

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Tuesday, June 21, 2022
Open to public attendance in Committee Room G
Lower Level, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT

Councillor Mary Trentadue*	Chair
Kendra Johnston*	Alternate Chair, Representative, Downtown New Westminister Business Improvement Association
Councillor Chinu Das*	Council Representative
Monita Cheng*	Community Representative from Commercial Area
Mark Evans*	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Jorden Foss*	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Vera Kobalia*	Community Representative from Commercial Area
Nikki Morris*	Representative, New Westminister 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

REGRETS

Jolene Foreman	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Imran Gill	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

STAFF PRESENT

Carolyn Armanini	Economic Development Planner
Blair Fryer	Manager, Communications and Economic Development

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor Mary Trentadue opened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS

There were no items.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes of May 6, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the May 6, 2022 Economic Development Advisory Committee be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Retail Strategy

Justin Barer and David Bell, Urban Systems, provided a presentation entitled, "New Westminster Retail Strategy – Phase 2 Presentation: Retail Market Positioning and Strategy."

During the presentation, Mr. Barer and Mr. Bell posed the below questions in italic to the Committee.

Beyond the core indicators and variables on the previous slide, what other health and vitality indicators do you see as critical to the success of local commercial districts?

- Personal security or social indicators are needed. The social problems in the downtown area may make people reluctant to choose it as an entertainment destination;
- Discussed the amount of vacancy in light of the rising population, noting that emerging from the pandemic vacancies by area were relatively modest compared to other municipalities in the same period;
- It would be useful to measure vacancy vs. plug-and-play rentable spaces, as there are some vacancies unfilled because the space is not ready to go;
- If possible, measure the general public's and prospective small businesses' perceptions of New Westminster, and why they would or would not come here;
- Pedestrian counts on sidewalks would be an effective measure to track, and show where pedestrian traffic goes—it would then be up to businesses to turn that traffic into dollars; and
- A metric for tracking the age of businesses would be helpful, and the number of new businesses.

What opportunities do you see to further enhance the City's role as a specialty destination?

- The Paddlewheeler cruises are starting again, which provides historical value for those interested in history and culture, including students;
- The quay could use some new investment or a refresh. The riverfront is a great place to eat—maybe add more tables outdoors for people who are sensitive to indoor dining;
- There is a lot of story to be told in terms of Indigenous culture and history of the area;
- An inventory of event and theatre space, even just on Columbia, could help direct people from the SkyTrain to enjoy local arts and culture; and
- Would love to see things like New West Craft's Indigenous market happen annually.

Procedural Note: Nikki Morris left the meeting at 9:51 a.m.
DOC#2105650

What new retail commercial business types do you see as being most effective in enhancing the overall health of New Westminster as a retail market? What sub-areas of the City are these most suited for?

- Lower 12th Street would be a great place for a food truck lot, though this may end up being seasonal due to the weather. Consider an indoor alternative;
- Artisan craft fairs are highly popular among residents and visitors;
- Offering amenity space to non-profits is an interesting opportunity;
- An appealing idea is to have micro-restaurants, distilleries, and brewpubs all in the same market—have anchor tenants that would draw people throughout the week, and on weekends set up pop-up markets to bring people from outlying areas to that destination; and
- Something to consider within the retail study is social enterprise retail, like Found.

Procedural Note: Councillor Das left the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Are there other project concepts or ideas that you would like to see explored in New Westminster? What areas of the City are these most suited for?

- The old Army & Navy space has some interesting possibilities;
- The Shipyards building in North Vancouver is often used for events and craft fairs, would like to have something like that, which perhaps the City owns and manages, as it is hard to get other owners of buildings to do what we think is right for the community.

Procedural Note: Councillor Trentadue left the meeting at 10:19 a.m. Kendra Johnston assumed the role of Chair.

How can the City better leverage arts and culture programming to support healthy commercial districts?

- Consider our existing theatres on Columbia Street and how we can work with the owners;
- Ensure consistent funding for events like Uptown Live;
- Emphasis on experiential retail, as people are moving away from just buying things to having a good time while doing so; and
- Need to right-size the retail to have vibrant retail instead of long sections of poorly performing retail.

Procedural Note: Bart Slotman left the meeting at 10:26 a.m., at which point quorum was lost. The meeting continued for information only.

DOC#2105650

Procedural Note: Catherine Williams left the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

Carolyn Armanini, Planner, Economic Development, advised that the aim is to have some recommendations ready for the committee by its meeting in September.

5.2 Business License Bylaw

Carolyn Armanini, Planner, Economic Development, provided a presentation entitled “Business License Bylaw Modernization.”

The Committee expressed excitement that this is happening, and advised that data should be collected and analyzed for these processes.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no items.

7. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

There were no items.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There were no items.

9. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 10:52 a.m.

10. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Certified Correct,

Original Signed _____
Councillor Mary Trentadue
Chair

Original Signed _____
Katie Stobbart
Committee Clerk