

The **Minutes** of the **Economic Development Select Committee** meeting held in **Conference Room 2** of the Welton Common Building at 7337 Welton Street, Mission, British Columbia on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 commencing at 8:00 am.

Members Present: Edgar Sarfeld, Vinegar Hill Consulting, Chair  
Lesa Lacey, Lacey Developments  
Chris Hartman, Polygon Homes Ltd. (left meeting at 9:00 am)  
Allan Main, Community Futures North Fraser  
Sean Melia, MRCC & Prospera Credit Union  
Raymond, Szabada, Sumas Regional Consortium for High Tech  
Beverly Toews, Fraser Pacific Enterprises & Sumas Transport Inc.  
Rocky Blondin, Blondin Enterprises

Members Absent: Mayor Pam Alexis  
Wade Peary, Riverside College  
Craig Toews, University of the Fraser Valley  
Dan Schubert, Schubert Plumbing & Heating Ltd.

Council  
Representative:

Others Present: Stacey Crawford, Economic Development Officer  
Mike Younie, CAO  
Dan Sommer, Director of Development Services  
Clare Seeley, Manager of Tourism  
Lesley White, Administrative Assistant

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Moved and seconded,

That the agenda of the Economic Development Select Committee meeting held on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

**3. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

Moved and seconded,

That the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting of the Economic Development Select Committee be approved.

CARRIED

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **(a) Planning Update Regarding Year to Date Building Report**

Dan Sommer provided an update on Development Services, they are currently analyzing trends. Current Development Applications statistics are shared; approximately 200 active applications in queue for a total of 2,400 units. Abbotsford, in comparison, has 4,700 applications with a population 3 times larger. There has been a 10-12% growth in residents in Mission and the Department is working to fill vacancies.

##### **Development and Building Permit Update**

Building Applications in February 2019 had a total value of \$10 Million Dollars and in February 2020, they have grown to a total value of \$20 Million Dollars. There are currently no applications for Industrial, Commercial, Institutional (ICI) use.

Discussion ensued regarding the flexibility of commercial and industrial zoning in relation to the Employment Land Strategies (ELS) initiatives to increase potential for employment uses.

##### **(b) Development Liaison Committee**

Development Services is reacting to the increase in applications and workload with a new hire, who is currently working with Economic Development to help create current statistics. The department is focusing on reducing the delay in the Development Application process through pre-application review, ensuring applications are complete when submitted, speeding the process. Discussion of the current timeline for application approval determines there are too many variables to provide a confirmed answer.

Concerns are raised about delays in Building Permit Applications. It is noted that commercial applications are prioritized and the process is under review by the Deputy CAO, including staff resources.

##### **(c) Tourism and Filming Update**

##### **Mission Tourism**

Clare Seeley shared the launch of the new tourism brand and noted the department is doing the Visitor Guide in-house for the first time this year, additionally The Mission Tourism website is being re-developed by a new company. In recognition of the impacts of COVID-19, The Province has announced it will be reallocating tourism funds to local markets to encourage local tourism. Scenic 7, the iconic Highway 7, has received full funding from the Destination BC and the Stave West project is moving along well.

##### **Filming Updates**

Film inquiries are down, possibly linked to the downtown area and some issues with previous projects. We are currently in discussion with the downtown area regarding future filming projects.

#### **(d) Employment Lands Strategy Project**

The Chair of the ELS Committee gave an overview of the objectives of this project, which include:

- Updating the underlying base data, including local labour force and the growth of the employment section within these labour forces.
- Updating the policies
- Gaining understanding of household spending, commuters, land use intensity
- Identify new opportunities for employment lands

This data analysis and preliminary information should be ready by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April, 2020.

#### **(e) Waterfront Revitalization Initiative**

Stacey Crawford provided an update on the Waterfront stating that Council has given the 1<sup>st</sup> reading to the Waterfront Study Area, providing more detailed servicing and land use information. It is noted that there is a slow roll out of public information around the Waterfront project.

##### Development Corporation

Stacey Crawford provides a background on the introduction of a Development Corporation as an option to navigate the Waterfront Revitalization Initiative. This corporation would allow the District to collaborate with landowners and aid them through the process. The Development Corporation could be comprised in two ways: with in house staff or with outside business partners.

Discussion around technical reports, the building of a database of information related to the Waterfront, preparing for the displacement of existing businesses, partnership options, and long-term outlook.

##### Government Relations

Stacey Crawford provided an update about the Provincial Government contacts that were made while in Victoria, BC with Mayor Pam Alexis and CAO Mike Younie. The group met with 3 Ministers and 3 members of senior staff with intent to request Provincial financial assistance. A round table meeting with Provincial members was secured, making it a successful effort.

##### Waterfront Public Hearing

Discussion around a public information session to engage with the community. A letter with the comments and feedback from the EDSC would be prepared and shared with

the public in support of the initiative. More discussion around marketing and a public hearing as means to gain public support.

**(f) EDSC Strategic Focus and Working Groups: Transportation and Employment Lands – Next Steps**

- **Transportation Working Group:** Ed Sarfeld, Lesa Lacey, Wade Peary, and Bev Toews

The Transportation Working Group met with MOTI to discuss The Waterfront Initiative and general community growth. Support from this group is important to set up the forum in the Spring. The MOTI has attempted to set up meetings internally to get the groups together. Updates on the operational levels at the MOTI, there is a high turnover which has proved to be challenging when attempting continuous contact with the Ministry, leaving little progress. Work is being done with the Vancouver Port Authority on strategies involving the use of the river. The group met with Transport Canada and will stay in contact. The group met with the FVRD to discuss commuters and the work force.

The question was raised regarding best timing for a forum. Suggested that the end of May would be an appropriate time. The group is meeting with DT World April 6, 2020 to tour the company and learn about their movement of goods by rail, road and river.

- **Employment Lands Strategy Working Group:** Chris Hartman, Sean Melia, Ed Sarfeld, and Dan Schubert

The group would like to identify what is missing from Business License Applications that could be causing delays in processing and approval. More discussion regarding homebased businesses and the benefits of a business license for these business owners, as homebased businesses are 70% unlicensed. Development Services suggests any delays in approval are general external, such as Fire Department Inspections or Health Department Inspections.

It is discussed that 47% of jobs in the Vancouver Area are generated within the community, such as Drs, lawyers, banks etc. whereas Mission only has 30%. Discussion about securing options for employment growth and the need to identify future employment areas. Development Services indicates these areas are noted in the OCP. The question is asked regarding how many employed individuals it takes to service one new resident. Discussion about protecting industrial and commercial lands from future residential growth.

The chair of the ELS provides update on the various locations the group has studied, including parks they have walked. The exercise was useful to see the types of projects that have been completed and how they apply to Mission.

Stacey Crawford provides a description of an Innovation Zone as an industry area on a small footprint and shares information about how an Innovation Zone would be an ideal fit for the Waterfront Initiative. Discussion about identifying local talent upon which to build this zone, working with stakeholders, the community, building Terms of Reference for the Waterfront Initiative. Stacey Crawford shares that Langara College has taken on the Waterfront Initiative as a project and will share their results at the end of April 2020.

Lesa Lacey announced that she will be stepping down from this committee effective immediately. She was thanked for her time and commitment to the group.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

Approved minutes of the Tourism Committee held on February 11, 2020 were provided as information.

**6. ROUNDTABLE**

Roundtable discussion highlights included:

- District staffing levels are low, it is suggested that they need to be increased to better manage workload
- It is suggested that the District explore the idea of summer students to help reduce the workload.

**7. CLOSING REMARKS**

There are no closing remarks.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

Next Meeting April 8, 2020 at 8:00 am in Conference Room 2 at 7337 Welton Street, Mission, BC.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved and seconded,

That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:38am.