



Economic Development Advisory Committee

Friday, March 2, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.

City Hall, Committee Room #2

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Bill Harper	- Chair, City Council Member
Danison Buan	- Community Member
Jorden Foss	- Community Member
Kendra Johnston	- Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association Representative
Lizz Kelly	- New Westminster Chamber of Commerce Representative
David Moulton	- Community Member
Catherine Williams	- Community Member
Julia Zhou	- Community Member (left at 9:49 a.m.)

MEMBER REGRETS:

Councillor Mary Trentadue	- City Council Representative
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STAFF PRESENT:

Carolyn Armanini	- Economic Development Coordinator
Ruby Campbell	- Intergovernmental & Community Partnerships Manager
Blair Fryer	- Manager of Communications and Economic Development
Tristan Johnson	- Planning Analyst
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m.

1.0 HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 2018 Committee Orientation and Oaths of Office

Ms. Heather Corbett, Committee Clerk, provided a PowerPoint orientation presentation, and reviewed the following documents:

- EDAC Terms of Reference;
- Committee Rules of Conduct;
- Respectful Workplace Policy;
- Social Media Policy; and,
- Freedom of Information Permission Forms.

Ms. Corbett administered the Oath of Office to all members of the committee present.

2.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

2.1 Additions to the Agenda of March 2, 2018

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT 'Business and Development Update' be added as item 6.1 in New Business and the amended agenda be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of January 26, 2018

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the January 26, 2018 Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

4.0 PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Census 2016: Preliminary Data Review

Mr. Tristan Johnson, Planning Analyst, provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing key elements of the 2016 Census Data New Westminster, including the following information:

- Education levels – 69.5% post-secondary educated compared to 67% in Metro Van;
- Top five fields of study for New Westminster residents 25-64 years of age;
- Work activity – 48.7% worked full year and full time in the City; 14.1% didn't work at all, and 9.8% declared themselves as self-employed;
- Employment in the City, which indicated that the health care and social assistance industry accounted for 23.1% of all jobs;
- The professional, scientific and technical services sector, one that New Westminster desires to grow, composed 7.1% of jobs compared with 10.6% of jobs in Metro Vancouver in 2016; and,
- The results of the 2016 Census data support the direction of the City's Economic Development Plan.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Johnson provided the following information:

- The data indicates that approximately 20% of jobs are in the service industry, which is consistent with the rest of the region;
- The classifications are by industry, therefore the tech workers in the health sector would be included in the health industry;
- The economic development dashboard was last updated in 2016, and it could be revised slightly based on the Census results and the proposed Economic Development plan – the metrics will be reviewed and the results brought forward to the Committee; and,
- The City’s local intel tool on the website, which provides data on the economy, business growth, building permits via maps and graphs has recently been updated with the 2016 census data.

5.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.1 Economic Development Plan (EDP) Update

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, summarized the general feedback received from Council on the proposed Economic Development Plan (EDP), including:

- Additional information should be included on how the City would support and encourage the retail realm;
- Being mindful of diversity and how the EDP strategies would be reached by business owners of all ethnicities and languages;
- Strategy 5 is too specific, and needs to be adjusted to remove mention of the IDEA centre;
- Ensure that the City maintains relationships with key economic stakeholders – ie meetup group, Chamber, BIAs, NW Collective in order to better empower the Plan and bring it to fruition;
- Additional information on supporting home businesses and the advantages that the City supplies to these businesses; and,
- Generally, the Plan encountered no objections and garnered positive comments overall.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Fryer provided the following information:

- The goal of the Economic Development Plan will be to establish a concrete action plan in the City to encourage growth and support businesses – the Intelligent City initiative does this directly;

- The objectives of the Intelligent City initiative are to develop smart city technologies that positively impact the local economy and residents, including projects such as the BridgeNet fibre network and IDEA Centre;
- The next steps in the process are to make adjustments to the plan, return to Council for endorsement, hold open houses and invite the business community, and then implement the action items with currently available City resources; and,
- Once the plan is endorsed and in place, there may be a need to expand resources and budget, but this would be evaluated at a later date.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- This strategy is very practical and as it is based on quantitative surveys, workshops and discussion, it represents a bottom-up, collaborative approach;
- Importance should be placed on encouraging business growth and movement of businesses into the City, however there is risk of “poaching” from other municipalities and jeopardizing the regional prosperity initiative;
- It is challenging to fill the large property assets in the City if limited to attracting entrepreneurs, however there are plenty of assets available to leverage, such as Braid Industrial, which could attract companies from outside the region, and even the country;
- A general shortage of tech talent in Metro Vancouver would be challenging if growing the technology economy is a priority in the City;
- Provide opportunity to encourage tech workers to stay – the example of Amazon was given, where the region is seen as a landing pad where there is opportunity to build a different life and a better working atmosphere, but often workers come to the region and then move on to the United States;
- Another challenge is the provision of wages in an unaffordable region – need to demonstrate the affordability of New Westminster and the benefits that would attract entrepreneurs to establish in the City; and,
- The work that the City is doing in terms of encouraging new forms of housing, such as laneway housing and secured market rental will be important in attracting workers to the City.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Business and Development Update

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, provided the Committee with a summary of business development recently announced or ongoing in the City, including:

- Douglas College has been confirmed as a new tenant in the Anvil Centre, and the office tower is now over 90% leased with approximately 10,000 sq. ft. remaining;
- Evolution Gaming, which is connected to BC Lottery Corporation, has also leased space in Anvil Centre for their online gaming operations;
- CL Simplex, a technology firm, is looking for opportunities to become more involved in the City;
- Offworld Industries, a gaming development company currently based in Burnaby, is looking to expand and is looking to secure a lease and make improvements in the Westminster Trust building downtown;
- Royal Farmers Market is opening soon in Sapperton;
- An old-style arcade company has recently been issued a temporary use permit to set up in Sapperton, and may look to provide liquor in the future;
- A six-storey mixed use development with market rental units, office space and retail space is proposed on the empty lot at 406-412 East Columbia in Sapperton, which will support the IDEA Centre;
- A 29-storey mixed use high-rise development with ground-oriented commercial, 79 secured rental units and a 1700 sq. ft. plaza is proposed at 6th Street and Princess in Uptown, but has received concerns from local businesses about the construction period, traffic and the loss of current retail tenants; and,
 - The Uptown BIA is facilitating discussions with tenants and as the current owner is the developer, they are being proactive with the tenants.

6.2 Appointment of EDAC Alternate Chair

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Danison Buan be appointed as the Alternate Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee for the 2018 term.

CARRIED.

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

7.0 REPORTS

7.1 Member Reports

Ruby Campbell, Intergovernmental & Community Partnerships Manager, gave a short summary of Innovation Week and expressed her thanks to several EDAC members who contributed to the event's success, including Douglas College, Steel & Oak, the Chamber of Commerce, Julia Zhou, and Danison Buan.

Jorden Foss, Community Member, discussed the rezoning occurring in Victoria's old town, where a mix of 70% retail and 30% manufacturing is being implemented in order to maintain a manufacturing base while encouraging business in the area through retail. This was compared to lower 12th Street and Royal Ave, which may have a similar potential, which the City will be studying further this year.

Catherine Williams, Community Member, discussed Douglas College's potential movement towards working with the City's Open Data and integrating it into applied research projects by faculty and students.

8.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

9.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 4, 2018, in Committee Room #2 at City Hall.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Certified Correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Councillor Bill Harper
Chair

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Heather Corbett
Committee Clerk