



Corporation of the City of NEW WESTMINSTER

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, May 25, 2023

**Open to public attendance in Council Chamber, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically**

PRESENT

Councillor Ruby Campbell	Chair
Monita Cheng*	Community Representative from Commercial Area
Mark Evans*	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Jolene Foreman*	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Jorden Foss*	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Vera Kobalia	Community Representative from Commercial Area
Paige Strand*	Community Representative from Commercial Area
Catherine Williams	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

REGRETS

Councillor Paul Minhas	Council Representative
Imran Gill	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Paul Romein	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Bart Slotman	Representative, Uptown Business Association

GUEST

Jesse Brown	New Westminster Chamber of Commerce
Angie Whitfield	New Westminster Chamber of Commerce

STAFF PRESENT

Jen Arbo	Economic Development Coordinator
Carolyn Armanini	Economic Development, Senior Planner

Blair Fryer	Senior Manager, Communications and Economic Development
Meredith Seeton	Policy Planner
Katie Stobbart	Committee Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ruby Campbell opened the meeting at 9:02 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

The Committee began with a round of introductions and an icebreaker.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes of March 3, 2023

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes of March 3, 2023 be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Council Strategic Priorities Plan 2023-26

Councillor Campbell reviewed Council's new Strategic Priorities, noting the following:

- Council's Strategic Priorities are usually adjusted when a new Council is elected to affirm the priorities align with the new Council's goals;
- As well as the priorities set out, there is a focus on enhancing public engagement, climate action, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) work;
- There may be a change to the advisory committee model to include an assembly that represents the community, and possibly a new iteration of this committee; and
- Would like to ensure that economy is not a silo but approached in conjunction with the arts, the social sector, and more beyond retail.

In response to questions from the Committee, Councillor Campbell advised that the advisory assembly model being considered is new and would replace the majority of current advisory committees.

5.2 Retail Strategy Update

Carolyn Armanini, Senior Planner, Economic Development, provided a presentation titled "New Westminster Retail Strategy."

In response to questions from the committee, Blair Fryer, Senior Manager, Economic Development and Communications, Ms. Armanini, and Meredith Seeton, Policy Planner, advised:

- Conversations are underway with planners and developers regarding the foot of 12th Street and its potential for a catalyst project and more opportunities to incubate businesses; and
- The hope is to have lower 12th Street host a mix of retail and light industrial/light manufacturing, and employment uses, with an innovative mix that will have a fun, edgy feel but not compete with Downtown.

The Committee had the following comments arising from discussion:

- There should be a plan to activate sidewalks as well as integrating plans for patio extensions and activations, street furniture, bike racks, and so on in the plan for a building;
- Members of the committee like to see arts and culture being woven in to the strategy; and
- In addition to Temporary Use Permits and pop-up retail, would be great to have feedback from brick and mortar stores to ensure there is a good balance.
-

5.3 Engaging with Douglas College Students

Catherine Williams, Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community, provided a presentation titled “Connecting New Westminster Businesses to Douglas College”

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Williams advised that currently Douglas College is taking job opportunities for a September start, which requires the job to be posted by mid- to late-June.

6. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

6.1 General Roundtable Updates

The Committee exchanged updates in a roundtable format, noting the following:

- The Chamber of Commerce held its AGM, welcoming eight new board members for a total of 12;
- Following an informal request for assistance last year, the New West community has been very welcoming to new Ukrainian families in the area;
- Douglas College will launch a mentoring program in January 2024;
- The Stage New West has plays coming up between June 1 and 10, with a social media draw for tickets;
- Steel & Oak celebrates its ninth year in business on June 25; and
- Tourism New West is recruiting new board members.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Commercial Vacant Property Tax Update

Staff confirmed that while some other municipalities would like a Vacant Property Tax to include industrial properties, the proposed motion only applies to commercial properties in New Westminster.

Councillor Campbell encouraged the Committee to reach out regarding advocacy that can be done, for example for housing on top of the commercial properties.

8. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 11:00 a.m.

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

To be determined.