



ARTS, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, April 11, 2024, 9:30 a.m.

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT

Councillor Ruby Campbell
Angie Whitfield

Chair
Alternate Chair/New Westminster Chamber of
Commerce Representative

Gerardo Corro Amador
Jordan Foss

Tourism New West Representative
Sectoral Representative from Local Business
Community

Andy Gomez Zamora

Sectoral Representative from Local Business
Community

Laura Grady
Tamsen McDonough
Angelene Prakash
Jessica Schneider
Saurabh Sood

Arts New West Representative
Home-based Business Representative
Downtown BIA Representative
Massey Theatre Representative
Sectoral Representative from Local Business
Community

Paige Strand*

Sectoral Representative from Local Business
Community

REGRETS

Councillor Paul Minhas
Ailed Duarte Martinez

Council Representative
Sectoral Representative from Local Business
Community

Vera Kobalia
Catherine Williams

Sectoral Representative from Commercial Area
Sectoral Representative from Local Business
Community

STAFF PRESENT

Blair Fryer (arrived at 10:07 a.m.)	Acting Director, Community Services
Todd Ayotte	Manager, Community Arts and Theatre
Jennifer Miller (left at 10:25 a.m.)	Manager, Public Engagement
Jen Arbo	Lead Economic Development Coordinator
Carolyn Armanini	Senior Planner, Economic Development
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor Campbell opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

Councillor Campbell encouraged Committee members to visit the City's Year of Truth website.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions took place.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 February 8, 2024

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the February 8, 2024 Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee be adopted. With the following change:

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 New Media Gallery Tour and Social at Anvil Centre

Councillor Campbell announced that the Committee's next meetup would be at the New Media Gallery which is located in the Anvil Centre. The tour will take place at 5:00 p.m. on April 25, 2024 and additional information will be emailed to Committee members by Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk.

Procedural note: Item 5.2 – Economic Development Plan Update was addressed last. The minutes are in chronological order.

5.2 Economic Development Plan Update

Blair Fryer, Acting Director of Community Services shared an updated on the Economic Development Plan advising that:

- The Economic Development Strategy ("Strategy") will be updated during this Council's term;
- The current five-year Strategy was developed in 2018 and almost everything contained in it was implemented or was no longer deemed a priority as a result of the pandemic;
- This Committee will play a significant role in the development of the new Strategy in terms of reviewing the research and engagement with the various organizations that will take place;
- During the third quarter this year, a business survey will be created with the assistance of a consultant. The survey will provide a very broad overview of where the business community is at and what they would like to see in the Strategy;
- It is expected that the business survey results will be coming to the Committee for discussion before the end of the year;
- Resource requests will be put together through the Economic Development Department for the 2025 budget as resources will be needed to invest in the development of the Strategy; and
- The current Economic Development Strategy can be found on the City's website under Economic Development.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Fryer, Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre, and Councillor Campbell provided the following comments:

- The economy beyond business is included in the Strategy. Staff identified, during the development of the current Strategy, that the

City's economic development activities were very traditional. Now engagement includes the arts sector in New Westminster;

- The Strategy speaks to acknowledging the importance of the arts and the creative sector in terms of place making and building a dynamic economy;
- The arts, post-secondary education, and healthcare are the key sectors that we want to retain and grow in the City;
- One staff member oversees public art in the City, including the planning, marketing, and conservation aspects of public art;
- Staff are looking at ways to build more engagement around public art pieces; and
- A report went to Council on Monday, April 8, 2024 regarding filming movies and television shows in the city. The report can be viewed on the City's website.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- The Economic Development division could look at how to document the paintings on the walls and maintenance through photos and video as this may become valuable information to have in the future; and
- Staff could invite TikTokers and Instagrammers to share the wall art in a fun way.

Councillor Campbell encouraged Committee members to share with her how re-inspiration and re-engagement within the arts, culture, and business communities could continue after the pandemic, including possibly holding a workshop or event with a keynote speaker.

At this point in the meeting, a PowerPoint presentation was shared with the Committee and reviewed the following topics:

5.3 Sidewalk Patios and Street Activations

Jen Arbo, Lead Economic Development Coordinator, reviewed sidewalk patios and street activations including converting patios from temporary to permanent, a new system for administering patios, and moving to mid-year invoicing.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Arbo and Carolyn Armanini, Senior Planner, provided the following comments:

- The lists of food trucks and patios will be shared with Committee members once they are complete;
- Licences for food trucks may be purchased throughout the year and the list can be located on the City's open dataset;
- Food trucks can be licenced for specific events or annually which would allow them to participate in pop up and other events and catering so they are encouraged to get the annual licence;
- The City is taking a proactive approach to patios on public and private properties and those that submit food and / or drink related business licence applications are asked if they have thought about having a patio in effort to get them to consider adding that to their business plan up front; and
- The street activation pop up test case events will prioritize New West artists; however, the details are still being worked out.

