



Town of Sidney - Economic Advisory Committee

Minutes

November 27, 2020 – 10:30 am via Zoom

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

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

Present: Brad Edgett (Chair), Councillor Chad Rintoul, Frank Austin, Denny Warner, Doug Walker, Stasia Hartley, Deanna Mathewson, Doug Walker, Alyssa Gerwing, Annilee Armstrong, David Calveley, Rod Hunchak

Staff: Randy Humble - Chief Administrative Officer, Paula Kully – Recording Clerk

1. Meeting called to order by the Chair at 10:31 am.

2. Review and approval of the Agenda

Moved by D. Warner, seconded by S. Hartley, that the Agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

3. Review and approval of the October 23, 2020 Minutes

Moved by A. Gerwing, seconded by A. Armstrong, that the Minutes of the October 23, 2020 meeting be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4. Report from Councillor Rintoul on results of the EAC recommendations to Council at the November 9 Council meeting regarding:

a. Long-term Economic Strategy: The EAC recommend that the Town allow an appropriate budget to work with a contractor to develop a long-term economic strategy in 2021.

- Councillor Rintoul advised that Council accepted the recommendation to include the development of a long-term economic development strategy in the 2021 budget process. The expectation is that there will be substantial involvement from the EAC with a contractor undertaking the work.
- R. Humble advised that staff would be conducting a review of other communities and their costs associated with conducting a similar economic development strategy. They will also reach out to SIPP to provide a possible budget figure.

b. Business Support Project: The EAC recommended that the Town work in conjunction with the BIA and the Chamber to facilitate a follow up survey of businesses using the remaining \$5,000 in the economic development fund and that the survey be conducted during the first quarter of 2021.

- Council approved the recommendation and have instructed staff to work with the BIA and Chamber to facilitate a follow-up survey of businesses utilizing existing funding from the economic development fund. Council recommended the end of the first quarter of 2021 to conduct the re-survey.

- c. **Additional Item:** Councillor Rintoul raised a previous recommendation from the EAC to Council: reviewing options for businesses for outdoor lineups and seating during the winter. Staff have recently reported back to Council on suggested guidelines.

5. Roundtable Discussion

Frank Austin – Marine Industry: Things have slowed down due to winter. He noted that Harbour Road businesses are often left out of projects and he would like to ensure these businesses are included in the re-survey and economic development strategy. Van Isle gas dock is now closed to January 15.

Denny Warner – Chamber of Commerce: Advised that the original survey did include Harbour Road businesses but recognized more feedback is necessary. The Chamber's AGM was held virtually and they are planning the Business Excellence Awards. This is challenging and they have postponed them until January 20th. The Tour of industry is one of their most popular events. They will attempt to host it but it is difficult with the current orders in place. They are taking this opportunity to include smaller businesses in a remote setting. The Chamber has received significant requests for time and involvement in projects such as the three OCP projects being undertaken by the Peninsula municipalities.

Stasia Harley – Service Industry: Increasing COVID numbers are concerning in the health care industry. They have ramped up their PPE protocols. Stasia reminded people to mask up with 3 layer cloth masks or procedural masks. Bay Shore Homes has just finished flu clinics and they may be one of the companies that delivers COVID vaccines when they become available. They are getting calls from group homes that require assistance to develop COVID protocols and have dispatched nurses going to assist. They have recently moved to new office in Oak Bay but are still very much connected to Sidney.

Deanna Mathewson – Hospitality/Tourism: Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea are conducting their AGM via zoom this week. They had a reasonable turn out recently for a virtual event. Volume and revenue at the Centre has been down about 60% and 100% in retail. They have seen a drop below 50% since the new orders have come in. However, they had a school group from Cowichan this week while the centre was closed and they are doing pop-up shops for local artisans.

Alyssa Gerwing – SEAG: The Sidney Museum is now closed 2 days a week, as numbers do not warrant being open all week. There was no SEAG meeting this month. However, Christmas lights are up and Christmas activities are happening within the new restrictions. Everyone is still trying to do Christmas but it will look different than other years.

David Calveley – Member at Large: David took part in SIPPs Rising Economy Week. BCEDA provided recommendations and tools for municipalities for assembling knowledge base of the community. He noted the recovery grants that are coming up and a December 2nd webinar for small & medium grant programs hosted by BCEDA and the province.

Rod Hunchak – Victoria Airport: Traffic was stable up until a week ago. The recent restrictions recommend people do not travel and travel seems to have dropped 30-50%. Fickle Fig has started operating in the terminal, which fits VAA's mandate to promote local. Victoria Distillers are opening their retail space in the near future and later next week, Spinnakers will be opening. The interest in land development has increased and they currently have two interested in sites now. They will have confirmation in January if these will go ahead. They currently have a multi-million project happening to install new parking equipment resulting in a new parking touchless payment system where customers can go online to pay in advance and make reservations.

Question re: rapid testing: VAA are just exploring at this point, as it is expensive. Other airports are in trial mode to see what works best.

Doug Walker – resident at large: Businesses that he deals with are diverse. Those with direct customers are struggling while those working on the contract side or without direct contact are doing well. Personally, as a business advisor his business is quite strong.

Annilee Armstrong – Homebased Businesses: Personal services are mixed. Some are very busy while others are struggling. The challenge for homebased businesses is that the new order indicates people are not to be invited into your home while yet homebased businesses operate out of their home.

Councillor Chad Rintoul: This is an important season for retail and he thanked the BIA, Chamber and Town for their support and promotion to encourage shopping locally. Council has heard from Artsea, the museum, the aquarium and Mary Winspear centre how they have been successful in adjusting to the new circumstances. They have modified attractions and been creative with funding. In the New Year, council reviews liaisons and there may be new liaison. He thanked all the members.

Randy Humble – CAO: The past week has focused on updating the Town's safety plan. Recent update from the province is that municipal bylaw is to support businesses in regards to customers refusing to wear mask. The Town's bylaw enforcement officer is ready to respond as a first point of contact. The Town's focus is currently budget preparations and will move into budget process in the New Year. The OCP charrette has been postponed from December to early in the New Year. It will likely be virtual. A new system has been installed for Council meetings that makes all of council visible on the livestream; those in chambers and those on zoom. Recently met with the Fire Chief and determined that the Town has returned to working in a response phase and meeting at an EOC level 1 with a small team.

Brad Edgett – Sidney BIA/Mary Winspear: In-person music has been discontinued. Horse carriage rides during the Christmas season will go ahead this year. The BIA has collaborated with many businesses and organizations during this time to think outside the box. Winspear collaborated with the Town and BIA to deliver a virtual Remembrance Day. They received many calls from family of veterans thanking them for making it happen. This year's toy drive is only accepting cash donations and purchases will be made locally. Morgan was working with the hoteliers on a snowbird package but that has been put on hold. The free delivery program is doing very well. Feedback from patrons has been great.

6. 2021 Meeting Schedule – set dates for 10 meetings throughout the year

- It was determined that meetings in 2021 will take place on the third Thursday of the month beginning at 10:30 am. There will be 10 meetings per year with no meeting in December and one during the summer. Paula will send out calendar invites.

7. Meeting adjourned at 11:33 am.