



## **Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**Friday, September 6, 2019 – 8:00 a.m.**  
**City Hall, Committee Room #2**

### **MINUTES**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillor Mary Trentadue	- Chair, City Council Member
Councillor Chinu Das	- City Council Representative
Alejandro Diaz	- Community Representative from Commercial Area
Mark Evans	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Jorden Foss	- Community Representative from Commercial Area
Jonathan Graves	- Community Representative from Commercial Area
Kendra Johnston	- Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association Representative
Vera Kobalia	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Quinn Waddington	- New Westminster Chamber of Commerce Representative
Catherine Williams	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

#### **MEMBER REGRETS:**

Jolene Foreman	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Richard Patterson	- Uptown Business Association Representative
Paul Romein	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Jen Arbo	- Economic Development Coordinator
Mike Anderson	- Transportation Engineer
Carolyn Armanini	- Planner, Economic Development
Kim Deighton	- Manager of Licensing & Integrated Services
Blair Fryer	- Manager of Communications & Economic Development
Harry Gill	- Business Liaison Officer
Aaron Hilgerdenaar	- Superintendent, Street Use Enforcement, Parking & Animal Service
Tristan Johnston	- Senior Planning Analyst
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m.

## **1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

### **1.1 Additions to the Agenda**

There were no additions.

## **2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

### **2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of June 7, 2019**

#### **MOVED AND SECONDED**

*THAT the Minutes of the June 7, 2019 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

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

## **3.0 PRESENTATIONS**

### **3.1 Introduction to Harry Gill, Business Liaison Officer and Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator**

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications & Economic Development, introduced Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator, noting that she would be working on Intelligent City projects, and promotion and marketing efforts for the department.

Kim Deighton, Manager of Licensing & Integrated Services, introduced Harry Gill, Business Liaison Officer, noting that he is the coordinator of the business license process and helping businesses with their applications.

## **4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **4.1 Input on Gathering Data from Closing Businesses**

As follow up to the Committee's June 2019 discussion, Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications & Economic Development, provided clarification on the City's process for collecting data from businesses who are closing or leaving the City, noting the following:

- The City's business licensing unit offers a refund of the balance on business licenses and issues a survey at the same time
- The City is also in close contact with the BIAs who also collect data; and,
- Collaborations and process improvements are being made between the Economic Development and Business licensing departments to ensure that businesses re contacted.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Fryer and Harry Gill, Business Liaison Officer, provided the following information:

- The feedback survey is handed out to businesses when they come to the licensing desk and request a refund;
- Information is not known at the current time about what measures other municipalities take to collect this “exit data”
- The importance of collecting data from companies exiting the City is to understand the reasons behind their move, for example business environment, costs, lease rates, and whether process improvement is needed by the City;
- Often, the only way that the business license office finds out that a business has closed is during license renewal time; and,
- The business license refund is not currently widely advertised.

The Committee made the following comments:

- It may be beneficial for the City and the BIAs to share and compare the information collected in their surveys;
- A process improvement may be to reach out to any businesses who have closed to let them know about the refund policy and to ask survey questions; and,
- The data collected in the surveys would be important for the City to analyze in order to attract more businesses and economic activity to the City.

**Procedural note:** Item 4.2 was addressed after Item 5.1

#### **4.2 Update on Economic Development Metrics**

Tristan Johnston, Senior Planning Analyst, and Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator, discussed an infographic that has been created to explain and describe the City’s economic development data, and asked the Committee for their feedback.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Johnston and Ms. Arbo provided the following information:

- The infographic was created using the online software platform Infogram, and could include more features if the full version of the software is purchased; and,
- The infographic is intended to provide high-level metrics; however, the data could be put online in Excel format further analysis by anyone who may have interest.

The Committee made the following comments:

- The infographic provides a clear format to describe the data;
- It is not immediately evident that some information is interactive and only visible when it is rolled-over or clicked – this could be a drawback in its effectiveness and information could be missed unless viewing online;
- It may be beneficial to add a graph to indicate the percentage growth of the population in comparison to the region; and,
- It would be beneficial to define the purpose of the document, and what advantages it is indicating, as well as its relevance to the EcDev plan.

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

**Procedural note:** Item 5.1 was addressed after Item 4.1

### **5.1 Review and Input on Draft ‘Operating a Business in New West’ Guide**

Carolyn Armanini, Planner, Economic Development, introduced the ‘Operating a Business in New West’ guide, noting that it was one of the deliverables in the Economic Development plan adopted by Council in 2018, and the City had received input into its content from the BIAs and Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Armanini requested feedback on the guide from the Committee, in particular with regards to the FAQ and funding and incentives sections, and noted that the document would contain hyperlinks in its online form.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Armanini provided the following information:

- Once completed, the guide would be available both online and as a handout;
- The length of the document is two pages based on examples from other municipalities; and,
- Translation of the document is still under consideration - there may be internal resources available.