Gerardo Corro Amador, Tourism New West Representative, announced that they would be sharing the lists of food trucks and patios in their newsletter.

5.4 Anvil Centre 10-Year Review

Jennifer Miller, Manager, Public Engagement, shared a 10-year review of the Anvil Centre including the origins and purpose of the facility.

Jessica Schneider, Committee member and Massey Theatre Representative, left the meeting at 9:56 a.m. due to a possible conflict of interest.

Committee members were asked the following questions and shared their replies as follows:

Anvil's tag line is "Where Culture, Community and Commerce meet". How have your experiences at the Anvil Centre lined up with these three areas?

- It is a centre and hub for all of these areas and the tagline matches the experiences I have had there;
- The tagline is suitable and I am appreciative that the Centre hosted COVID-19 vaccination clinics;
- Residents new to New Westminster may not understand the commerce side of it;

- It feels like culture and community meet when it is convenient for commerce;
- This is a challenging place for artists as they do not know how they can contribute to the space;
- It feels like more of a commerce space than a community space to a lot of local artists;
- It is not accessible for a lot of local businesses as it is too expensive;
- One of the focus groups felt that the “meet” aspect seemed to be missing as there was no real connection between culture, community and commerce and that during big conventions, things are blocked off to the extent that you are unable to see what it happening inside the building;
- It is a complicated mixture of uses;
- The tourism office, which is located behind the front desk, does not seem to be utilized much by the community nor local businesses. Consideration is being given to having a kiosk in the lobby to be more visible;
- A discount could be offered to local businesses to make it more accessible to those who wish to use the space; and,
- It is good to see conferences and conventions coming to the City but it should be used by more local businesses as well.

In response to comments from the Committee, Ms. Miller shared that they had received feedback from artists.

How would you describe the identity of Anvil Centre, both in terms of physical presence and the experience it offers?

- It can be overwhelming and sometimes I feel as if I am not dressed well enough to be there;
- It should be better publicized that the New Media Gallery is free to visit and people should be encouraged to do so;
- The room used for a gaming event last year was very accessible for those using wheelchairs and guide dogs which is not always the case at facilities hosting such events;
- A variety of people can be seen at Anvil Centre: mums with kids, people wearing suits, people wearing sweatpants. It is a hub that could be for a fancy occasion or for donating blood or getting a vaccination – it is a space for everything; and
- It makes a statement about the City of New Westminster.

Do you have any suggestions about how to make Anvil Centre feel more welcoming and community focused?

- Display art by local artists to make the approach more welcoming;
- Have art that is visible from the street. This strategy is used in the business community and proven to work;
- Music would be a great way to welcome people into the building. While this could not be done during conferences, it could be done in the front of the building so as to not disturb what is happening inside the facility;
- Make it accessible for community use with a tiered payment system;
- While I may attend there for a business meeting, it is not a place that I would go to on my own time;
- It is useful to know that we can use the space if needed but it remains inactive for long periods of time;
- It would be helpful for the BIA to know well ahead of time what is happening at the Centre so that it can be promoted;
- There is a definite interest in utilizing the space but it is not accessible to the BIA;
- A coffee shop could welcome people into the space and draw them into what is happening inside the building;
- Create pop ups with local businesses to attract people inside;
- Consistent displays of paintings or other art done by hand; and
- Utilize those in the film industry that have been furloughed to create attractions to invite visitors into the space.

We have heard feedback that awareness of Anvil Centre and its diversity of programs, services, and spaces could be expanded. Do you have suggestions for how best to share information about Anvil's offerings to the local community and beyond?

- The building does not look like a community space;
- Advertising of events and other offerings of the Anvil Centre needs to reach families and different target audiences via various social media, the Downtown BIA, and other New West channels;
- The message in advertisements is important and should be fun as sometimes things are too formal. This is especially true of messages coming from the government;
- Fun TikTok dances filmed at the Centre may appeal to a larger variety of people, including those that may not normally visit the facility;

- Specific media channels have semi-influencers that could create something that is specific, fun, and promoted around the City;
- The focus group also advised that money should be invested in marketing as the New Media Gallery is a gem that a lot of people do not know about; and
- People need to know what is happening on the second floor of the building in order to want to visit there.

Ms. Miller shared that this would be the last group conversation seeking feedback on the Anvil Centre 10-year review but encouraged Committee members to share additional suggestions and comments with her via email over the next two days.

Ms. Miller advised that the engagement findings would be taken to Council, and then recommendations developed for further discussion with Council.

Councillor Campbell noted that when the report goes to Council it can be shared with the Committee and Ms. Miller advised that all findings will also be posted on the City's Be Heard website.

