



Economic Development Advisory Committee

**Friday, September 27, 2013 – 8:00 am
CR 2, City Hall**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Bill Harper - Chair, City Council
Reg Nordman - Community Member
Marie Szklarz - Community Member
Patrick O'Shaughnessy - Community Member
David Moulton - Community Member
Andy Bradshaw - Downtown Business Improvement Association

MEMBER REGRETS:

Chuck Stewart - Community Member
Dana Woods - Community Member
Frank Gregus - New Westminister Chamber of Commerce

STAFF:

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 am.

1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the September 27, 2013 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 July 19, 2013 minutes be approved.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 “INNOVATION GROWS HERE” NEXT STEPS

3.1 Innovation Grows Here – Next steps

At the July 19, 2013 committee meeting, Mr. Ted Cowie and Mr. Murray Smith presented “Innovation Grows Here”, an idea derived from a New York initiative called “Next Idea”. The Committee requested that Mr. Cowie and Mr. Smith provide further details to show proof of concept. Subsequent information forwarded from Mr. Cowie and Mr. Smith included news stories and sales information, but not the information as requested by the Committee.

After brief discussion, the Committee agreed that this is not the right time for this idea in New Westminster, and advised the Economic Development Office not to pursue this idea or invest money into it. While the New York initiative was agreed to be a success, the Committee was not convinced that New York’s experience would be translated into success with the concept in New Westminster at this time.

Mr. Fryer is to communicate the Committee’s decision to Mr. Cowie and Mr. Smith.

4.0 METRICS

4.1 Community Quality Report Card

The Community Quality Report Card is a guide as to how a community can measure their past, present and future based on seven factors: economy, population, ecosystem, education, crime, housing and health care.

The Committee reviewed the Community Quality Report Card score trends as derived from EDAC member scores. Eight of the ten committee members completed the qualitative report card, voting positive, neutral or negative for each of the aforementioned seven factors in past, present and future. The trends were as follows:

- Population: negative
- Economy: positive
- Ecosystem: positive
- Education: steadily negative. This is likely a reflection of the state of School District 40, not the post-secondary institutions.
- Crime: positive
- Housing: negative
- Health care: bounce back

The Committee discussed the metrics, focusing primarily on population. The growth in population of taxpayers is growing at a slower rate than the retiree group. As the baby boomer generation retires it is anticipated that there will be a labour shortage in the jobs that require qualifications, and full employment in jobs that require little to no training or qualifications. The communities that will thrive in the next 15-20 years are the ones that can attract the 24-44 age group to their community to live and work. Referencing the 2011 Census, the Committee noted that there are not enough people of working age currently in New Westminster to replace the people who are going to be leaving the work force over the next 10-20 years.

The Committee highlighted the importance of knowing the effect of the immigrant population given that it is the group that has the greatest impact on New Westminster's growth. Attention should be given to the ages of immigrants coming to New Westminster, taking into consideration their intention to bring parents or children to the city in the future.

With respect to housing, the Committee discussed the 48% rental stock in New Westminster. Currently, Council has a moratorium to not allow rental buildings to convert to strata. New Westminster has one of the lowest average incomes in Metro Vancouver; the Committee suggested that the prevalent rental stock attracts people with lower incomes who generally don't invest in the local economy.

The Committee discussed the need for an economic plan to be created to enable the attraction of the businesses and citizens that the city wants. This would include reviewing existing policies that may affect the plan positively or negatively and leave opportunity for new programs such as apprenticeship programs that allow people to change trades without having to stop working altogether to train.

The Committee emphasized the importance of being clear on the type of economic development that the City wants for the community. This vision can then be used to attract the right people and businesses. To support this, the Committee would like to explore the numbers that correspond with the community quality report card with reference to past, present and predictive metrics. The purpose of the metrics would be to inform future policy and economic development decisions.

The Committee suggested that Mark Lautman, the author of "When the Boomers Bail: How Demographics will Sort Communities into Winners and Losers", be considered as a speaker for the 2014 economic forum.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Economic Development collaborate with other city departments to discuss the importance of collecting the past, present and future/predictive data, and the

need to have either staff or a consultant to carry out the research necessary to collect the aforementioned data.

CARRIED.

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

Mr. Moulton offered to provide information regarding the effect that post-secondary institutions had on their resident cities during the last recession.

4.2 Data as provided by City staff

Staff is able to provide data on population, education, crime, housing and health, but are unable to provide data on the economy, workforce and business community. This will need to be sourced externally when compiling the requested data.

Procedural note: Patrick O'Shaughnessy arrived at 8:55am

5.0 WORK PLAN

5.1 Economic Development Work Plan

Mr. Fryer presented the draft work plan that the Economic Development Office is currently creating and requested input from the Committee. Included in the scope of the 2013/2014 work plan are:

- A business visitation, attraction and retention program;
- Participate and staff the Intelligent City Advisory Committee (ICAC);
- Lead and staff three of the five ICAC subgroups;
- Lead and staff the 2014 Economic Forum Steering Committee;
- Update the Invest New West website and add a CMS;
- Develop a new economic development video;
- Create and distribute a quarterly economic development e-newsletter;
- Meet with potential investors (ongoing);
- Work with the Anvil Centre team and the Merchant Square leasing team;
- Act as advocates on behalf of local businesses;
- Act as a resource to local business associations and the Chamber;
- Assist with Christmas lighting programs for business associations;

Mr. Fryer then gave a brief recapitulation of the September 13, 2013 development tour.

The Committee expressed affirmation of the current draft work plan. The work plan will be solidified in the coming weeks and presented to the EDAC at the November 29, 2013 meeting.

Procedural note: David Moulton exited at 9:35am

6.0 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Information request

The Committee requested updates regarding First Capital's interest to purchase the lot next to Plaza 88, and the timeline for the completion of Anvil Centre. Mr. Fryer and Councillor Harper explained that First Capital is currently in discussion with the City regarding that lot, and that Anvil Centre is on track to be complete in early May, 2014. There is also interest in the restaurant space and they are in negotiations currently.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:14am.

Next meeting: November 29, 2013 @ 8am, Committee Room 2, City Hall

Councillor Bill Harper
Chair

Andréa Khan
Committee Clerk