



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

Thursday, January 13, 2022 – 10:30 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*

Present: David Calveley, Councillor Peter Wainwright, Bert Chen, Kerry Hittinger, Rod Hunchak, Deanna Mathewson, Al Smith, Shannon Toogood

Regrets: Brad Edgett, Alyssa Gerwing

Staff: Randy Humble – CAO, Anna Morton – Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Councillor Wainwright called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

2. Review and approval of Agenda

Moved by A. Smith, seconded by B. Chen, that the Agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

3. Election of new Chair for 2022

Councillor Wainwright called for nominations.

Moved by D. Calveley, seconded by D. Mathewson, to table the election of the chair.

CARRIED

4. Election of new Vice Chair for 2022

- *Councillor Wainwright called for nominations for Vice Chair:*
- *A. Smith nominated D. Calveley as Vice Chair.*
- *D. Calveley accepted the nomination.*

- *B. Chen seconded the nomination.*
- *Councillor Wainwright made a second call, a third call and a final call.*
- *D. Calveley was declared Vice Chair by acclamation.*

5. Review and approval of the November 4, 2021 Minutes

Moved by A. Smith, seconded by D. Mathewson, that the Minutes be received and approved.

CARRIED

6. Referrals from Council

a. Report on SIPP's Rising Economy Week (November 22 – 25, 2021)

S. Toogood, A. Smith and D. Calveley each attended Rising Economy Week sessions and noted that it was worthwhile.

D. Calveley requested that S. Toogood and A. Smith put together summary to share with the Committee.

Moved by A. Smith, seconded by Bert Chen, that the Report on SIPP's Rising Economy Week (November 22 -25, 2021) be received for information.

CARRIED

b. SBIA's Business Development Report

R. Humble recommended that the Report be moved to the next agenda. Councillor Wainwright suggested that EAC members watch the Council video of the Report in advance as well.

D. Mathewson agreed that more time was needed for review.

K. Hittinger asked if there was a plan prepared for the coming year that could be cross-referenced during the review of the report. S. Toogood replied that a plan exists as a working document, as yet incomplete.

D. Calveley agreed that was a good idea. He had watched the Council meeting discussion and felt that, while Council clearly had oversight, members were looking for input from the each business sector represented on the EAC as to how the work done to date had been helpful to them during COVID recovery and how efforts could best be targeted going forward. Feedback would also help S. Toogood as she works on the 2022 plan. He noted that members from the West Side, Harbour Road, Downtown Retail and Service have still to be appointed and their input would surely be most helpful. He felt the contact list prepared by S. Toogood would be of assistance to the consultants working on the ED Strategy.

A. Smith noted that the presentation was well done and that it would be beneficial for S. Toogood to provide a written report on the SBIA for EAC members to review before each future EAC meeting.

Moved by D. Mathewson, seconded by K. Hittinger, to defer comment and feedback on the SBIA's Business Development Report until the next EAC meeting.

CARRIED

7. Economic Development Strategy

R. Humble provided background information on how the consultant funding was approved. A small selection committee was created which recommended Lions Gate Consulting be selected as the consultants to lead and undertake creation of the Economic Development Strategy. The kick off meeting took place on December 2nd. He provided an overview of the Strategy's timeline and noted that the final report and deliverables would be brought to Council at the end of June.

8. Council Liaison Report

Councillor Wainwright noted that the four vacant spots on the EAC are currently being advertised in the Peninsula News Review.

Council is moving into the budget process for 2022, which normally wraps up in February. Strategic Priorities were finalised at the last Council meeting and there was a significant amount of interest in tax policy, particularly concerning business and residential tax ratios. Councillor Wainwright encouraged Committee members to watch the relevant portion of the most recent Council meeting. He also noted that the Kothari Group is holding a virtual meeting next week re: potential housing on the area on northwest side of the Beacon intersection. A. Smith agreed to share the link for the presentation with Committee members.

9. Roundtable Discussion

A. Smith – Peninsula Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber just completed a survey of businesses and a number of them are experiencing staffing issues. The Chamber is looking to hire a Membership Coordinator.

D. Mathewson – hospitality/tourism: The year ended on a quiet note, with some extra closures due to weather and possible COVID exposures. They had low revenues for December, but summer 2021 had higher revenues than summer 2019. Their annual five-day closure is starting Monday, January 17. They are anticipating a better year in 2022 with the return of summer camps and school groups.

R. Hunchak – Victoria Airport Authority: December was a good month, but traffic has gone down significantly in the last two weeks. Current numbers are similar to those from 2020 and will likely stay that way for the next 4-6 weeks. Flights are being cancelled due to low ridership and airline staff contracting or being exposed to COVID. Although it is not currently having a major impact, there are staff shortages for concessions, ground handlers, and airline staff.

The COVID-19 testing clinic was closed on Christmas Day but is now open seven days a week for 10 hours a day. It is looking to expand testing into the terminal building and add Rapid Antigen Testing.

K. Hittinger – home-based business: Many Public Relations businesses are looking to plan for the new year, but there is a great deal of uncertainty whether they should be promoting to the U.S. or Canada. New funding opportunities are coming out and many operators rely on those grants, particularly with the current uncertainty.

B. Chen – resident at large: There is a demand for industrial land and space. He believes that densification is the best route but it is constrained by current zoning laws. Downtown commercial spaces with upstairs residential require more parking than currently available. With many people coming from the lower mainland, Sidney is becoming a suburb of Victoria and Vancouver.

S. Toogood – Sidney BIA: The February 24th Sidney Employment Expo is being postponed until late April or early May and local businesses can still sign up to take part. Businesses are still struggling to find staff. She has received a number of HR questions and has been using available resources, including Councillor O’Keeffe. The BIA is looking into starting partnerships with regional HR companies. The Canada Summer Jobs applications are now open for hiring students.

Thanks to the lighting grant received by the BIA, downtown Sidney will have permanent lighting installations, which should serve as a year-round tourist attraction and show Sidney as open later in the evening.

10. Adjournment

Moved by D. Mathewson that the meeting be adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Chair

Date