

MINUTES
SPECIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING
BOARD ROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
TUESDAY, 2020-MAY-26, AT 1:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor J. Turley, Chair
Councillor Z. Maartman (joined electronically)
D. Backhouse (joined electronically)
C. Beaton
C. Carlile (joined electronically)
D. Devana (Nanaimo Airport Alternate)
J. Green (joined electronically at 1:11 p.m.)
R. McLay (VIU Alternate) (joined electronically, vacated at 3:00 p.m.)
J. Michell (NPA Alternate) (joined electronically at 1:22 p.m.)
B. Moss (joined electronically)
A. Sullivan (joined electronically)

Absent: M. Hooper
I. Marr
D. Saucier
K. Smythe
E. Thomas

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer
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 1:06 p.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-MAY-13 at 10:00 a.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS:

(a) Economic Development Strategy – Unique Selling Proposition

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development

Presentation:

1. Lee Malleau, CEO, m+a globalnomics, facilitated a discussion on Nanaimo's unique selling proposition:

- The objectives of the session were to work with the Task Force to develop a strong understanding of the local leadership perspective on Nanaimo's Value Proposition
- The exercises completed during the discussion will provide an opportunity to establish a baseline of information that will be used to build recommendations around Nanaimo's Unique Selling Proposition and how the City can position itself as a competitive environment for investment and growth

Exercise 1 - Round Table Opener

- The first part of exercise was to find out why the Task Force Members live and work in Nanaimo, responses included:
 - Affordability
 - Accessibility to wilderness
 - Central location on Vancouver Island
 - The many resources (sports, activities and clubs) available when raising kids
 - Proximity to other urban centres
 - Diversity in the community
 - Opportunities and size of town for operating a small business
 - Potential in Nanaimo for the future
- The second part of exercise asked that if the Task Force members could not live in Nanaimo, where would they live and why? Responses included:
 - Lower Mainland as friends and family live there
 - West End Vancouver as family lives there and the walkability and livability of the area
 - Victoria
 - Comox Valley or Okanagan
 - California for the warm weather
 - Bamfield for the fishing or Ottawa as family lives there
 - Castlegar or Nelson area or the Shuswap/Chase area as family lives there, or a more rural community on Vancouver Island like Chemainus or Black Creek for the affordability
 - Comox Valley or Victoria for lifestyle reasons
 - Parksville, Mill Bay or Maple Bay
 - Nanaimo for the central location on Vancouver Island and all the resources available
 - Anywhere on Vancouver Island

- West Vancouver or Oak Bay as they both have the amenities, accessibility that are required

J. Michell joined the meeting electronically at 1:22 p.m.

Exercise 2 – Building Character

- The first part of the exercise was to pick three words that describe the personality of Nanaimo, from a business perspective, suggestions included:
 - Affordable, vibrant, great community spirit
 - Untapped market, accessible, perfect transportation hub
 - Hard working, affordable, accessible
 - One foot in today, one foot in yesterday
 - Gateway, connected to large markets, diverse
 - Abundant, opportunity, welcoming, expansive
 - Supportive, collaborative
 - Inclusive, innovative, diverse
 - Connected, confused, misunderstood
 - Accessible, relaxed
 - Availability of land and opportunity
 - Potential, undiscovered, laid back or easy going
- The second part of exercise was to use three words in a sentence to describe Nanaimo:
 - Gateway to the world
 - Discover the potential of Nanaimo while enjoying a laid back lifestyle

Exercise 3 – Assessing Competition

- Task Force members were asked to identify another city or region (provincially, nationally, internationally) that Nanaimo competes with for business and investment:
 - Provincially: the Interior or Okanagan, Victoria, Comox Valley, Fraser Valley, Prince George, Lower Mainland, Tofino, Campbell River
 - Nationally: Halifax, Niagra region, some east coast cities
 - Internationally: New Zealand, Australia, Washington State, Pacific North West, Europe
- The second part of exercise asked Task Force Members to identify where Nanaimo needs to improve its competitiveness.
 - Tourism and the need to market some attractions better, such as Newcastle Island but need to find something that draws people to Nanaimo
 - Nanaimo needs a clearer vision of what it wants to be
 - There is a branding issue with Nanaimo
 - Communicative markets, more investment ready, focused on transportation infrastructure
 - Better links to lower mainland for people to get back and forth efficiently
 - Be better at giving a more precise outward facing view of Nanaimo
 - Needs to be a more expedited process for development with City for applications (business licenses and permits)

- Nanaimo can be a 'hub' for people travelling the island
- Develop a focus and determine where the competitive advantages are and target market those areas
- Improve investment readiness for new sectors like fibre technology, health innovation or education

D. Lindsay entered the Boardroom at 2:12 p.m.

- Improve marketing to who we want to attract
- Continue to improve the infrastructure (airport, port, transportation network)
- Work on the first impression and pride in the city
- Lack of industrial property

Exercise 4 – Target Audiences

- The first part of exercise was for Task Force members to imagine they have an eraser in their hand and could eliminate something about Nanaimo that should simply disappear, what would it be?
 - Redevelop the Jean Burns land and the A&B Sound building
 - Rejuvenation of Terminal/Nicol corridor
 - Redevelop the Departure Bay Ferry Terminal
 - Redo the major roadways to mirror how new streets are looking, for example, the new roundabout by Labieux Road
 - No more car lots
 - Refresh the waterfront area near Stewart Avenue to the Departure Bay ferry terminal
 - Address the homeless situation in a realistic way
 - Change the persona around the idea of Nanaimo
 - No more strip malls, where parking is on the street
 - Anti-development citizens with negative opinions
- The second part of exercise was for Task Force members to imagine they have a magic wand, make something appear in Nanaimo. Responses included:
 - Derelict buildings are replaced with new buildings for housing, community arts centre and shops
 - The Port Drive development would be complete and the boardwalk in Departure Bay would be constructed
 - Passenger ferry downtown to downtown Vancouver
 - Affordable, safe adequate housing for all residents and an indigenous culture centre that would be accessible to all
 - Accessibility to the hospital area from under the East Wellington overpass
 - Multi-use sports stadium
 - Downtown core comes back strong after COVID-19
 - Make development plans with high City standards
 - Set up treatment centres for mental health and addiction issues
 - Something iconic in Nanaimo that can tourism can be leveraged on and bringing vibrancy to Nanaimo

Exercise 5 – A Future with COVID-19

- The final exercise was for Task Force members to think of post COVID-19 changes and what new world opportunities might there be for Nanaimo?
 - Work in the tech industry, with people working from home and meetings happening online and working globally with people
 - More infrastructure development and have coordination between businesses and government
 - Streamlining processes, such as permit applications online
 - Attract people moving to the island from mainland for affordability options
 - Fundamental change in shared transportation services
 - Improving internet connectivity in the community
 - Bricks and mortar will change with more happening online and a change in logistics with companies like FedEx to move those products
 - A reversal of urbanization with people looking to relocate to smaller communities
 - Flexibility in provincial and federal government funding and looking at certain business cases slightly different to accelerate the funding
 - Creating a more social city
 - Keep shopping online with the curbside pickup option still available

(b) Economic Development Strategy Next Steps

Introduced by Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development

Steve Nicol, Lions Gate Consulting Ltd., talked about the next steps of the Economic Development Strategy:

- The unique selling proposition is part of Phase 1
- Two reports will be completed: the Current Situation report and the overall Economic Development Strategy
- The contact list with has been sent to the task force for review
- Focus group dates have been booked for June 17 and 18 at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre
- The contact list should be broken down into sectors, to see if there is enough representation from all sectors, with the banking industry being added to the list

R. McLay left the meeting at 3:00pm

5. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 3:11 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER