

MINUTES
MAYOR'S LEADERS' TABLE MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING
FRIDAY, 2022-JUN-10, AT 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor L. Krog, Chair
Councillor I. Thorpe
Ashwak Sirri, Board Chair, Nanaimo Hospitality Association
Balraj Mann, President, Young Professionals of Nanaimo
Ben Harrack, Vice President of BC Operations, Save On Foods
David Witty, Board Chair, Nanaimo Airport Commission
Deborah Hollins, Executive Director, Nanaimo Family Life Association
Carolyn Holmes, Nanaimo Art Gallery
Donna Hais, Board Chair, Nanaimo Port Authority
Grace Elliott-Nielsen, Executive Director, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society
Paula Masyk, Executive Director, Foodshare Society
James Hanson, VP, Clinical Operations, Island Health
John Horn, John Howard Society
Keith Wilson, CAO, Nanaimo Youth Services Association
Kim Smythe, President and CEO, Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
Paul Sadler, CEO, Harmac Pacific
Sean Gallagher, Nanaimo Arts Council
Signy Madden, Executive Director, United Way

Absent: Councillor S. D. Armstrong
Brian Clemens, President, Board of Directors, Port Theatre
Bruce Halliday, General Manager, Port Theatre
Charlene McKay, Board Chair, School District #68
Chief M. Wyse, Snuneymuxw First Nation
Deborah Saucier, President and Vice Chancellor, Vancouver Island University
Erralyn Joseph, Petroglyph Development Group
Cory Vanderhorst, Board Chair/President, Innovation Island Technology Association
Jenn MacPherson, President, Nanaimo/Duncan District Labour Council
John Manning, Board President, Nanaimo Museum
Mikaela Torres, Executive Director, Nanaimo Multi-Cultural Society
Tyler Brown, Board Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer
R. Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
B. Corsan, Director, Corporate and Business Development
N. Sponaugle, Legislative Communications Clerk
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
S. Snelgrove, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE MAYOR’S LEADERS’ TABLE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Mayor’s Leaders’ Table Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

(a) Add Agenda Item 6(b) Next Steps.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

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

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Mayor’s Leaders’ Table Meeting held electronically on Friday, 2022-MAR-04 at 9:00 a.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORTS:

(a) Infrastructure Ask

Introduced by Donna Hais, Chair. Highlights included:

- The community will need to shift its mindset about who and what Nanaimo is as Nanaimo is no longer a small town and is evolving into a large urban centre with infrastructure needs
- Changes involve challenging the public to change how citizens think of Nanaimo
- The Working Group was comprised of a cross section of volunteer community leaders who invested significant time in the project
- The group looked at projects which have a whole person and whole community impact as opposed to looking at projects to benefit one segment of Nanaimo
- Time was spent ensuring projects aligned with the City Plan
- City policies were reviewed to ensure there were no conflicts moving forward when the City Plan is adopted in July
- The Working Group reached out to various agencies who submitted reports in the Working Group’s template and evaluation included a three stage criteria which narrowed down the list of projects
- Only three submitted projects didn’t move forward
- Projects were required to add value to the community
- The Working Group identified critical need projects to make Nanaimo thrive
- Projects were categorized based on the City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined goals
- Proposed projects include:

- Waterfront walkway
- Inclusive and adaptive trail network
- South end community centre
- New patient tower at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH)
- Cancer centre at NRGH
- Multiple housing facilities
- New art gallery
- Nanaimo museum gallery renovation
- Small performance space
- Port Theatre completion
- Replacement of Nanaimo District Secondary School
- Fibre network
- Island Rail Corridor
- Highway 1 access near Nanaimo Airport
- Marina redevelopment
- Athletic centre or field house at Vancouver Island University
- Through the review process the Working Group was able to see connections where partnership opportunities emerge to make two projects into one larger scale project
- The concept of a local hub from the City Plan was reinforced by combining projects into one location, for example including a primary care facility in the south end community centre which creates a destination
- A rigorous assessment process was undertaken for each project in order to determine the top five projects, not in priority order:
 - NRGH patient tower is critical to residents north of the Malahat
 - Equitable housing – five proposals related to housing were received
 - Community fibre optic network
 - Cancer centre requires a new patient tower
 - South end community centre integrates well with the hub concept and partnerships to be more than a stand alone project
- 28 projects were received
- Other critical community projects are not listed in the slide presentation as some already have funding and others will follow a different stream:
 - Nanaimo Operations Centre, RCMP detachment, water supply upgrades, Nanaimo Airport expansion plan, Duke Point terminal expansion, recreation partnerships such as an artificial turf field and athletic facilities in the north end of Nanaimo
- Next steps include:
 - Continuing the momentum gained and working with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) on critical pieces
 - Establishing a table of champions and their scope such as monitoring projects, providing support and mentoring, providing lobbying and advocacy and coordinating a single community voice to senior government
- Work sparked and strengthened partnerships and led to members at the committee level having conversations about partnerships
- Emphasizing Nanaimo’s evolution from a small town to a large urban centre and educating the community on this change
- Increasing property taxes to pay for infrastructure changes should be planned
- Challenging the community to see what they can do for the community

(b) Doughnut Economic Philosophy

Introduced by Kim Smythe, Chair. Highlights included:

- The Doughnut Economic Philosophy Working Group dealt with the idea of the doughnut economy and how to create awareness within communities
- The outer circle represents the ecological ceiling and living within our means while the inner circle is the “sweet spot” where we meet the needs of all while respecting the limits of the environment
- Focusing energy on the centre to be more successful overall
- The framework informs future planning in a balanced and integrated way
- The Working Group focussed on their mission to draft recommendations to create awareness and influence participants to seek the centre spot of the model and recommendations are related to the goals of the City Plan
- Recommendation 1 – Include (the Doughnut Economic Philosophy) in Council’s orientation for 2022/2023 and establish an ad-hoc committee to develop awareness training for City staff and Council to embed the concept throughout the organization
- The Working Group recommends looking through the lens of the doughnut economic model and increasing awareness of the philosophy which includes training, commitment to doughnut principals and showcasing practical examples from City departments
- Recommendation 2 – Develop an awareness program for City entities: Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, Tourism Nanaimo and the Systems Planning Organization, and engage with key stakeholders
- Recommendation 3 – Develop a doughnut focussed outcomes-based budgeting philosophy for Council
- Recommendation 4 – Advocate for alignment of Doughnut Economic principles across the region
- Recommendation 5 – Develop a Doughnut Economics Business/Non-Profit recognition program
- Recommendation 6 – Establish a Doughnut Economics coalition with the wider Nanaimo to support and promote the philosophy
- Growing a circle of influence starts within the City and is a multiyear challenge

Discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The doughnut economics commission and the table of champions working together as a leadership group

(c) Youth Attraction and Retention Strategy

Introduced by Keith Wilson, Chair. Highlights included:

- The Working Group was created to address distressing statistics in Nanaimo where the 15-34 age group is growing annually by only 0.8%
- The Working Group is concerned that things are standing in the way to make life in Nanaimo attractive for this age cohort
- The first meeting was to leverage broad community engagement to develop a strategy to retain and attract the target age cohort
- An online survey was created which received 150 responses

- Work concentrated on 19-34 year olds who are more likely to be living on their own and can choose where to live, work and plan their immediate future
- Issues standing in way of young people in Nanaimo are housing and career options
- There is a disconnect between young people looking for work and the number of well paying jobs
- Many qualitative responses voiced concerns around safety, homelessness and drug problems on the streets
- Health care and availability of family doctors were noted as concerns
- The three main concerns were: Housing, employment and recreation options
- 13 actions are recommended with numbers 1, 4, 9 and 10 key to youth attraction and retention
- Recommendation 1 - Work more effectively with law enforcement, other levels of government, service agencies and the community to address street level issues of homelessness, addictions, mental health and public safety
- Recommendation 4 – Work with non-profits or other community groups to develop new housing options. Consider collaborating with or creating an independent housing corporation
- Recommendation 9 - Improve City regulatory process for ease of access and response times related to development of new housing
- Recommendation 10 - Support development of outdoor recreation options, focussing on supports for bike and mountain bike activities (paths, amenities).
- For someone working minimum wage the cost of rent for a studio apartment is 44% of their wages and a single parent pays \$1500 for 1 bed or 55% of their income
- The City may benefit from people working from home or in small office or home enterprises with Nanaimo as their home base
- The region is known as the best on the Island for mountain biking and comments received through the survey related to growing and developing this pursuit
- Suggestions received noted that recreation, culture and leisure should be part of City hubs
- SFN provided input regarding the need for affordable venues for organized sports and the value for local groups and sports tourism
- The concerns regarding affordable housing and well paying, long term jobs cannot be overstated and is causing significant stress in young peoples lives

Discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Priorities discovered are the same as any other demographic the in community and seeing alignment of priorities within the community
- Hearing from youth that they have a hard time making rent as their disposable income is so small
- Examples were noted of rent increasing and young people moving to more affordable places
- Recent graduates wanting to stay in the Nanaimo area noted concerns related to housing and affordability and were encouraged that the Mayor’s Leaders’ Table was finding solutions
- Issue of food insecurity and young people choosing between food or rent
- Seeing rising mental health issues in youth and advocating for more social resources in the community

- Building affordable housing for youth through housing corporations as private developers are not the answer for affordable housing
- Recreation in small centres focussing on sports and sports facilities while recreation in urban centres focussing on cultural aspects and recreation including more than sports facilities
- Focus on organized sports in Nanaimo from an early age
- Famous SFN athletes reflect part of the community
- School District 68 previously had a robust music program which reflected community resources committed to the program
- Ensuring the City is not missing opportunities for Nanaimo to be culturally attractive

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Working Group Membership

The Working Group Membership List was provided for information.

(b) Next Steps

Mayor Krog advised:

- The final report will be presented to Council July 18, 2022
- Once presented Council will have to decide what they’d like to do
- Inclination is not to disband but to continue with a table of champions and the doughnut economics coalition

Feedback from the Table was encouraged regarding what they’d like to see as next steps. Highlights included:

- Would like to see the new Council refresh this topic and discuss implementation of the recommendations each group has brought forward
- Form some sort of housing task force that includes non-profits, financial sector and BC Housing to determine a strategy that is non-market housing and not dependent on tax payers to pay for people who can’t afford it
- Form a table of champions as there is lots of crossover, commonality and opportunity for partnerships
- The conversation the Table is having exceeds what other communities are doing and allows for the ability to see where projects can become partnerships to provide housing, healthcare, recreation, arts and culture in one facility as opposed to breaking things up
- Creating hubs is a critical piece
- Concerns were noted that if the Table stops advocating and working as a community group, a critical project will drop off
- Moving forward have comprehensive plan supported by the entire community with Council and City Staff promoting it
- It is up to the leaders around the table to make these projects happen
- Need to have a standing group of leaders across non-profit, for profit and government sectors advocating provincially and federally with consistent messaging

- There will be a need for increased taxes
- Lobbying will be needed for Nanaimo at the federal and provincial levels and throughout the local community to educate and change thinking processes to understand that Nanaimo is no longer a rural community
- Capitalizing on Table member knowledge moving forward
- Lots of momentum and a desire to keep moving forward

Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that Staff will do their part to make sure the components of the plan are included in Council’s orientation and ongoing work plans. He encouraged the members of the Table to attend the Council meeting when the final report is presented to Council.

Mayor Krog thanked the Table for volunteering their time and noted the documents provide a road map for the future.

7. QUESTION PERIOD:

There were no members of the public in attendance to ask questions.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 10:10 a.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER