



**Town of Sidney - Economic Advisory Committee  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 13, 2022 – 10:00 a.m. via Zoom**

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

[http://www.sidney.ca/Business/Economic\\_Advisory\\_Committee.htm](http://www.sidney.ca/Business/Economic_Advisory_Committee.htm)

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**Present:** David Calveley (Vice Chair), Councillor Peter Wainwright, Natalie Bobrowich, Bert Chen, Kerry Hittinger, Deanna Mathewson, Al Smith

**Regrets:** Brad Edgett, Alyssa Gerwing, Rod Hunchak

**Staff:** Randy Humble – CAO, Andrew Hicik – Director of Corporate Services, Anna Morton – Recording Clerk

**1. Call to Order**

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**2. Review and approval of Agenda**

*Moved by B. Chen, seconded by D. Mathewson, that the Agenda be adopted as presented.*

**CARRIED**

**3. Review and approval of the March 10, 2022 Minutes**

*Moved by B. Chen, seconded by D. Mathewson, that the minutes be received and approved.*

**CARRIED**

**4. Referrals from Council**

**a. Written Report from the South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP)**

B. Chen noted that the report is consistent with what is being seen throughout North America, particularly generationally.

D. Mathewson was curious about what the total survey pool was as 56 seemed like a low response.

*Moved by B. Chen, seconded by D. Mathewson, that the Report be received for information.*

**CARRIED**

**b. Current Situation Assessment Report prepared by Lions Gate Consulting Inc.**

Concerns were raised regarding the accuracy and relevancy of the information presented in the report, the impact the EAC's comments would have on the upcoming workshops and the report's purpose.

K. Hittinger indicated that there have been significant changes in business practices, not only for home-based businesses and the gig economy, since the 2016 census data was collected.

A. Smith emphasized the need for updated data, particularly relating to housing, age, and income demographics. He referenced other sources and projections, such as VIHA, which could be used to get a more accurate of the state of the economy.

D. Mathewson indicated that the appendix contained the most interesting and relevant information and would be good to bring to the forefront of the report. She also noted that the chart on page 52 of employees' ability to find housing in Sidney was very interesting.

D. Calveley did not feel that older data was big issue. He noted that some things would change with updated info, but that there would be no significant surprises. His main concern was that Sidney's economy be seen together with the surrounding municipalities and their demographics and business community. He noted that Lions Gate Consulting has held focus groups with the business community and has two upcoming workshops.

A. Hicik pointed out that the tax table in the report is not reflective of the current situation. Council just moved forward to reduce gap between residential and business taxes.

N. Bobrowich would like to see the labour shortage addressed in a strategic plan.

B. Chen suggested that: 1. Lions Gate should update the report with new statistical data from 2021 census with exclusive focus on labour, economic, and housing data; 2. The focus for the Economic Development Strategy should be on industrial land use, with added emphasis on the OCP process, and rental housing stock; and 3. Methods to preserve or enhance Sidney's competitiveness when it comes to economic activity, including taxes and transportation.

R. Humble noted that 117 business surveys were used to gather data for the report, and the results of them were not surprising to the consultant. The consultant will also be asked to review the meeting's recording for feedback for the final report.

*Moved by C. Calveley, seconded by D. Mathewson, that the report is suitable as a basis for moving forward to the next steps but the data should be updated to include the latest census and there is a need to incorporate specific information mentioned in the April 13 EAC meeting.*

**OPPOSED: K. Hittinger, A. Smith**

**ABSTAINED: B. Chen**

**DEFEATED 2:2**

*Moved by A. Smith, seconded by K. Hittinger, that the EAC supports this project moving forward, however the EAC is concerned that the situation assessment is based on old data and does not incorporate key new information mentioned in the April 13 EAC meeting.*

**CARRIED**

## **5. Economic Development Strategy**

R. Humble shared that there are two related half day sessions coming up on April 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> with Lions Gate Consulting. Attendees will include business leaders, a Council representative, and senior Town staff. Randy will look to Natalie or Al to make recommendations to help fill the vacant spots.

## **6. Council Liaison Report**

Council has initiated the process for SBIA bylaw renewal for another five-year term. Businesses only need to react if they are opposed to the renewal and will be sent instructions on how to register their opposition.

Council adopted new Tax Policy at the April 4 Committee of the Whole. Councillor Wainwright recommended watching the recording, as it was a close vote.

The Climate Action Plan phase two was approved and is open for review.

Public input on Draft OCP closed.

## **7. Roundtable Discussion**

**N. Bobrowich – Sidney BIA:** There is an employment expo happening on May 19<sup>th</sup> for over 30 local businesses.

## **8. Adjournment**

*Moved by D. Mathewson, seconded by A. Smith, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:29 a.m.*

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Chair

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Date