



Town of Sidney - Economic Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, April 8, 2021 – 10:30 am via Zoom Meeting

EAC Meetings are video recorded and posted on the Town's website at:

http://www.sidney.ca/Business/Economic_Advisory_Committee.htm

Present: David Calveley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wainwright, Annilee Armstrong, Frank Austin, Rod Hunchak, Stasia Hartley, Deanna Mathewson, Jennifer Michell, Al Smith, Doug Walker

Regrets: Brad Edgett, Alyssa Gerwing

Staff: Randy Humble – CAO, Paula Kully – recording clerk

1. Meeting called to order at 10:30 by David Calveley in the Chair
2. Review and approval of the Agenda

Moved by A. Armstrong, seconded by J. Michell that the Agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

3. Review and approval of the March 11, 2021 Minutes

Moved by A. Smith, seconded by D. Mathewson, that the March 11, 2021 Minutes be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

Council Liaison Report

- The OCP review process has a design survey open on the Town's website. Councillor Wainwright encouraged committee members to take it.
- Council recently reviewed the grant in aid applications and approved all submissions.
- Council approved the Business Development Manager Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Sidney BIA. Councillor Wainwright noted that the council discussion was interesting and resulted in a 4/3 vote. He suggested that committee members watch the video's discussion and requested that R. Humble provide an overview of the MoU to the committee.

Randy Humble provided a summary of the MoU, which was available on the Council Agenda and approved by Council at the March 22, 2021, Council Meeting.

4. Introduction of Shannon Toogood, Business Development Manager

S. Toogood provided an overview of the projects she is currently working on as follows:

- Currently finalizing work plan as it aligns with the MoU deliverables.
- She has taken part in the BCEDA convention, where she met with other community professionals regarding their public engagement plans for COVID recovery.
- Through BCEDA, she is utilizing complimentary services, including working with them to develop a business retention and expansion plan related to COVID.
- Registered the BIA with the "support local BC" program, which offers the program to all Sidney businesses at no cost. This brought Sidney businesses out from under the umbrella of Victoria, where they were buried under Victoria businesses.
- Taking part in SIPP webinars with leading economists and panel discussions.
- Connecting with Al Smith, the new ED at the Chamber of Commerce.
- Will provide written briefs for future meetings.

Discussion

- A board member inquired if Shannon is doing anything to promote her work to businesses outside the BIA. She has drafted a media release to be distributed through the EAC network and PNR.
- Al Smith noted that the Chamber will help disseminate information to their membership to clarify how the BIA will help them and alleviate any concerns they have about the financial impact on them.
- Stasia Hartley noted that she was pleased to see how quickly restaurants moved to patio and outdoor space and questioned how this was achieved. Shannon advised that Town staff are predominantly responsible for making this happen but that she provided support by clarifying bylaws and assisting businesses to work through the process.
- Regarding support to home-based businesses, Shannon is working on compiling mailing lists to send out relevant information to corresponding business types while also breaking down this information and making it available on the website.
- There was some discussion around antispam laws regarding email, which needs to be considered.

5. Roundtable Discussion

- **Jennifer Michell – West Sidney:** They had their first COVID exposure a few weeks ago and found it a stressful, complicated process to go through, as there was a lack of information as to what they needed to do. The new building is coming together, and they anticipate moving in within the next few months.
- **Rod Hunchak – Victoria Airport:** Confirmed that the airport will remain international and there is no risk of losing this designation despite media reports. Ongoing travel restrictions continue to significantly impact the airline industry, which is generally in a holding state. Swoop will be coming in the summer, offering direct flights to Edmonton and Toronto with excellent fares. There is a lot of land development going on.
- **Frank Austin – Marine Industry:** Not much to report – the marine industry is doing well.
- **Doug Walker – resident at large:** Some consulting businesses continue to do well while others have had to close, and others are barely hanging on. No real change.

- **Deanna Mathewson - hospitality/tourism:** The aquarium had a strong March and spring break. There is some concern about having too many people or people refusing to wear masks, but things have gone well. Membership sales are back to pre-COVID numbers. Thanked the Chamber for the building resilience program, which they subsidized; it is an excellent program. Looking for grants from several sources to assist in getting back up to speed. The aquarium had to cancel summer camps this year. Deanna commented on how well run the Mary Winspear Centre vaccine clinic is.
- **Al Smith – Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce:** Chamber membership has not changed during COVID. His immediate goal as the new ED is to get out into the industry and hear what the members and community need. He is open to meet with people to discuss.
- **Annilee Armstrong - home-based business:** Personal business is doing well. She has taken advantage of some of the government resources that have been made available to home-based businesses.
- **Stasia Hartley – service industry:** In light of the increasing numbers, Stasia expressed concerns and provided comments about the virus and the new variants from the point of the healthcare services industry. She encouraged people to continue to follow health orders.
- **Randy Humble - CAO:** A report to Council on an approach to the economic development strategy and recommendation on options will be going to Council on April 12.
- **Councillor Peter Wainwright:** Also on the next council agenda that may be of interest to EAC members is an application by Jima Cannabis and a Beacon West traffic study.

Al Smith commented that it is challenging to find information, especially about who to contact for specific purposes, on Town's website. He suggested that a database or directory would help industry and businesses and that the Chamber and BIA would be willing to assist in developing such a tool. It can live anywhere; however, the Town should own it.

6. Move by D. Walker that the meeting be adjourned at 11: 23 am.

Chair

May 13, 2021

Date