Kainth, former Executive Director of Tourism New Westminster, will work throughout the summer on a contract basis. The hiring committee is working to find a permanent Executive Director for September, with new board members being sought as well.

5.2 Public Art – Front Street Fire Escape

Mr. Fryer announced that 43 international submissions were received in response to the call out for a public art installation at the Front Street Fire Escape located at 655 Front Street, with Monkey C Interactive's Floralume Interactive Street Lamp Vine being the winning submission. Additional information provided to the Committee included:

- Floralume is an interactive art piece that consists of a foot-pedal controlled interactive music and light display;
- Staff have worked with local businesses to ensure that the lights and sounds emanating from the piece are not invasive to the surrounding area;

- Monkey C Interactive will set the lighting and sounds on the piece which can be reprogrammed with a variety of lights and/or sounds over the next five years; and,
- It is expected that installation of the piece would coincide with Fridays on Front.

5.3 Upcoming events

Ms. Kelly announced that world-renowned futurist speaker, Nikolas Badminton, will be appearing on Thursday, May 31st at Douglas College Theatre to speak about current and future technologies. The event is being sponsored by the City and Douglas College.

Mr. Fryer reminded members that the 2nd Annual New West Grand Prix, which is a part of BC Superweek, will take place on Tuesday, July 10th. The race starts at 4:45 p.m. with the kids' component, followed by the youth race, the women's race and the men's race. Ruby Campbell, Intergovernmental & Community Partnerships Manager, notified members that sponsors were still being sought and urged anyone interested to contact her. Sponsorship starts at \$500 and includes access to the viewing area which is being sponsored by PIVA Modern Italian restaurant.

Ms. Armanini announced that staff are currently working on the National Industrial Symbiosis Program (NISP) along with Norm Connolly, Community Energy Manager, and the University of British Columbia. NISP is an internationally recognized economic development program being brought in to support the innovation and success of the local business community. To this end, the City will be hosting a circular economy-based workshop on Wednesday, June 6th from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Anvil Centre, which will connect people and businesses. Members were asked to register if interested.

Ms. Campbell informed the group that Innovation Week has been approved by Council for next year and that it will now be an annual event, with next year's event running from March 2-8.

Procedural Note: Councillor Trentadue left at 9:26 a.m.

Ms. Kelly advised that the NWCC has been meeting with the Province regarding the Pattullo Bridge replacement project and working to ensure that the contractor awarded the project is aware of New Westminster businesses that can be utilized during the project. An event will be held in the fall with the Province, local, suitable businesses, and the contractor to explore opportunities to work together.

Ms. Johnston announced that *Fridays on Front* will be running from July 6th to August 24th and that Douglas College has signed up as a sponsor. The event will include weekly guest breweries, food trucks, an Artisan Market, and live music. Other upcoming events include *Music by the River* from July 5th to August 9th, and Wednesday night *Yoga in the Park* from July 4th to August 29th.

Ms. Kelly also announced that *An Evening of Women in the Arts* will be taking place on Thursday, June 21st at 100 Braid Street and will include a panel of local female leaders in the arts community.

7.0 REPORTS

There were no items.

8.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

9.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 7, 2018, at 8:00 a.m., in Committee Room #2 at City Hall.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Certified Correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Councillor Bill Harper
Chair

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk