



Town of Sidney - Economic Advisory Committee MINUTES

Thursday, May 13, 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: Brad Edgett (Chair), Councillor Peter Wainwright, Annilee Armstrong, Frank Austin, David Calveley, Alyssa Gerwing, Rod Hunchak, Stasia Hartley, Deanna Mathewson, Jennifer Michell, Shannon Toogood, Al Smith, Doug Walker

Staff: Randy Humble – CAO, Andrew Hicik – Director of Corporate Services, 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 A. Armstrong, seconded by J. Michell, that the Agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

3. Review and approval of the April 8, 2021 Minutes

Moved by F. Austin, seconded by D. Calveley, that the Minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting be approved with a correction to the spelling of Rod Hunchak's name, which appears as "Rob" in the roundtable discussion.

CARRIED

4. Council Liaison Report:

- Councillor Peter Wainwright advised that at the May 10 Council Meeting:
 - o Council received the EAC Minutes of April 8
 - o Council heard a presentation from VAA President Geoff Dickson and received community input regarding the VAA development. Council made seven recommendations to the VAA in regards to the development. The recommendations included engaging the WSANEC Leadership Council and providing an opportunity for public input. The recommendations have gone to the VAA, been posted on the Town's website, a media release was issued and an ad placed in the PNR. This concludes the Town's role in the development proposal, which is now in the hands of the VAA.
- Council has instructed staff to contact SIPP in regards to the Town's proposed economic development strategy. Councillor Wainwright asked Randy Humble to provide an update.

R. Humble reported that he and Andrew Hicik met with Emilie de Rosenroll – CEO, and Dallas Gislason – Director of Economic Development, to discuss SIPP's possible involvement with the Town's economic development strategy. They had a brainstorming discussion, which concluded with SIPP staff expressing an interest in being involved. Randy has provided SIPP with a high-level

overview and scope of deliverables. They will submit a proposal based on this to the Town, which will come to Council for review and consideration.

5. Roundtable Discussion:

Councillor O'Keeffe – Council Liaison to SIPP: provided an overview of the recent SIPP Municipal Partner's meetings, including upcoming events and initiatives such as the South island abitur. Councillor O'Keeffe provided an overview of SIPP's strategic plan, "Rising to Resilience," which was provided to the committee before the meeting.

Frank Austin - Marine Industry: Things are very busy, and it has been hard to find good technicians. They recently had a visit by Shannon Toogood, who toured the boatyard.

Jennifer Michell – West Sidney: There has been a lot of buzz in west Sidney about the proposed VAA development and the traffic study. It is nice to see a focus on west Sidney. They are in the process of moving into their new location, which is planned for early June.

Shannon Toogood – BIA Business Development Manager: It is officially economic development week in BC. Free webinars are being hosted, and the focus is on COVID recovery. The Island Good and Support BC campaigns are in full swing, and the BIA is doing outreach for these programs. Shannon met with Small Business BC to develop a partnership as well as with Frank Austin. She will be making her way along Harbour Road to meet with businesses and look into supporting the marine industry. Shannon is working with Frank to develop a marine business group to participate in the OCP process. She is finding the challenge with a home-based business is outdated contact information – if the town has any, she would like to gain access to it.

Annilee Armstrong - home-based business: Nothing new to report, although she has met with Shannon to share information.

Rod Hunchak – Victoria Airport: The airport is currently exploring implementing a COVID testing facility operated by an organization already managing such facilities on the mainland. Staff would be local and led by Doctor Caley Flynn from Oak Bay. They are hoping for the COVID testing facility to open on June 1 for a 6-month trial period. They will monitor the project to determine if it is working. The cost to the public has not yet been determined. The VAA AGM is taking place this afternoon.

David Calveley – member at large: His impression is that businesses in Sidney are doing very well. He noted that Seaweed Day is coming up from May 17-23. Cascadia Seaweed has coordinated the event, and they will be doing a brand launch in conjunction on May 20.

Al Smith – Chamber of Commerce: Al has been working with the municipalities to get up to speed in his new role. He appreciates the support and openness of Town of Sidney staff. He also met with Butchart Gardens. There is a lot of discussion on the Peninsula on economic development. Restaurants are suffering, and there is apprehension about the future when government money and supports end. Staff recruitment is an issue. Businesses seeking entry-level staff are struggling while those recruiting mid to educated staff are overwhelmed with applicants.

Deanna Mathewson - hospitality/tourism: Al's comments align with what the Centre is experiencing. For example, there is apprehension about what to expect in the future. They applied for summer jobs funding and are having a hard time recruiting. They also submitted to the Victoria Foundation. Deanna notes that

the Work BC session that the Chamber hosted was beneficial. She encouraged people to participate in the transit survey, as this is an issue concerning recruiting staff. Al is on the Transit Board and can bring forward any concerns if people wish to go through him.

Doug Walker – resident at large: Not much new to report. He also noted that small business owners are unable to find staff.

Alyssa Gerwing - SEAG: Numbers coming into the Museum are starting to slow down as people go outside with the warmer weather. The Museum is closing for three months, beginning June for renovations. SEAG has not had a meeting for several months. Sidney Street Market relocated to the Winspear parking lot for the season. The Museum received federal funding for summer students and has been overwhelmed with applications.

Stasia Hartley – service industry: COVID continues to dominate. They are happy to see numbers turn down. They have a program for people who want to retrain to get into the health care industry. This week is national nursing week (we answer the call).

Brad Edgett – Sidney BIA: They too successfully secured four positions through summer jobs for the BIA. The Sidney Street Market kick-off was very successful, with about 2200 people attending. Vendors did very well, and there was lots of traffic down Beacon to the rest of the community. People are very excited about the market. There were 49 vendors with room for ten more with current restrictions. Memorial Park Society and the School District are working together for the Parklands track. They have launched a fundraising campaign to run to the end of December. They will break ground next year for a new track. Sadly, we lost Bob Whyte last week. He was on the Winspear board. Vaccinations are ramping up and will operate until December for second doses. They are concerned about how things will look when government programs are no longer available. The Winspear is working on a Canada Day video to air on CHEK on July 1 at 8 pm. It will showcase Sidney and the Peninsula. It is a professional project, and they even scooped Victoria on the timeslot. They are also working on marine tourism videos.

Al Smith recommended that the EAC identify the business community needs for COVID and economic recovery. Brad will discuss this with Randy. This is something that potentially could be submitted to Council and may work into strategic planning.

**Al, Brad, Morgan and Shannon to prepare a report to the EAC for the next meeting.*

6. Moved b Annilee Armstrong that the meeting be adjourned at 11:32 am.

Chair

Date