



**Town of Sidney - Economic Advisory Committee**  
**MINUTES**  
**Friday, June 19, 2020 – 10:30 am via Zoom**

**Present:** David Calveley (Acting Chair), Frank Austin, Alyssa Gerwing, Stasia Hartley, Rod Hunchak, Jennifer Michell, Councillor Chad Rintoul, Doug Walker, Denny Warner

**Regrets:** Annilee Armstrong, Barbara Cina, Deanna Mathewson

**Guest:** Morgan Shaw, Executive Director Sidney BIA

**Staff:** Randy Humble, CAO, Andrew Hicik, Director of Finance, Paula Kully, Recording Clerk

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Meeting called to order at 10:31 by Acting Chair, David Calveley

**1. Election of Committee Chair**

D. Calveley announced that he has been appointed to the Town's OCP Review Committee and the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force. With these additional commitments, he is happy to stay on as Vice Chair but would prefer someone else to take on the role of Chair.

Councillor Rintoul thanked David for his support during the pandemic and thanked the Committee members for their patience in reconvening. He also took the opportunity to thank Denny Warner, Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and Morgan Shaw, Sidney BIA for their work at the EOC in supporting the business community.

- *Councillor Rintoul called for nominations or expressions of interest for Chair of the Economic Advisory Committee.*
- *Stasia Hartley put her name forward.*
- *Councillor Rintoul made a second call. A third and final call was made.*
- *Brad Edgett put his name forward. S. Hartley withdrew her name.*
- *Brad Edgett was acclaimed as Chair.*
- *David Calveley remains Vice Chair.*

B. Edgett took the Chair and the meeting continued.

**2. Review and approval of the Agenda**

*Moved by D. Calveley, seconded by A. Gerwing, that the Agenda be approved as distributed.*

**UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

**3. Review and approval of the February 14, 2020 Minutes**

*Moved by D. Calveley, seconded by A. Gerwing, that the Minutes of the February 14, 2020 EAC Meeting be approved as distributed.*

**UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

#### 4. Council referral regarding recommendations to Council on actions and initiatives to support economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councillor C. Rintoul confirmed that Council is requesting suggestions on actions and initiatives to support economic recovery from the pandemic from the EAC. A roundtable discussion with recommendations proceeded:

- M. Shaw, Sidney BIA: The BIA is working on a recovery plan. Through conversation with members, it has become apparent that the impact from COVID-19 looks very different across various sectors and the BIA is working on finding ways to support each sector. With the possibility of a second wave in the fall, they are moving through the recovery process cautiously.
- B. Edgett Sidney BIA: Recently made a presentation to Rotary on the BIA's recovery plans including the new campaign to assist local business.

**Action:** *There was a request to see the BIA's plan. Morgan will send it out to members.*

- R. Hunchak: Reported that VAA traffic and revenue is down 96%. The only current source of revenue is land tenants. It is anticipated that the aviation industry will be one of the last to make a full recovery with a prediction of recovery in late 2023. VAA is launching an awareness program called Travel Safe YYJ.
- J. Michell: Reported that they have been maintaining operations with required safety protocols. It is predicted that they may be impacted next. Current impact has been the inability to maintain international contracts.

**Action:** *Jennifer will reach out to Sidney north Saanich industrial group to get their feedback on recommendations to town.*

- F. Austin: Reported that most of their employees have worked while 20% have stayed home. They have maintained government contracts and have installed safety precautions, plexi-glass, physical distancing, etc. Business is picking up as people are heading out on the water. With 10 -15% of business from the US, this has not been a large impact.  
**Recommendations:** keep costs down and limit demands on companies during recovery.
- A. Gerwing (SEAG): Very few events are happening this year although some, including Canada Day have gone virtual. The Museum is still closed but they are working on opening by the end of June. Museum staff is working back on site. They have not been successful with grants, as their need has not been considered dire enough. The Aquarium reopened recently. Tourism looks different and is much slower. Some organizations are not opening during the summer.

**Action:** *Alyssa will canvas SEAG members about their needs.*

**Recommendation:** Increase internet capacity. Can the Town advocate on behalf of the businesses community as businesses switch to online models?

(D. Warner left the call)

- D. Walker: His small business advisory practice saw an increase due to the pandemic as businesses were seeking support.  
**Recommendation:** Encourage people to follow the requirements of ECO and PHO but there is no need to go beyond; this is negatively affecting businesses unnecessarily.
- D. Walker provided Denny Warner's update: The Chamber has revenue concerns and has taken advantage of the \$40,000 forgivable government loan. Membership is down and events are now virtual. They are currently dealing with an emergency at the Chamber office, as they cannot get the public washrooms open and cleaned, yet many people including truck drivers stop expecting them to be open. It has become a health emergency. The Chamber does not have funding to manage this and initial contact with the District of North Saanich has been discouraging. Randy suggested the Chamber write to N. Saanich Mayor & Council and request that they submit an Expense Authorization Form to Emergency Management BC for the reopening and cleaning of the public washrooms.
- S. Hartley: Bayshore lost 20% of their revenue overnight when COVID hit and a number of employees had to book off. However, the loss of employees matched the loss of clients. They have regained lost clients and in fact have an increase in demand as people start to look for alternatives to care homes.  
**Recommendations:** Reach out to long-term care providers to find out what their needs are.
- Councillor Rintoul: Noted some of the positive things that have come from COVID such as the increase in recreational boat sales and how some businesses have seen an opportunity to reevaluate how they work. Communications infrastructure mains challenging in some parts of the community.
- Randy Humble: Thank you to everyone for coming together as the EAC. Randy provided an overview of the Town's COVID response thus far. As of March 12, the response quickly evolved to a level 2 EOC with 12 senior level staff and a full complement EOC at the CSB. The EOC began involving the business community immediately with Denny Warner and Morgan Shaw working at the EOC. Operations of the Town were generally maintained, with cutbacks on hiring axillary staff, which resulted in a small reduction in service. The Town was able to advance budgeted capital projects and strategic priorities but some priorities will not be possible and a report will go to council in August to outline these. The Town is now transitioning into recovery phase and will cut back the EOC at the end of the month with a focus on recovery including the appointment of a recovery task force.
- Andrew Hicik: The Town reduced property taxes more than any other municipality in the region. This will likely be the starting point for next year as well.
- Brad Edgett: Mary Winspear Closed to the public on March 17, at which time, revenue ceased. The Centre worked with the EOC and the Town throughout the pandemic. Wi-Fi was boosted in the parking lot. Expenses were also down as there were no events. Planned maintenance projects were pushed ahead. This includes have the bathrooms renovated and theatre upgrades. They are working with theatre groups and Worksafe BC but will likely be one of the last facilities to reopen. They are currently starting to

slowly reopen with small groups. They have taken advantage of some grants, developed local partnerships and produced the Virtual Canada Day, which is professionally edited so that it can be used beyond Canada Day to promote Sidney. A summer concert series is also being planned.

**Recommendations:** The Town should ease some restrictions and streamline processes to make it easier for events to be organized within the bounds of safety measures.

***Action:** Chad Rintoul and Chair, Brad Edgett requested that recommendations be pulled out of the meeting minutes and compiled into a comprehensive list. In addition, members are asked to think about recommendations to present to Council and email their suggestions to Brad or Paula. An entire list will be compiled and reviewed at the next meet before forwarding to Council.*

**Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am**

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Chair, Brad Edgett

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Date