



Economic Development Advisory Committee

Friday, September 10, 2021

**Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020
and in Meeting Room G, City Hall**

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
Kendra Johnston	- Representative Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association
Vera Kobalia	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Nikki Morris	- Representative, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce
Paul Romein	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Bart Slotman	- Representative, Uptown Business Association
Catherine Williams	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

MEMBER REGRETS:

Artemisa Bega	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Bob Crockett	- Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Jolene Foreman	- Community Representative from Commercial Area
Jorden Foss	- Community Representative from Commercial Area

GUESTS

Jacquie Griffiths	- Regional Economic Prosperity Service
Chris Heine	- Regional Economic Prosperity Service

STAFF PRESENT:

Jen Arbo	- Economic Development Coordinator
Carolyn Armanini	- Planner, Economic Development
Blair Fryer*	- Manager, Communications & Economic Development
Nicole Ludwig*	- Assistant City Clerk
Katie Stobbart*	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

*Denotes attendance in person

Procedural Note: Prior to the adoption of the agenda, the Chair called for a round of introductions for the new member Nikki Morris.

1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Agenda of the September 10, 2021 Economic Development Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of June 11, 2021

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the June 11, 2021 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 Regional Economic Prosperity Service Overview

Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications & Economic Development, introduced guests Jacquie Griffiths and Chris Heine, Regional Economic Prosperity Service (REPS).

Ms. Griffiths provided a presentation on REPS, including an economic snapshot, rationale, what the region can do, and Metro Vancouver's role.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Griffiths, Mr. Heine, and Mr. Fryer provided the following comments:

- Many of the fundamental tenets behind the REPS are similar to those driving New Westminster's economic development plan. Under that plan, the connection between the City and REPS was formalized in the first strategy: to liaise with REPS and take advantage of global as well as national opportunities;
- Mr. Heine works closely with investors to offer a regional perspective, then refers investors to someone in the community (e.g. Mr. Fryer) who has the focused City perspective;

- Approaching economic development collaboratively and regionally is more sophisticated, efficient, and effective than what has been done in the past;
- There is an individual at the REPS office who works with post-secondary institutions and who can explore how REPS can collaborate with Douglas College, particularly in terms of access to research, developing programming, and work-integrated learning;
- Capital follows talent, so building capacity and investing in local people means fewer will be left behind in the growing global economy; and
- The City conducted its own internal analysis to look at our various sectors and their potential for growth in a provincial but also national and international context.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

There were no items.

6.0 REPORTS

6.1 Standing Reports:

a) Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association

Kendra Johnston, Representative, Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association (DBIA), reported the following:

- There are myriad challenges for downtown businesses right now, with business losses, decreases in foot traffic due to the pandemic, two fires over the past couple of years, and major construction in the downtown area, especially on Columbia Street. Downtown business owners are working hard to create positive experiences for customers and need the community's support; and
- DBIA has been working in consultation with membership and stakeholders to update its strategic plan, which will be complete in late fall or early winter.

Councillor Trentadue encouraged the DBIA to reach out for City support as needed, particularly in terms of the construction underway downtown.

b) Uptown Business Association

Bart Slotman, Representative, Uptown Business Association, reported the following:

- Businesses in Uptown have been relatively stable, however subsidies and supports will expire in the coming months, which may have a negative impact on businesses; and
- There has been a significant increase in permit processing times from the City, which presents challenges for small businesses trying to get started.

Blair Fryer, Manager, Communications and Economic Development, confirmed there have been delays in permit processing due to staff shortages and transitioning from a paper to a digital system, and suggested arranging a discussion between the Committee and Economic Development staff to generate ideas for improvement of the process.

c) New Westminster Chamber of Commerce

Nikki Morris, Representative, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce advised that The Chamber is hosting an All Candidates Meeting on September 16, 2021, and invites the Committee to attend.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Friday, November 5, 2021, time and location to be confirmed.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Certified Correct,

Original signed
Councillor Mary Trentadue
Chair

Original signed
Katie Stobbart
Committee Clerk