Ms. Schneider rejoined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

5.5 City Grants

Jen Arbo, Lead Economic Development Coordinator, provide an overview of city grants, noting that they are under review for the 2025 grants program. She advised that grants will be on the agenda for the June meeting of the Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee so that the Committee can have a more fulsome conversation on the topic.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Arbo provided the following comments:

- There does not appear to be an appetite to change the City's criteria around operational funding;
- The concern is aligning with other organizations and then them changing their program;
- The recommendation to Council of striking the one-time small grants and putting that funding back into city services was because the uptake in those grants was minimal as the City was awarding many grants but not reimbursing many people because the timing did not work. While they were easy to apply for, they were difficult to make happen;

- It is expected that the one-time grants program, which is run in the spring, will be eliminated unless the review indicates otherwise. The program takes the same amount of staff capacity to run as the much larger fall program;
- An additional stream of small grants may be implemented but with a fall intake;
- To share information on and invite people to participate in the focus groups, there will be call out to the community through the *Invest New West* newsletter, on the City's social media, and City committee members will be contacted. There will also be direct and targeted outreach to particular groups as it is important to hear from those that applied for but did not receive a city grant as well as those that did not bother to apply for a grant for various reasons, including the time it takes to apply for one;
- Those awarded the one-time small grants have advised that the time between when they had to make the grant happen, were awarded the money, and had to do the reporting was too short, noting that they are often challenged with capacity;
- Many recipients of one-time small grants did not submit expenses as their event did not happen, did not cost as much as they expected, or they received other sponsorship; however, all submitted expenses were paid out;
- Being awarded a grant allocates that money so it does not get awarded to someone else. Approximately \$25k was applied for during the last round of one-time small grants and the budget is only \$13K, all of which was allocated with only about \$2,600 of it actually being reimbursed;
- The budget of approximately \$975K is already set for this year and is the same as last year; and
- The allocation of the funds between the portfolios is not yet known; however, it is important for the City to be adaptable and able to respond to the great ideas coming out of the community by hearing from the community and partners directly as to how they would like to see the funds allocated. The scan of other municipalities will also help with this.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Along with a municipal scan, alignment with other levels of government in different sectors, such as Canada Council for the Arts, federal government cross-sectoral grants, and the Canadian Heritage Foundation would be beneficial;

- There are a lot of project funds that do not have sustainable approaches imbedded in them;
- The Province is moving to more of a procurement process in the way they are doing things;
- Opportunities for partnerships with community groups should be considered with respect to the small grants program. There may be a partnership where organizations are funded to then reach out, mentor, and give out the money in alignment with priorities and criteria. This could be a win-win as it would provide connectivity in the community and would support the limited staff capacity (a fee-for-service arrangement);
- Partnerships with struggling arts organizations will help them tap into funding;
- A list of possibly partners or others, such struggling arts organizations, who can backfill if grants monies are not reimbursed to those to which is allocated would be beneficial; and
- A number of community arts councils in other cities, such as Maple Ridge, are delivering grants programs for their municipalities.

Councillor Campbell advised that in prior years there was an endowment wherein funds from the principle of the endowment paid for the grants but now that endowment has gone down. She noted that part of the consultation will help us to understand how the City should budget in alignment with Council's Strategic Priorities such as partnerships and community belonging and this may provide an opportunity to ask for more funding if it aligns with the Strategic Priorities.

Councillor Campbell encouraged Committee members to share with Ms. Arbo the names of other municipalities doing partnerships that may be relevant to the review.

5.6 Business Licence Bylaw Update

Carolyn Armanini, Senior Planner, provided an update on the Business Licence Bylaw review during which she highlighted changes proposed to the Bylaw. She also shared information about the focus group for interested business owners to give input on the proposed updates to the Business Licence Bylaw.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Armanini advised that charitable organizations have been reviewed; however, they have not been included on the list because they will not change from being a zero-fee licence. She also noted that independent artists, such as buskers, would be

charged in the general category of “Employee Based” and would roughly be charged around \$200 which is approximately the same as it would be for a home business.

5.7 Business Education Nights

Jen Arbo, Lead Economic Development Coordinator, shared information about business education nights which would build capacity and provide topical education to non-profit organizations and businesses in New Westminster.

Committee members were urged to email their comments and / or workshop suggestions to Ms. Arbo.

5.8 Public Art Update

Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre, shared an update on public art in the City including:

- t̓əməsew̓tx̓w Aquatic and Community Centre public art installation;
- Capture Photography Festival;
- Mural Pilot Project;
- Irving House Artist Residency; and
- Agnes Street Park

In response to a suggestion by a Committee member, Mr. Ayotte advised that a downtown art walk to could take place during the summer.

Discussion ensued and Committee members expressed their appreciation for the Agnes Street Project and the Mural Project.

6. NEW BUSINESS

None.

7. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 11:36 a.m.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 20, 2024
August 8, 2024
October 10, 2024
December 12, 2024

Certified correct,

Original Signed

Councillor Ruby Campbell

Original Signed

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk