



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2020

OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM

PRESENT: VOTING:

Mayor Victor Cumming, Chair
Leigha Horsfield, Community Futures (via Zoom)
Annette Sharkey, Social Planning of North Okanagan
Jenna Stasuk, Accelerate Okanagan (via Zoom)
Richard Toperczer, Province of B.C. – Regional Ec. Dev. (via Zoom)
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Bud Mortenson, UBCO (via Zoom)
Jane Lister, Okanagan College (via Zoom)
Susan Lehman, Downtown Vernon Association

GUESTS: Colin Wilson, Director, Business Development, UBC Okanagan School of Engineering
Brad Pelletier, Senior Vice-President/Wesbild Okanagan

ABSENT: Councilor Brian Quiring
Tannis Nelson, Regional District of North Okanagan Rep

STAFF: Kevin Poole, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism
Roy Nuriel, Economic Development Planner
Natasha Kositsin, Legislative Secretary

ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

**ADOPTION OF
AGENDA**

Moved by Richard Rollke, seconded by Susan Lehman:

THAT the agenda for the Thursday, October 29, 2020 meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee be adopted.

CARRIED.

**ADOPTION OF
MINUTES**

Moved by Richard Rolke, seconded by Leigha Horsfield:

THAT the minutes for the July 16, 2020 meeting of the Economic Development Advisory be adopted.

CARRIED.

PRESENTATIONS:**UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
OKANAGAN –
PARTNERSHIPS AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

Colin Wilson, Director of Business Development and Bud Mortenson, Director, University Relations provided a presentation on UBCO partnerships and opportunities. The following points were provided:

- UBCO has experienced an increase in domestic and international students
- 40 acres purchased beside the University to put in a hub for a manufacturing program (Innovation Precinct), completion anticipated for summer of 2021
- Shared statistics from the UBCO Engineering Department. The annual report can be found here: https://engineering.cms.ok.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/07/SOE-AR-2020_FINAL-web.pdf
- Shared the work they are doing in the region with partners such as the City of Vernon, Regional District of the North Okanagan, Kohler, Tolko and Kal Tire
- Students want a good education and the UBC brand is recognized all over the world
- Recruiting professors has not proven difficult due to the desirable Okanagan lifestyle and affordability of the region compared to the lower mainland

Annette Sharkey arrived at 9:48am

**PREDATOR RIDGE –
UPDATE AND
OVERVIEW**

Brad Pelletier, provided a presentation on an update and overview on Predator Ridge. The following points were provided:

- Community partner for the City of Vernon (Tourism and Economic Development)
- Predator Ridge has approximately 170 full time, year round employees
- Has multiple business models including construction, real estate, accommodation, recreation and food and beverage
- Shared a video of kindness and cleaning measures at Predator during COVID
- The outbreak started in March when main season was beginning – had to work quickly with adjustments so our businesses could remain opened
- Launched a major marketing strategy through the Okanagan Bucketlist which helped drive traffics as BC reopened

- Implemented a strong strategy and with having 1200 acres it was easier to social distance
- Kept residents engaged as to what we were doing to help them feel safe and that guidelines were in place for all of the businesses
- The restaurants had to reduce dine in capacity and kitchen staff, homeowners continued to support restaurant operations through take out and delivery
- When the Province entered into Phase 3 of the pandemic, the resorts accommodation were at near capacity
- Record accommodation in July, August, September and October
- Significant increase in golf
- Pickleball increased
- The Real Estate market is seeing substantial growth despite some delays in construction and the closure of the sales office for two months
- Second quarter is at 70% ahead of last year for the same period
- Snowbirds who are unable to head south for the winter will increase the demand for rental accommodation and a positive economy impact to other businesses
- Experiencing enquiries from Canadians living in the United States that are looking to move back to Canada
- Added a skating rink, golf simulators for the winter
- Partners need to work together to navigate through this as our success is the City of Vernon's success
- A thank you to the City of Vernon for support on Commonage Road widening
- RDNO has been working quickly on upgrading the underground highway access. The biggest challenge has been the cost for this project
- The potential for tourism because of the connection to the Rail Trail will be remarkable
- Two biggest challenges were identified as: 1) Labour shortage and 2) Housing inventory to meet demands

Brad Pelletier left at 10:21am

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

SOUTHERN INTERIOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TRUST

The Manager, Economic Development and Tourism provided an update on Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust. The following points were noted:

- SIDIT hired a new CEO named Laurel Douglas

- 2021-2023 Strategic Plan represents an amended version of the 2007 Strategic Plan as they move to their 13th year of operations
- Listening to the community and how they can partner with economic development
- Applying for funds from SIDIT has been challenging in the past
- Should start hearing more of strategic direction in the next six weeks

INFORMATION ITEMS:

The Chair asked each member for any updates they wanted to share and the following notes were provided;

- The Chair thanked the Chamber of Commerce for the Business Awards online zoom event –enjoyed being in the recording room and announcing the awards.
- Jenna Stasuk, Accelerate Okanagan Rep is hosting the first North Okanagan Talent Hackathon on Thursday October 29, 2020
- Richard Toperczer, Province of BC - Regional Economic Development Branch Representative reminded the Committee that the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Grant Project closes tonight at midnight. Will have more information to share at the next meeting.
- Jane Lister, Okanagan College Representative updated the Committee on the Vernon campus new employment services and will connect with Brad Pelletier regarding referring co-op students for employment opportunities

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for November 26, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee adjourned at: 10:31 a.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Victoria Cummins", is written over a horizontal line.