Agenda - Economic Development Commission
Thursday, July 12, 2018 - 1 - 2:30pm

1. Call to Order

2. Amendment to Terms of Reference

3. Approval of Agenda

4. Approval of Minutes of June 14

5. Acceptance of David Howe's resignation - received on June 18

   i. Torque Masters Funding
   ii. Partnership to Establish Economic Development Officer Function
   iii. Request for Funding of Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

7. New Business

8. Next Meeting - August 9

If time permits we will add…

6b. Subcommittee Reports
   i. Communications
   ii. WSID / EduTech
   iii. Transportation - Brian re: Neighbourhood Golf Carts Pilot Project
   iv. Business Climate / Metrics - Brian re: Revenue Trends
   v. Other - Brian re: Vista Conference
   vi. Other - Sidney Summit

6c. Organization Update
   i. SNSIG - Robin re: Follow Up Report from the Luncheon of Business Leaders on the Saanich Peninsula with Adam Olsen, MLA
Dear fellow Commission members,

I feel compelled to submit a report summarizing discussion topics that were on both the Audit & Finance and Council Agenda packages this past Monday, that related to Economic Development and requests for funding from the Economic Development Fund.

There were three items;
- a request from the Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce requesting $25,000 where Town Staff identified the Economic Development Fund as the source,
- a proposal from the Sidney Business Improvement Area Society regarding a pilot project for an Economic Development Officer position and request for $45,000 to support a list of potential projects,
- a request from the Torque Masters Car Show requesting $2500 from the Economic Development Fund to cover event related costs.

It is worth noting that as of Monday morning, the Town's Economic Development Fund had an available balance of approximately $63,000.

Full agendas, which contain the reports, can be found on the Town's website and through these direct links.

[http://www.sidney.ca/Town_Hall/Committees__Commissions__Boards/Audit__Finance_Committee/Audit__Finance_Committee_-_Agendas__Minutes_2018.htm](http://www.sidney.ca/Town_Hall/Committees__Commissions__Boards/Audit__Finance_Committee/Audit__Finance_Committee_-_Agendas__Minutes_2018.htm)


On April 9th, Sidney Council received a letter from the District of North Saanich encouraging Sidney to contribute financially to the Chamber of Commerce. Council referred the item to the next Audit & Finance meeting which was held Monday afternoon. Along with the letter from North Saanich was a letter from the Chamber President with background information and several ideas for how the financial assistance could be utilized. The accompanying staff report identified the Economic Development Fund as the appropriate source of funding should Council wish to support this request.

The recommendation passed from committee was to refer the request for funding from the Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce to the 2019 budget deliberations.

The committee agreed that more information was necessary to consider the request, and therefore directed staff to send a letter in response requesting how the money would be used, and for that plan to presented prior to the next budget deliberations.
It was noted in the discussions that it would be helpful to see a list of priorities and action items that would be completed based on the funding they receive; for example how the $25,000 from North Saanich will be utilized, what would be done with $50,000 should they receive funding from both North Saanich and Sidney, and again what could be accomplished with $75,000 should contributions be made from all three Peninsula municipalities.

During the public participation period of the Council meeting, prior to Susan Simosko’s presentation regarding the Sidney BIA’s proposal, two speakers addressed the BIA’s report and expressed support for the concept but concern for some of the details. Questions included how this position was to fit in with the regional economic development initiative, how it would work with neighbouring municipalities, as well as existing organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Sidney North Saanich Industrial Group, and the Sidney Breakfast Club. It was expressed that additional consultation should have already been completed. It was also noted that Council has endorsed the work plan of the EDC which includes monitoring the commercial vacancies on the West Side, as well as to develop a strategy to market and promote the West Side as an innovation district, and that the model proposed would eliminate the Economic Development Commission. There was concern that the example projects were too focused on the geographic boundaries of Sidney’s BIA, and didn’t represent the needs or opportunities expanding across the entire municipality.

