

MINUTES
SPECIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING
BOARD ROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
TUESDAY, 2020-MAY-13, AT 10:00 A.M.

Present: Councillor Z. Maartman, Chair
Councillor J. Turley (joined electronically)
D. Backhouse (joined electronically)
C. Carlile (joined electronically)
J. Green (joined electronically)
M. Hooper (joined electronically)
R. McLay (VIU Alternative) (joined electronically)
J. Michell (NPA Alternative) (joined electronically)
B. Moss (joined electronically)
K. Smythe (joined electronically)
A. Sullivan (joined electronically)
E. Thomas (joined electronically at 11:11 am)

Absent: C. Beaton
I. Marr
D. Saucier

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer (vacated at 10:58 am)
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
B. Corsan, Director, Community Development
A. Manhas, Economic Development Officer (joined electronically)
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
A. Bandurka, Recording Secretary

1. **CALL THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING TO ORDER:**

The Special Economic Development Task Force Meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Special Open Meeting of the Economic Development Task Force held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2020-FEB-18 at 1:00 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS:

(a) Introduction of Consultant

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development.

Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development introduced the Task Force to Steve Nicol, of Lions Gate Consulting.

(b) Review of Economic Development Strategy Work Plan

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development.

Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, provided the Task Force with information on the Economic Development Strategy Work Plan and the information provided by Lions Gate Consulting.

Presentation:

1. Steve Nicol, President, Lions Gate Consulting Ltd., reviewed the work plan for the Economic Development Strategy, including:
 - The work plan is divided into three major components
 - Phase 1 Current Situation Assessment:
 - Socio-economic analysis
 - Asset map
 - Industry analysis will focus on the key factors that are major wealth creators in Nanaimo
 - Trends analysis focuses on the key drivers of the economy, which are macro and international. These forces drive investment attraction and economic development in general
 - Unique selling proposition means trying to get a sense of what it is that makes Nanaimo what it is, the brand and why investors would be interested in coming to Nanaimo, what's the story or narrative that brings interest in the investment in Nanaimo
 - SWOT analysis: strength, weakness, opportunities and trends, which will be completed
 - Performance measurement may be moved to Strategy Development
 - A Current Situation Report will summarize the above findings
 - Phase 2 Engagement:
 - will consist of two surveys (business and community)
 - focus groups
 - key informant interviews
 - Phase 3 Planning
 - Will consist of two workshops, which may be impacted in some way by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and may need to conform to adhere to social distancing practices
 - Want to deal with key issues around the direction of the strategy and what is that should be focused on
 - Schedule

- March – May: current situation assessment
- June: draft plan and engagement
- July – September: planning

(c) Report of Progress on Economic Development Strategy

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development.

Presentation:

1. Steve Nicol, President, Lions Gate Consulting Ltd., provided a presentation on the initial findings and observations of the local economy:
 - Initial Findings – Demography
 - Population growth: 29% since 2001, higher than BC growth of 24%, very few communities that exceed provincial growth rate
 - Projected population growth of 20% to 2041, would add another 23,000 people
 - Nanaimo has had a slightly higher average than BC, due to a greater proportions of retirees
 - In 2015, personal incomes marginally less than BC, Nanaimo is in centre of pack
 - Initial Findings - Labour Force
 - Growth continues to be in the service sectors
 - From 2016: 9 out of 10 industries in the labour force are services
 - Top occupations are services dominated with the highest percentage of labour being in the sales and service industry and trades and transports industry
 - Transportation and manufacturing industries dominate in Nanaimo with high employment concentration
 - Industries with high employment concentration in Nanaimo compared to BC, shows that transportation and manufacturing dominate
 - Initial Findings – Business Locations by Employees
 - Map shows where companies are, clusters throughout Nanaimo, from downtown to the Island Highway and the north end
 - Fairly wide distribution of employment throughout the City of Nanaimo
 - Initial Findings – Business Locations by Employees and Revenue
 - Map shows clusters of where economic activity is happening and where the greatest concentration of revenue is happening
 - Initial Findings – Key Trends
 - Shift to services – macro economic, neither good nor bad, just the way economy is developing, especially in North America
 - Decline in Resource Industries – in terms of employment, still very important to the economy, Nanaimo used to have nearly 50% of employment in the resource industries
 - Environmental and Climate Change Issues – factoring more into economic development process and how communities position themselves to attract investment

- Public Assets as Economic Drivers – infrastructure is important to attract investments

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Updating the current assessment situation to focus on the time before the COVID-19 pandemic and after the COVID-19 pandemic

Steve Nicol continued with the Lions Gate Consulting presentation:

- Engagement Process – Surveys
 - Two draft surveys will be reviewed by City Staff
 - One survey for business and one for community

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Finding a way to avoid engagement/consultation fatigue
- The community survey will be included as part of the comprehensive community engagement program being led by the City and supported by Lanarc consultants.
- In June, the City will begin engaging the community on the Official Community Plan, Parks Recreation & Culture Plan, Climate Action Plan, Economic Development Plan and the Water Supply Plan.
- The purpose of the coordinated engagement is to reach as many people as possible without consultation fatigue.
- The business survey will be done with Lions Gate Consulting, and will avoid the demographic questions and focus on business based questions
- The City has a robust business licensing database for lists on sectors, types of businesses and revenues and the data can be analyzed a variety of ways

J. Rudolph vacated the Boardroom at 10:58 a.m.

Steve Nicol continued the Lions Gate Consulting presentation:

- Engagement Process – Interviews
 - Interviews meant to supplement the surveys and focus groups
 - Planned for May – July
 - Interviews won't be highly structured and will be fairly informal and focus on the expertise of the interviewee
 - The City will provide Lions Gate with a master contact list for those to be interviewed and should have at least 100 contacts
 - Task force members will be part of the focus groups and interview process, if available
 - City will draft the master contact list and will circulate it to the Task Force
- Engagement Process – Task Force Interviews
 - Task Force interviews to be around the unique selling proposition of Nanaimo
 - Important to touch base with people who know the City well
 - Volunteers from the Task Force: Councillor Maartman, Robin McLay, Jason Michell, Bob Moss, Councillor Turley, Doug Backhouse, Andre Sullivan, Jolynn Green

E. Thomas entered the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

- Engagement Process – Focus Groups
 - Focus group meetings planned for June, will have six session with around 6 – 8 participants in each session
 - The preference would be to have face-to-face meetings and comply with social distancing regulations and not through Zoom
 - City staff to find a location for the focus groups
 - The themes of the focus groups will need to be decided, some examples would be sectors, downtown, demographic groups (youths or seniors)

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Could review list of interviews done by Neilson Strategies when the Economic Development Function Service Model Review was done
- Suggested sectors: construction, tourism, light industrial, professional, green clean tech, agriculture, manufacturing, health care
- Receiving input from other areas such as government, MPs, City councillors and SFN Chief and Council is important
- The Lions Gate research could identify sectors that the Task Force may not be aware of
- With the COVID-19 pandemic there is an opportunity to have the first workshop be a scenario based
- The scenario analysis will become a baseline for the next phases of the economic development strategy
- VIU is currently working on analysis of the labour market projections and sectorial analysis

Steve Nicol continued the Lions Gate Consulting presentation:

- Next Steps:
 - Volunteers from the Task Force for the Unique Selling Proposition interviews
 - City to work on Master Contact List
 - City to work on logistics and delivery of Focus group
 - Surveys to be reviewed by City and Task Force
 - Proceed to draft current situation assessment report

(d) Next Meeting Date

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development

The next meeting date and time of the Economic Development Task Force will be 2020-MAY-26 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 11:28 a.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER