

Minutes of the Regular Economic Development Commission Meeting held on Thursday, November 15, 2012 at 7:30 am in the CVRD Boardroom, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC.

PRESENT

Marsha Stanley, Chair
Directors B. Fraser and P. Kent
Mike Kelly, Roger Hart, Sandra Goth, Russ Jenkins, Robert Radford and Blair Herbert

ALSO PRESENT

Rick Pipes, Co-Owner Merridale Estate Cidery
Ross Tennant, Vice-President, South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce
Mike Hanson, President, South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce
Director I. Morrison
Tom Anderson, General Manager, Planning & Development
Geoff Millar, Manager, Economic Development
Judy Mills, Recording Secretary

ABSENT

George Robbins, Darin George, Keith Chicquen, Jane Worton and Kathy Lachman

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be amended with the addition of Business Arising item as follows:

BA5 Roger Hart term expiry;

and the addition of Delegations as follows:

D2 Ross Tennant and Mike Hanson, South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce regarding waste management;

and the addition of Correspondence as follows:

C1 Jane Worton;

C2: Canadian Union of Public Employees;

and the addition of New Business as follows:

NB1 EDC update;

And that Delegations D1 and D2 are prior to Business Arising from the Minutes and Correspondence C1 and C2 are prior to Reports;

and that the agenda be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chair Stanley explained the green replacement sheet notes a change to page 5 of the October 18, 2012 EDC minutes.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Economic Development Commission meeting, including the noted change, held October 18, 2012 be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

DELEGATIONS

D1 – Merridale Estate Cidery

Rick Pipes, co-owner Merridale Estate Cidery, handed out a one page summary. He reported that Cowichan is lagging behind on an opportunity to augment agri-tourism through our lack of on-farm accommodation that would attract overnight visitors to our many food and wine sources that are subject to extensive day visits. In effect, the lack of capacity in the region means that we do not take advantage of one of our key tourism drawing cards as people stay elsewhere. There are lots of issues about the use of farmland for non-farming purposes, about the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC) regulations, about economic viability of small farms, about making economic units that young farmers can use to get started that need to be considered. Many of these issues need a clear policy response on the part of the CVRD so that zoning rules, advice to the ALC and responses to applicants are consistent and clear.

Other communities such as Okanagan and Comox Valley are leading this change and it is an excellent opportunity to stimulate investment, jobs and tourism revenues. The process needs to be executed in a responsible manner noting farm stays would not be principle use of farm land and does not involve rezoning land for commercial use. Rick Pipes, who is a lawyer by profession, would like to be actively involved in the process and could assist with legal side.

Tom Anderson reported the Planning & Development department has just completed the South Cowichan Official Community Plan (OCP) and is reviewing the bylaw zoning and this would be a good time to discuss farm stay option. He will have Mike Tippett, Manager, Community & Regional Planning contact Rick Pipes to discuss further.

Member discussion took place. It was noted it is necessary for EDC to support growth of small farms and encouraged Rick Pipes to speak to the Regional Agricultural Advisory Commission (RAAC) and move recommendation to Board level.

Rick Pipes left the meeting.

D2 – South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce

Ross Tennant, Vice-President and Mike Hanson, President, South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce reported that many of the waste management contractors in the region are upset by the lack of opportunity to present a level-ground bid on the service package that is being put before the public for approval. There has not been an opportunity to bid for some time so that comparative advantages are not capable of being assessed. There are many policy level issues embedded in this situation. Not the least is the advisability of having the public sector actively displace existing private sector businesses using public tax funds and preferential borrowing power. The question was posed about the appropriateness of a decision process that is not supported by public tendering to seek alternatives when cost advantages are given as a major reason. These concerns deserve to be examined carefully because of the implications for the overall CVRD relationship with the business and investment community. The Chamber is unclear as to why the Board has not consulted the Economic Development Commission as per their bylaw.

Director Morrison noted the CVRD is in the process of considering moving waste collection from an external contract with private sector firms to an in-house public function. An Alternative Approval Process is in progress that seeks public agreement with the necessary capital borrowing to support the initiative.

Geoff Millar noted the Regional Services Committee will be reviewing EDC bylaw wordings at the November 28, 2012 meeting.

Ross Tennant and Mike Hanson left the meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

BA1 – World Junior A Hockey Challenge

Geoff Millar reported the Board recommendation has been sent to the South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Shawna Benson, and they are waiting to hear back.

Director Morrison reported discussion took place at the November 14, 2012 Board meeting regarding return of proceeds. Hockey Canada does not write cheques to local government but will support a legacy. An amendment was made to the Board motion.

BA2 – Sports Tourism

Geoff Millar reported at the November 14, 2012 Board meeting the motion received support and is moving forward as a 2013 supplemental budget item and will be reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team.

BA3 – EDC Bylaw

Geoff Millar reported that EDC bylaw #2497 was not included for review on the October Regional Services Committee agenda but will be on the November 28, 2012 Regional Services Committee agenda.

BA4 – EDC Chair

Geoff Millar reported as per the October 18, 2012 EDC minutes Chair Stanley announced she will be stepping down as the EDC Chair effective December 31, 2012 but wishes to continue as an EDC Commission member. George Robbins has submitted written interest in becoming the EDC Chair. If anyone else is interested to stand as Chair please advise Geoff Millar by November 30, 2012. Appointment recommendation(s) will be sent to the CVRD Chair and CAO. The Chair will make the appointment at the December 12, 2012 Board meeting.

BA5 – Roger Hart

Roger Hart advised he is the Environment appointee to the Economic Development Commission and his term expires December 31, 2012. In reviewing the February 2012 CVRD Board minutes he was appointed for a one year term which suggests his term would expire in February 2013. The EDC Bylaw states member terms are two years. Roger Hart requested Geoff Millar or the Chair send correspondence to the Environment Commission regarding clarification of his term expiry.

Geoff Millar will follow up.

CORRESPONDENCE

C1 – Jane Worton

Geoff Millar read Jane Worton's resignation email dated November 8, 2012. Jane remains committed to the work of economic development in our region and would be pleased to continue to support on a voluntary basis any specific tasks that the Commission or the Economic Development staff might request of her.

C2 - CUPE

Geoff Millar reported he received an invitation for the Economic Development Commission to attend a Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) presentation on the 10% Shift Program. It will be held on Wednesday, November 21, 2012 from 6 to 9 pm at Island Savings Centre. The invitation will be circulated.

REPORTS

R1 – State of Economy Draft Report

Geoff Millar distributed the 2012 State of Economy draft report and is looking for comments from the commission. Member discussion took place and it was agreed to hold an informal meeting in December 2012 to address all issues. Geoff will contact Jane Worton and coordinate meeting date.

Chair Stanley noted there is no December EDC meeting scheduled however she will be hosting an EDC Christmas social at the MNP office and will coordinate a date with Geoff Millar.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

UB1 – Invitations to Sectors

Geoff Millar reported he is lining up a series of delegations for 2013 including: Mary Marcotte, Regional Agricultural Advisory Commission Chair & Wayne Hadow, Regional & First Nations Agrologist; Mike Hooper, President, Nanaimo Airport; Robert Arthurs, Senior Manager Business Services & Olympic Legacy. Sandra Goth recommended Early Childhood Educators and Director Fraser reminded that he recommended financial sector and investors in the area.

In depth discussion took place which led to further discussion regarding the meeting delegations. Chair Stanley formed a sub-committee including Mike Kelly, Blair Herbert and herself to review the Agriculture Land Commission regulations and CVRD bylaws pertaining to Farm Stays in the Region. Geoff Millar will circulate information to all members on the Alternate Approval Process which pertains to waste management services and the item will be brought forward at the January EDC meeting.

UB2 – Ross Milnthorp

Geoff Millar reported Ross Milnthorp will give a Facility Investment Presentation on Tuesday, December 4, 2012 from 1 to 2 pm in the CVRD Boardroom.

NEW BUSINESS

NB1 – EDC Update

Geoff Millar reported Live Edge Designs, a local furniture manufacturer, is making all the common tables for Starbucks and all boardroom tables for Hilton Hotels; as well, NoNuttin' Foods, a local manufacturer that produces nut and dairy free snacks has launched a highly successful gluten free oatmeal product.

MLA Bill Routley has expressed interest to speak with the EDC at a future meeting regarding a Provincial Committee on Timber Supply called Growing Fibre, Growing Value.

CLOSED SESSION

Not applicable.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 am.

Chair

Recording Secretary