Susan was later invited to give her presentation which was an introduction and summary of the proposal Sidney’s BIA put forward for Council’s consideration. The staff report and the BIA’s proposal are worth reviewing in entirety, but the highlights are as follows;
- it has been suggested many times before that an EDO position be created for Sidney
- the proposal suggests a part-time EDO position, jointly funded by the Town and the BIA
- that the role be largely project based, with a focus on outcomes and deliverables
- that outcomes be linked to the needs of the Town and respective stakeholders
- that a model similar to the Sidney Events Advisory Group be considered as an Advisory Panel for the EDO
- a list of example projects and associated costs are identified
- that a longer term arrangement and increase in funding be considered as part of the 2019 budget deliberations

The approved recommendations were as follows;
1. That Council sees merit in the proposed partnership with the BIA on a jointly funded Economic Development Officer Function;

2. That $45,000 be allocated from the Economic Development fund toward the establishment of an interim pilot project involving the establishment of the EDO function under the auspices of the BIA, and that the pilot project be initiated as soon as practical and extend through to the 2019 budget process;

3. That consideration of a proposed 4-year term for the EDO function, and associated incremental budget request, as outlined in the BIA proposal be forwarded to the 2019 budget deliberations.
A lengthy discussion then took place where one Councillor proposed tabling the motion until further consultation was conducted, however the majority of council felt that this was a good opportunity, with appropriate timing, to create a position that has long been requested. It was also identified that the needs of the West Side Industrial Businesses are primarily related to advocacy work. During her presentation, Susan clarified that she did not see the role of this EDO to be that of advocacy because that is the mandate of our local Chamber of Commerce. The proposal does state that this function under the BIA would enable collaboration with West Sidney, Harbour Road businesses and other stakeholders.

The plan suggests an initial focus on Downtown Sidney and the list of example projects do have an emphasis on the Downtown. It is my understanding that this is simply a list of examples and that the BIA will work closely with the Town to develop the actual actionable items - some of which may even be from the EDC’s current work plan. I have heard members of this EDC advocate for a paid support staff member, and I have also been in favour of exploring that option. The motion passed and the model presented does not mean the immanent dissolution of the EDC, it simply means we will need to explore how the functions work together. The proposal presented an option of creating an Advisory Panel for the EDO, and perhaps the EDC will evolve into that panel; those are discussions still to be had.

After speaking with a couple of members, I hear there are differences of opinion regarding how this was brought forward, on the merits of the proposal, and how it affects our commission. However, the proposal was directed to Council to ensure there was support for the idea, and it is my hope that sharing this information now might spark a fulsome discussion at our next meeting, where we can potentially make recommendations back to Council on specific projects and next steps. As we have representation from the groups around our table that were recommended for further consultation, I believe this is our opportunity, and my responsibility as your liaison, to hear what you have to say and report back to Council.

The third request for money from the Economic Development Fund on Monday was from the Torque Masters Car Show to cover Town staff costs for garbage collection, barricade placement, and for additional Fire Department coverage. As much as I can justify the event itself as an economic driver, I was unable to support this request for funding. The motion did pass, and I can only hope that the organizers heard my suggestion to request money to cover costs that could be defined as Economic Development in the future.

This concludes my report, but is hopefully the beginning of our discussion.

With respect and gratitude,
Erin
From: Brian Losie [mailto:brian.losie@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 5, 2018 11:08 AM
To: WEBMASTER TRAN:EX
Subject: 277118 Neighbourhood Golf Carts Pilot Project

I am a member of the Economic Development Commission for the town of Sidney. One of our goals is to establish a shopper’s shuttle service in the core (bounded by Bevan avenue to the south, Sidney avenue to the north and along the Beacon avenue corridor). This would be modelled after the service provided by the Chamber of Commerce in Palm Desert along El Paseo.

I read with interest the pilot projects in Chase and Qualicum for licensing of golf carts, much like is done in Palm Springs. We would envision a more modest project with two, eight seat carts as a trial during the summer tourist season. It would help mitigate vehicular traffic and parking in this busy commercial/retail zone.

How would we go about becoming part of this trial?

From: Ludwar, Kenedee TRAN:EX <Kenedee.Ludwar@gov.bc.ca>
Date: Fri, Jun 8, 2018, 9:35 AM
Subject: RE: 277118 Neighbourhood Golf Carts Pilot Project
To: Brian Losie <brian.losie@gmail.com>

Good Morning:

Thank you for your email regarding the neighbourhood golf cart pilot.

The ministry announced the Neighbourhood Golf Cart pilot project last summer (www.gov.bc.ca/neighbourhoodgolfcarts). This project allows us to monitor and review the possibility of expanding the roads in which golf carts can be used. We have only included two communities in the pilot to make sure the operating and road conditions are appropriate and necessary. We want to ensure that if we allow these slow moving vehicles into communities that it is done safely. We will continue to monitor this pilot and make necessary changes to the program as we move forward.

For ATVs and other off road vehicles to travel on the highway or public road, they require a permit from the RCMP or must be crossing at a designated and signed location. The insurance rate is lower than other vehicle classes as it is not anticipated to interact frequently with traffic and other road users. Please see the website regarding the new ORV framework (https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/orv/). It provides a lot of detail on the uses of ATV and other off road vehicles. The intent of this policy is to provide connectivity between trails for ORVs with limited access to roads and may meet your needs for your proposed program.

I would enjoy the opportunity to discuss further. I can be reached at 604-527-2255.
I still need to make contact with Ludwar regarding the pilot project and if Sidney can be included. As it is a pilot, it is unlikely we can launch a service in Sidney in any form before next year and only with the new council's blessing.

I did make a plea at the APC meeting for some form of 'trades shuttle' from a common parking area (airport land) to the various projects we will soon see underway in town. Third and Henry is near and dear to me and workers' Silverados line the streets. If the town can secure an agreement with VAA, we could have a common parking area for trades and set up a bus shuttle. Question remains, who pays?

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1. What is your target audience and what geographic area are your delegates coming from.
Vancouver Island - but have been as far as from Singapore, Vancouver, Seattle, Kelowna, Haida Gwaii .... this year Auckland, NZ even;

2. How many registered delegates do you have coming to Nanaimo? What do you anticipate the draw would be in Greater Victoria?
Nanaimo (VISTA Expo launch) in 2015 saw 140 'avg. float' we were told, Langford in 2016 about 100, Campbell River 80-90. Great Victoria projection for 2019 ? - difficult but 100+, low hundreds even would be fair

3. Are you endorsed by Nanaimo's EDO or council?
No - Nanaimo EDO is no longer I was told late last year, recently too. Nanaimo Council passed on a cash donation last year but quickly did agree to the Mayor attending, help open ... through a welcome address. Nanaimo did help with a $2000 cash donation in 2015 though - same level of energy/commitment this year to see VISTA Expo succeed in raising the awareness of the clean/sustainable tech sector island wide.

4. Who are the exhibitors you are inviting.
Always a mix - always open to whoever is available, keen to exhibit, have something relevant, new enough to be on panel or pitch etc... and who are not already committed in Europe - Axys Technologies being an example this year. ICC Group though is attending - on panel too in Nanaimo. Bryan Imber would be a good background reference as he knows how VISTA formed, has known me for about 6-7 years in fact. Suggest seeing past Expo programmes also on the webpage.

5. Have you engaged discussions with the VI Tech park on Markham road? Camosun College? UVic?
Yes - all are listing the event - been putting up posters.. Ross Lyle .... Susan Walton, Peter Wild ... ISEvic ... as have VIU, VIATec, Innovation Island, Fed Govt. Marine Renewables Canada, BC Shipping News ....

6. What is your 'ask' of the town of Sidney? Financial support? promotion?
Letter of Support or Cash Donation or Marketing assist or nudging Sidney based lean tech industry leaders to attend/participate - help spotlight Sidney/North Saanich, the island ... or all 4 even !

7. What will you charge exhibitors/delegates?
Still free to attend this year - under review though - but takes us out of the non-profit domain, $300/exhibitor helps cover staging/marketing, organizing the next Expo etc .... Main sponsors that have helped launch the first island loop (higher learning centres/finance teams & institutions) always agreed with me that during the 2nd island loop VI sustainable / clean tech industry leads might/should see the benefit in having their own island annual Expo - invite those that they meet off island at similar Expos to come visit/spend time on VI.

I may have more questions but these should at least give the commission some sense of scope and resource demand. We cannot commit to hosting the event without more information.
Sidney Summit on Habitat and Environment

If you have ever stopped and admired the natural beauty that surrounds us here on the northern half of the Saanich Peninsula then please consider the following:

There are more than 15 organizations, big and small, working to preserve and enhance these spaces. There are 4 First Nations who have called this place home for centuries. There are 5 governments entities having some level of responsibility. There are more than 50,000 citizens living here. Millions of people pass through here every year. It is imperative that everybody works hard together to preserve, restore and enhance the natural habitat and environment of the Peninsula.

The inaugural Sidney Summit is a gathering of people:
- To talk about our shared natural space
- To introduce ourselves and each other to local groups determined to make a difference
- To compare notes on successes and failures in habitat and environmental advocacy
- To educate each other and those responsible on best practices to protect nature
- To deliver an identifiable outcome, an expression of the will to do better by everybody

Please join us on November 9th and 10th, in Sidney BC to talk, learn and participate in changing the conversation. Everybody is welcome!

Keynote speakers:
To Be Announced

Sessions ideas include:
- Best practice for citizen hands-on support of public land. This session will be a push for municipalities to implement policies to let the common person tend to the needs of our parks.
- The promotion of community-based action to eradicate invasive species.
- Learning social media tools for Habitat Advocacy
- Speed dating for smaller, environmentally focused community groups. This session is about getting to know each other, promoting cooperation and collaboration.
- Senior involvement in environmental advocacy
- Towards the development of a “State of the Environment on the Saanich Peninsula”.
- Best practice for urban and suburban forests
- Health benefits of working with/in nature and volunteering.

Showcase:
Advocacy organizations and government agencies showcase their efforts with demonstrations and displays. School groups and the general public invited to watch, learn and perhaps sign up as a volunteer.

Long Table Supper and Entertainment
Stay for supper and keep the conversation going with a feast of local fare and great music.

Participating organizations
- Friends of Chalet Creek*
- Friends of Shoal Harbour
- Friends of Dominion Brook Park*
- Friends of North Saanich Parks
- Friends of John Dean Park
- Roberts Bay Residents
- Residents of Reay Creek
- Sidney Anglers*
- North Saanich Residents Association
- Sidney Community Association
- Peninsula Streams
- Saanich Inlet Protection Society*
- Saanich Inlet Network*
- SeaChange Society
- Habitat Acquisition Trust*
- World Wildlife Fund
- CRD’s Integrated Watershed Management
- CRD Parks*
- District of North Saanich
- Town of Sidney*
- Victoria Airport Authority*
- Office of Elizabeth May MP
- Office of Adam Olsen MLA

*participation pending
Follow Up Report
from the Luncheon of Business Leaders on the Saanich Peninsula
with Adam Olsen, MLA

The purpose of the meeting was for Adam to be introduced to and develop relationships with industry leaders on the Peninsula. This meeting was an opportunity to make him aware of issues and challenges that businesses face, so he can accurately represent business interests in the legislature and effectively communicate concerns during the upcoming municipal elections.

The purpose of this follow-up report is to ensure that perspectives and action items were captured accurately, but also to allow for additional feedback to be reported.

In attendance:

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>John Juricic</td>
<td>Harbour Digital Media, and Chair of the Sidney North Saanich Industrial Group</td>
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<td>Robin Richardson</td>
<td>Co-Founder of SNSIG, and now Consultant</td>
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<td>Christine Magill</td>
<td>Epicure</td>
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<td>Paula Bernard</td>
<td>Epicure</td>
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<td>Erin Bremmer-Mitchell</td>
<td>Town of Sidney, Councillor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Ramsay</td>
<td>Co-Founder of SNSIG, and now Consultant</td>
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<td>Robin Ambrose</td>
<td>Viking Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Spindloe</td>
<td>Nicholson Manufacturing</td>
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<td>Dominique Spragg</td>
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<td>Lynn Brown</td>
<td>Schneider Electric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adam Olsen</td>
<td>MLA</td>
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<td>Aldous Sperl</td>
<td>Adam Olsen's Chief of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ryan Clayton</td>
<td>Constituency Assistant for Adam Olsen's Office</td>
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The meeting was opened by John at 12:08, and the purpose was clarified.

Introductions were made around the room, and concluded with Adam Olsen giving an introduction to who he is, his deep rooted connection to the Saanich Peninsula, and his openness to hear the perspectives of all people, businesses and organizations that are encompassed within Saanich North and the Islands, especially through these ongoing advisory panel discussions.

Aboriginal Procurement was the first topic for discussion, as a follow-up to a previous conversation that Greg and Adam had. Background to a service currently being updated by the Ministry of Citizens’ Services was provided. This procurement program increases the likelihood of companies receiving bids when Aboriginal people are part of the labour force.

It was identified by more than one participant that the First Nations People of the Saanich Peninsula are a workforce that companies would like to attract, considering the lack of skilled workers in the available pool. Viking Air provides a 6 week program in which prospective employees are trained and tested. It was identified that this is a relationship building exercise and even though businesses need employees now, they are willing to invest in time and training so the challenge to find skilled trade
workers is mitigated in the future. **If businesses cannot hire local people, than these businesses are likely to expand their manufacturing components to other provinces or countries.**

**ACTION:** Adam to follow up with Honourable Jinny Sims at the Ministry of Citizens’ Services regarding the outcome of the meeting with Salish Sea Industrial Services.

Adam noted that there are so many different ways to approach government and his first year has been an intense learning curve on how to open doors to opportunities. He has learned that, because of the confidence and supply agreement, he can ask a Minister for a briefing on an issue and all upper management of that ministry attends the meeting to ensure the correct information is being passed along. **This is a way that Adam can directly highlight issues or ask questions on behalf of industry.**

**ACTION:** John and Adam to start a dialogue with Aboriginal folks on the Peninsula, identifying a single point of entry for businesses interested presenting work and training opportunities.

Tseycum First Nation has coordinated with Epicure to fill 3 job positions.

**ACTION:** Christine from Epicure please communicate with Robin at Viking about this process.

Adam noted that there is a political division between the four nations on the Saanich Peninsula. They are all WSANEC people with four village sites, but over time have been classified as four different nations, which isn’t correct.

**The upcoming October 20th, Municipal Election** was the next topic, and it was expressed that Adam could relay the importance of transportation, skilled trades, and affordable housing for business and industry to those seeking municipal seats. It was identified that the three municipalities on the Peninsula have not, or cannot, coordinate and agree to advocate for change on these issues.

Adam identified that he has 7 critic roles in the legislature, one being Municipal Affairs and Housing. His goal is to focus on the supply side of housing. He has begun meeting with Mayors and Chiefs in the region to facilitate conversations about regional planning.

There is significant opportunity in North Saanich to welcome residential development, such as Eaglehurst, which is now home to many young professionals. It was identified that the future of North Saanich needs to welcome more of the workforce by providing housing options.

The **Speculation Tax** was mentioned by Adam when speaking about how the Peninsula has a reputation as a retirement community. He expressed that if folks are encouraged to park their capital investments here for future retirement than our problem with not only skilled workers, but those in hospitals, coffee shops and retail establishments will also have increased challenges finding staff. However, he identified that there have been many unintended consequences highlighted with the Speculation Tax which demonstrates to him how everything is interwoven, and decisions cannot be made without considering their trickle down effects.

**ACTION:** The success of the SNSIG to this point has been about highlighting issues by “making noise” about them. It is perceived that when the “noise” stops, politicians misinterpret that as the problem has gone away or been addressed. Adam will help continue the “noise making” but industry leaders
need to continue to share their concerns and challenges with him. Adam has asked that requests be precise. They can do that by emailing or calling his constituency office. 250-655-5600 adam.olsen.mla@leg.bc.ca

The new BC Employer Health Tax is creating significant impact on our businesses financially, and out of province owners continue to question the viability of doing business here. Adam pointed out that this issue will likely be the first big disagreement within the Green Caucus, as his is the only riding of the three with significant industry.

**ACTION** - Could businesses please provide Adam with a one page summary of how the Employer Health Tax affects your bottom line. He has requested to know what you were paying before compared to what you’re being asked to pay with this new system.

**ACTION**: Adam is to schedule meeting with Minister James to demonstrate the impact the Employer Health Tax has on Saanich Peninsula Businesses, and the impact on the greater region if we start loosing these businesses to other areas.

It was noted that the Saanich Peninsula is a significant portion of the region’s economy, and if our industry businesses pack up, they likely won’t be moving to other areas of British Columbia but to other provinces or even south of the border. Existing senior managers have built their homes and lives here, they enjoy their quality of life and are not interested in moving for those personal reasons, however it was mentioned that those priorities might shift once current senior managers retire.

It was also noted that in today’s economy, an aviation manufacturing business would not open in our region - there are simply too many costs and hurdles, such as the time and expense involved in shipping raw materials here.

Another point made was that other communities are facing similar challenges. Packing up and moving doesn’t solve issues such as the availability of skilled trades or automatically provide convenient transportation.

**Transportation** comes up frequently, and there are multiple angles associated with this issue. It was noted that as we deal with a housing affordability crisis, accessible and convenient transportation becomes a critical amenity. Folks are having to turn down jobs because there isn't a convenient mode of public transportation that delivers them to their destination, or that aligns with the start and end times of their shifts, and in a time when the workforce is at a low, this creates additional stress on business.

When speaking about removing the transportation hurdle for the First Nations People, Adam suggested to utilize the school buses already available that could potentially take people from their homes to the industrial areas, after they have finished serving the school aged children.

**ACTION**: Erin to send John an update from the BC Transit Commission regarding scheduled improvements to Peninsula routs.

There is an ongoing issue with **BC Assessment** and the way that businesses on airport land are taxed. The assessments classify the land as fee simple, when it is actually on long term lease with the airport. As the land assessments go up, these businesses pay more in municipal taxes. This is not an accurate assessment because the businesses lease the land, therefore do not have opportunity to sell the land and capitalize on the increased land valuations.
It was noted that Nav Can and BC Ferries pay an annual lease of $1 for their land, and it was asked how is it fair that private businesses are continually facing tax increases on the same properties.

It was noted that municipalities will also be looking for additional revenue to cover the costs of the new employer health tax, and that in order to cover those costs municipal taxes are likely to increase. Because commercial mill rates are higher than residential, this will be another negative impact on our businesses bottom lines.

While reflecting on all of the important issues, it was noted that Adam needs to convey to municipal election candidates, and his colleagues in the legislature, to consider the impact to the entire region if one or some of these businesses were to move away. All levels of government are competing for taxable revenue, but what would the impact to our individual communities be if these large businesses were no longer in our communities?

**ACTION:** Adam ask for a briefing with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the valuation of fee simple land values through BC Assessment, and to convey the impacts of this issue to Minister Selina Robinson.