



Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)

Friday, February 5, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.

Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Councillor Mary Trentadue | - Chair, City Council Member |
| Councillor Chinu Das | - City Council Representative |
| Artemisa Bega | - Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community |
| Bob Crockett | - Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community |
| Alejandro Diaz | - Community Representative from Commercial Area |
| Mark Evans | - Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community |
| Jolene Foreman | - Community Representative from Commercial Area |
| Jorden Foss | - Community Representative from Commercial Area |
| Kendra Johnston | - Representative Downtown New Westminister Business Improvement Association |
| Vera Kobalia | - Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community |
| Bart Slotman | - Representative, Uptown Business Association |
| Rnold Smith | - Representative, New Westminister Chamber of Commerce |

MEMBER REGRETS:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Paul Romein | - Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community |
| Catherine Williams | - Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community |

STAFF PRESENT:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Jen Arbo | - Economic Development Coordinator |
| Carolyn Armanini | - Planner, Economic Development |
| Blair Fryer | - Manager of Communications & Economic Development |
| Heather Corbett | - Committee Clerk |

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Agenda of the February 5, 2021 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting be adopted with the following additions:

- 5.2 *EDAC Alternate Chair*

CARRIED.

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

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of September 25, 2020

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the September 25, 2020 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 Economic Development Workplan 2021

Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, reviewed the items on the Economic Development workplan for 2021, highlighting the following information:

- Much of the Economic Development department's activities have pivoted to support the COVID-19 Business Community and Local Economy Task Force;
- The workplan identifies the areas and projects where EDAC would be involved and asked to provide feedback;
- Many community relationships have been developed during the pandemic and would continue to be explored; and,
- The Be Heard New West engagement platform has recently been launched and the intention is for it to be used to inform community discussion.

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

- The status of the items on the workplan will be indicated in future versions;
- The workplan will be distributed to the EDAC members after the meeting, posted to the Committee webpage, and included with each agenda package going forward;
- Staff intend to update the Committee on the individual components of the workplan at each EDAC meeting throughout the year as the items are being worked on;
- The City would be engaging an outside firm to conduct the business survey;
- Some tactics of non-typical outreach that have been used recently to reach more businesses, including in-person interviews on the street, and in parklets;

- The workplan priorities for Q1 and Q2 include the following items:
 - Retail strategy;
 - E-apply business licensing launch; and,
 - Welcome guide for new businesses.

Committee members made the following comments:

- It would be important to be mindful of cultural and language barriers for business owners, and ensure that outreach extends to all businesses, particularly those who may not feel comfortable in engaging in conventional formats
- As business owners are often newcomer families, it may be beneficial to have the language in the proposed business licensing process and new business guide simplified into plain language and translated into other languages, and make them available at the Welcome Centre that will be opening at the new high school; and,
- It may be beneficial to ask business owners to answer the business survey questionnaire at the time of licence renewal.

3.2 ReDiscover New West

Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator, presented the ReDiscover New West promotional video and noted that it was launched on February 1, 2021 and was a collaborative effort by members of the Business and Local Economy Task Force, including Tourism New West, the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area (BIA) and the Uptown BIA. Ms. Arbo further noted that the associated campaign would last for six weeks and would include a contest each week with the aim of promoting local eateries in all geographical areas of the City.

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

- Plans to expand the reach of the campaign include strategies such as:
 - Weekly contests, developed to encourage the community to seek out hidden gems, post photos, and elevate their favourite businesses;
 - Promotion of the video and associated campaign by Tourism New Westminster and the BIAs to their social media audiences, and building on each others' messages;
 - Influencer marketing, through reaching the followers of the popular Eat New West Facebook page;
 - Leveraging the social media audiences of the video creators, who were all local service providers;
- The video features businesses who responded to the outreach; some businesses are working at full capacity and did not have the resources to contribute at this stage;

- Information about the businesses in the video and contest rules are located in a directory on the website www.rediscovernewwest.ca, and businesses are able to self-administer their information on both this website, and www.investnewwest.ca;
- To reinforce COVID-19 safety protocols, some of the contests incorporate promotion of take out from restaurants
- EDAC members can promote and contribute to the campaign by inviting businesses to list their information in the directory, and using the hashtag #rediscovernewwest;
- Sustainability of the campaign may entail introducing the promotion of other types of businesses after the initial six week campaign, but would be based on the Provincial health orders; and,
- A report on the metrics and successes of the campaign, including video views, hits to the campaign website, hashtag frequency, and effects on the local businesses, would be compiled after the 6 weeks. This would also help to evaluate how to allocate future resources.

Committee members commented very favourably on the high quality of the video, the use of local suppliers in creating the video, and the effectiveness of featuring the people behind the businesses in the video.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Retail Strategy Update

Carolyn Armanini, Economic Development Planner, provided the following update on the status of the City's planned Retail Strategy:

- The scope of work has been reviewed by EDAC, the Mayor's Task Force for Economic Development and Culture, and the COVID-19 Business and Local Economy Task Force, and the next step is to present it to Council;
- The retail strategy is tied in with the 2021 budget process, and the Request for Proposal (RFP) would be issued once the budget is approved (anticipated to be in March); and,
- It is planned for the strategy to return to the EDAC for a focus group with members once a consultant has been selected.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Business Licencing E-apply

Carolyn Armanini, Economic Development Planner, provided the Committee with some background information about the Business Licensing E-apply platform and showed a demo of the system, using the City of Kelowna's system as an example.

Ms. Armanini noted that the system is projected to be complete by May/June, 2021, and asked the Committee for feedback on the system requirements and the questions provided in the agenda package.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Armanini provided the following information:

- Currently, applications are available in paper or PDF format and online capability is limited; therefore, the online application is intended to improve the process, and take away from manual applications and errors that occur due to handwriting;
- The manual application process will still remain available;
- The system would be tested before implementation, and the Economic Development team is open to volunteers from EDAC to be beta testers and walk through the process in terms of usability;
- It is possible to start the application process and save the work midway through the process, in order to return to it;
- The intention is for the information collected in the application to auto-populate the Invest New West website; however, it depends on whether the two systems will work in conjunction;
- Some fields have been included within the application process so that data can be shared with the City's Open Data portal;

Committee members made the following comments:

- It may be beneficial to track what users find unclear while going through the process;
- Appreciate the examples that are given, as these will help to illustrate the questions;
- Ensure that the language used in the application process is simplified and understandable by all language levels;
- Ensure that a complete list of documents and information needed to complete the process is listed at the start of the process, and that an option to provide documents at a later time be available;
- Some suggested edits to the questions included:
 - The use of a toggle between measurement types, e.g. square meters vs square feet;
 - Include helper text on each question; and,
- It would be very worthwhile to have EDAC members and other businesses test the system and provide feedback to ensure usability and relevancy.

Several EDAC members volunteered to test the system, or to reach out to businesses who may be willing to do so.

5.2 Alternate Chair

Councillor Trentadue asked for any volunteers to stand as Alternate Chair for the 2020/2021 term.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Rnold Smith be appointed as the Alternate Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee for the 2021/2022 term.

CARRIED.

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

6.0 REPORTS

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

8.0 NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to add the following items to future EDAC agendas, as standing reports:

- Reports from the Downtown and Uptown BIAs and Chamber of Commerce; and,
- EDAC workplan, to review the status of projects.

The next EDAC meeting will take place on Friday, April 9, 2021 at 9:00 a.m., location to be confirmed.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

Certified Correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED
Councillor Mary Trentadue
Chair

ORIGINAL SIGNED
Heather Corbett
Committee Clerk