The Committee made the following comments in regards to the current layout and content of the document:

- The document contains a large amount of information, and could be larger;
- Much of the information could be condensed and point to content and resources found online, or through contacting City staff;
- It would be beneficial to note at the top of the document that hyperlinks are available in the online version;
- Consider two versions of the document which vary in length – one that talks about the process quickly, and another that goes into detail about the

steps involved in operating a business in the City, including the 8-12 week timeline, process flowcharts, a glossary, and a checklist;

- It may be helpful to create a checklist of the timeline and follow a business through completion of it, as that would provide information about how long the process takes, which the relevant City departments could learn from and improve on; and,
- The document is well written but could be double-checked for jargon.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the question “What’s Missing from the document?”:

- The City’s Open Data resources are really useful and could be highlighted;
- The contact details for the Business Liaison Officer;
- Resources and support for hiring, e.g Government programs and grants;
- Incorporate language about “Why New West?”
- Highlight the types of businesses (i.e. top three), and those that the City is looking to attract; and,
- Provide information about the demographics and market in the City and point to more details available on the City’s website.

## **5.2 Review of 2018 Provincial Local Economic Development Survey**

Tristan Johnston, Senior Planning Analyst, provided a Powerpoint presentation of UBCM’s 2018 Local Economic Development Survey, noting that it demonstrates the Economic Development work that is done in the provincial context and with regional partners.

In response to a question from the Committee, Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications & Economic Development, noted that the tech and innovation sectors have indicated to the City that they are in need of a range of space requirements, and completing a tech space inventory and strategy is a priority for the Economic Development office (EDO).

The Committee made the following comments:

- Projections indicate that demand for high skilled tech workers is higher than supply, which will have an impact on where tech companies will locate;
- Other challenges for location of the tech sector include cost of living, transit supply, and ensuring that immigrants feel welcome;
- Effective methods for the City to attract tech companies could include provision of tax breaks and infrastructure and ensuring that there is space in the city for the tech sector through planning and zoning; and,
- There may be value in looking at other municipalities in BC to find creative solutions.

### 5.3 General Economic Development Office (EDO) Update

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, provided an overview of the recent activities and priorities of the EDO, noting the following:

- Data captured about businesses within the current Tempest system can be challenging, therefore the EDO team recently met to see how to overcome this, and, in conjunction with the Business Licensing department, are going to begin initiatives on a process for electronic business licensing;
- The Metro Vancouver Board has recently approved a Regional Prosperity Initiative, which will soon be getting up and running. Mr. Fryer sits on the advisory committee and will report back to EDAC;
- The Intelligent Community Forum has designated New Westminster as a top 30 ranked community in broadband – 18<sup>th</sup> overall globally; and,
- Developing a retail strategy for the City is a key deliverable of the Economic Development plan, and work will take place in the coming year.

Mr. Fryer provided the following update on businesses operating in the City:

- Craft Café, which will be going in at the space previously occupied by Angelina's Restaurant;
- AdPerfect, a local software company, is moving from Uptown to a new space by the quay;
- CodeCore, a software training institute for adults and kids, has recently opened in Uptown;
- OffWorld Industries, currently occupied in the Westminster Building, is looking to expand in the City; and,
- Pink Ribbon Bakery is leaving the City.

### 5.4 City Parking Rates

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, introduced Mike Anderson, Transportation Engineer, and Aaron Hilgerdenaar, Superintendent, Street Use Enforcement, Parking & Animal Service, who joined the Committee meeting for a discussion about parking rates in the City.

Mr. Anderson provided the Committee with some notes about the City's parking policy and noted that parking rates have not been adjusted in five years. He noted that benchmarking the City's rates against other municipalities in the region has occurred and Engineering would be providing Council with a review of parking rates during the department's annual update. In addition, the Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) is still underway and it is expected that engagement would wrap up later this year. A key priority is to encourage more off-street parking in order to free up curb space for transit, ride hailing, car share, and taxis.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Hilgerdenaar provided the following information:

- The City is investigating the idea of raising rates on higher demand blocks in the Downtown, but it is not confirmed;
- The meters in the Downtown do not have the ability to charge different rates per day;
- Loading areas can be requested depending on the area;
- The Passport parking app was chosen because transaction costs for the PayByPhone app (as used in Vancouver) was higher;
- The traffic studies that occur as a result of proposed developments are not followed up for accuracy, however a review of study requirements for developments is being done to broaden the studies to more than traffic impacts; and,
- The use of existing bus stops for ride hailing could be difficult, especially from an accessibility point of view. Consistency among the region needs to occur about ride-hailing, and discussions are beginning to happen.

The Committee made the following comments:

- A commercial bicycle strategy, including secure bike parking, would be beneficial for the Downtown;
- It will be interesting to see how ride-hailing will impact parking in the City;
- The recommendations from the past Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) need to be considered and reported back on, as many remain outstanding; and,
- It would be appropriate that EDAC has the opportunity to weigh in on the DTP.

Mr. Anderson noted that he would take the committee's comments back to the Transportation department and discuss how to revisit the Downtown parking strategy.

## **6.0 REPORTS**

### **6.1 Introduction to the LevelUp My Brand Contest**

This item was not discussed.

## **7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

### **7.1 Joint Letter to Council from Uptown and Downtown BIAs and New West Chamber of Commerce**

The Committee discussed a letter from the Uptown and Downtown BIAs and the Chamber of Commerce, which discussed a call for the development of a split assessment taxation option. The letter requested that Council support small businesses by adding its voice to the matter at UBCM.

#### **MOVED AND SECONDED**

*THAT the letter be tabled for further discussion at the December EDAC meeting.*

**CARRIED.**

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

## **8.0 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. in Committee Room #2.

## **10.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION**, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Certified Correct,

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

**Councillor Mary Trentadue  
Chair**

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

**Heather Corbett  
Committee Clerk**