



**Town of Sidney – COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Committee
AGENDA**

Thursday, October 8, 2020 – 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Meetings are video recorded and posted on the Town's website.

1. Call to Order
2. Territorial Acknowledgement
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Still to be determined suggested next steps for the Task Force Committee
 - i. Submission by D. Calveley
5. Adjournment

4.i.

Short-term – Response

As we know from the survey after the initial response phase to the Covid 19 pandemic there has been significant impact on our business community in Sidney. I think we all tend to focus on the BIA area since that is the most apparent on a day-to-day basis but I'm relatively confident that there has been an impact also on the west side and Harbour Road areas. Some businesses, perhaps particularly in Harbour Road, have been positively impacted. Sales of boats and RVs, for example, have supposedly been excellent and presumably the service supports for both have reflected those sales. Other businesses may not have been so fortunate and may have issues. I think that these issues need a short-term response that can identify problems and respond quickly. This should not add additional workload to Town Staff and should be unhampered by restrictions that may be imposed by the Community Charter. In the initial response phase, contact was made by the BIA and Chamber to complete the survey as part of the emergency response. They did an excellent job but are now fully absorbed in this Response/Recovery phase. Taking action by actively engaging with the business sector, identifying problems and implementing solutions requires a temporary resource person be put in place. I believe that this resource would best be provided by an outside entity, perhaps the BIA, the Chamber or a another independent party.

Council should consider providing a budget, perhaps an initial \$50,000, to the Task Force (or the EAC in the absence of the Task Force) to be spent as they deem necessary with accounting later, perhaps by monthly report. In this time of crisis presenting individual ideas and then waiting for Council to approve minimal amounts such as \$3000 is an ineffective use of both time and resources. My concept is that priorities would be set and oversight provided by a sub-committee of the Task Force, in which both the BIA and Chamber are represented as well as the community support sector. Repeating and updating the business survey could be the first task of the resource. Problem areas for business could be identified and tackled. If this concept were implemented some projects would be highly successful but Council would have to accept there would also be failures. At least we would be responding, and the information gained would be invaluable for planning our long term recovery and for our OCP review.

Longer-term - Recovery.

When the EAC was conceived this time by the Select Committee, Sidney was enjoying a problem free period of economic vibrancy with very few dark clouds on the horizon. The primary objective of the Committee was determined to be a venue where various sectors of the Community could share information and experiences. There could be issues referred by Council from time to time and the Committee would report annually to Council. The world has now dramatically changed. Covid 19 will be with us for a long time and Sidney needs to have a long-term response. In the initial stages of the EAC a lack of an economic strategy was identified as a weakness of the Town. I think this developing and implementing this strategy should be the challenge given to a refocused EAC. I have a concept in mind that would entail the use of a planning tool coming from either the BC government or the BCEDA that would give us a clear roadmap for the future, integrated with our current OCP review. Tasked with developing this strategy the EAC would be required to report quickly to Council with a timeline and budget requirements.