

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Friday, July 19, 2013 – 8:00 am
CR 2, City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Bill Harper - Chair, City Council
Dana Woods - Community Member
Reg Nordman - Community Member
Marie Szklarz - Community Member
Patrick O'Shaughnessy - Community Member
David Moulton - Community Member
Frank Gregus - New Westminister Chamber of Commerce

MEMBER REGRETS:

Andy Bradshaw - Downtown Business Improvement Association
Chuck Stewart - Community Member

STAFF:

Blair Fryer - Manager, Communications and Economic Development
Andréa Parkerson - Economic Development Coordinator/Recording Clerk

GUESTS:

Ted Cowie - Genuine Advertising
Murray Smith - Profile Brand Strategy

The meeting was called to order at 8:06 am.

1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT PPP be added to Other Business, and the agenda be approved.

CARRIED.

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

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the metrics discussion that took place as a result of the last May 31 meeting be noted in the minutes, and the minutes be approved with the amendment.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion

3.0 “INNOVATION GROWS HERE” PRESENTATION

3.1 Innovation Grows Here – Ted Cowie/Murray Smith

Mr. Cowie commenced with introductions and a brief outline of the “Innovation Grows Here” concept – a replication of the New York initiative, “Next Idea”.

The “Innovation Grows Here” presentation highlighted the following points:

- Purpose of this meeting: to create a memorandum of understanding and move on to next steps.
- New York’s “Next Idea”:
 - Began in 2009 for the purpose of brand building and awareness
 - Total cost to the City was \$35,000 with other funding coming from sponsorship
 - Finalists received an all-expenses paid trip to New York, networking time with entrepreneurs, investors, professors, and government officials.
- The concept for New Westminister is to develop the branding that New Westminister is a tech centre/innovation centre
- The “Innovation Grows Here” competition is for new, seed, start-up or early growth companies that are able to reside or have some working connections with New Westminister
- The event would take 6 to 9 months to operate
- “Innovation Grows Here” is not a proprietary idea
- Mr. Cowie and Mr. Smith are asking for the City of New Westminister to commit \$30,000 to develop the idea and launch the program. The money is not to be paid up front, but according to milestones
- Each sponsor would be included in the judging and would have first right of refusal to mentor/work with the applicants
- Development would include a comprehensive communications plan including television, print, social media and digital avenues
- Goals of this initiative:
 - to position New Westminister as the Silicon Valley of Canada
 - to become an annual event
- Benefits to sponsors include opportunity to participate in a globally promoted innovation competition, positive brand building, and a first-hand chance to see the newest ideas
- Funds are proposed to also provide a scholarship at Douglas College
- Reasons the City of New Westminister should be involved:
 - Cost effective
 - Brand building
 - Job creator
 - Business development vehicle
- Optional idea: the City of New Westminister could launch a centre for innovation and acceleration

3.2 Discussion

The Committee discussed other cities and companies that are carrying out similar initiatives locally. There are a number of incubators and accelerators in operation, and while there are no municipalities or non-profits attempting a similar project, there is a for-profit company that is currently in this space.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Cowie noted that New York has experienced an economic increase as a result of “Next Idea”. The Committee requested the data to support that claim be submitted for consideration.

The Committee asked for historical achievements with this plan, to which Mr. Smith and Mr. Cowie responded that they had no previous experience. Having seen success with New York’s “Next Idea”, they decided New Westminster would be the ideal place to launch the event locally. The Committee warned that claiming New Westminster is an innovation or tech centre currently is misleading. Mr. Smith and Mr. Cowie responded by clarifying the message; it is not that innovation is currently in New Westminster, but that it can grow in New Westminster.

“Innovation Grows Here” is a not-for-profit and will ideally have significant funding from the provincial and federal governments.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the alignment of this idea with the current economic development strategy. The EDAC has addressed the idea of accelerators and incubators before, however they were unable to create adequate differentiating factors. The concept of “Innovation Grows Here” is beneficial in that it offers the much needed differentiation, however it needs to be linked into current strategies.

The Committee asked Mr. Smith and Mr. Cowie about ownership of the event. Mr. Smith and Mr. Cowie explained that the not-for-profit would manage it and the City of New Westminster would host. The concern that Committee expressed was that potential for the City to provide seed money and the not-for-profit to take the money and move the event from New Westminster to another city.

Procedural note: Murray Smith and Ted Cowie exited at 8:43am

The Committee postponed making a final decision until the September 2013 meeting to allow time for exploration of New York’s “Next Idea” data. Should the Committee decide to move forward with “Innovation Grows Here”, a recommendation needs to be made to Council to have funding approved.

4.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE ACTIVITY UPDATE

4.1 Activity Update – Blair Fryer

Mr. Fryer overviewed the recent activities of the economic development office. The overview included the following:

- Quarterly e-newsletter
- Inter-municipal business licenses
- New website
- Intelligent Communities Forum
- Events – convener role
- Tourism
- Video
- Merchant Square marketing materials, liaison with listing agent
- Intelligent City Advisory Committee
- 2014 Forum – Mr. Fryer requested that the Committee provide names of potential speakers for the September 2014 Forum
- Merging of the economic development and communications departments
- Updating of the Livable City Strategy
- Business Walk Program

The Committee suggested that Douglas College students be considered for participation when the Business Walk Program takes place.

5.0 METRICS

Procedural note: Item 5 considered before Item 4

5.1 Metrics – David Moulton/Reg Nordman

Mr. Nordman and Mr. Moulton presented the metrics document that was prepared by Rocket Builders, “Metrics for New Westminster Economic Development”. The presentation included the following points:

- The people who will make up the workforce for the next 25 years have already been born
- There are not enough people to replace the “boomers” that are retiring/leaving the workforce
- There will soon be too many people and not enough services
- Immigration will likely be necessary to fill the gap
- There is an underemployed group that grows because they do not have the skills necessary to obtain the available jobs, thereby becoming a strain on services – services that are being resourced by a limited taxpayer base

- Ideally, the people to attract to New Westminster are between the ages of 25 and 45 because they have earning power, are interested in local consumption, and their children (if any) are not in post-secondary school. Those under 25 years of age are likely renting or living at home, and not paying taxes.
- The economy needs to grow faster than the population
- The latter half of the metrics document contains the numbers that are recommended to be tracked by economic development if the information is available
- The new geography of jobs shows the mobility of the new job industries. Related to that is home ownership, which limits mobility, and investment in the local community. Transients tend not to invest or contribute as much to the local community as home owners.
- The metrics document can be integrated into the updating of the Livable City Strategy

The Committee discussed the metrics and requested that staff provide available numbers that correspond to the metrics in the Rocket Builders document, “Metrics for New West Economic Development. The Committee also agreed to rate New Westminster using the “Community Quality Report Card” as described in the document, and input their ratings by September 6th, 2013 into an excel file that will be created and put into the Dropbox.

6.0 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Paper Products and Packaging (PPP)

The Committee briefly discussed the new recycling legislation that is being implemented by Multi Material British Columbia. The legislation will require producers, first importers, franchisors and brand owners to pay for the collection, recycling, consumer awareness, operation/administration, and research and development to address unrecyclable PPP. The businesses will be self-policing and will report the weight and type of all recyclable materials covered by the new legislation. These materials include all paper products and packaging, as well as some aluminum, steel, plastic, PVC, and cardboard packaging materials such as bottles, pails, cups, cartons, and aerosol cans.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:11am.

Next meeting: September 27, 2013 @ 8am, Committee Room 2, City Hall

Councillor Bill Harper
Chair

Andréa Parkerson
Committee Clerk