



City of Port Moody

Session 1 Working Notes

Joint Economic Development Workshop

Notes of the Joint Economic Development Workshop held on Wednesday, June 27, 2018 in the Brovold Room.

Present

Mayor Mike Clay
Councillor Diana Dilworth – Economic Development Committee Chair
Councillor Barbara Junker – Economic Development Committee Vice-Chair
Councillor M.P. Lahti
Councillor Hunter Madsen
Councillor Zoë Royer

Samantha Agtarap – Economic Development Committee Member
Lisa Beecroft – Economic Development Committee Member
Yvette Cuthbert – Economic Development Committee Member
Matt Ferguson – Economic Development Committee Member
John Grasty – Economic Development Committee Member
Andrew Mackey – Economic Development Committee Member
Aaron Robinson – Economic Development Committee Member
Robert Simons – Economic Development Committee Member
Mary Vellani – Economic Development Committee Member

Absent

Councillor R. Vagramov (Regrets)
Adam Bird – Economic Development Committee Member (Regrets)
Adam Crandall – Economic Development Committee Member (Regrets)

In Attendance

Tim Savoie – City Manager
André Boel – General Manager of Planning and Development
Jennifer Lester – Committee Coordinator
James Palmer – Principal Consultant of Golden Rule LLC.
Angie Parnell – General Manager of Corporate Services (Facilitator)
Maxwell Ridge – Corporate Planning Advisor
Kate Zanon – General Manager of Community Services (Facilitator)

1. Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 The General Manager of Corporate Services welcomed the attendees and invited attendees to introduce themselves and share what they feel is best about doing business in Port Moody.

The General Manager of Corporate Services and the General Manager of Community Services noted that they would facilitate the workshop.

2. Workshop Goals and To-Date Economic Development and Tourism Initiatives

Workshop Goals and To-Date Economic Development and Tourism Initiatives

- 2.1 Councillor Dilworth outlined the goals of the workshop, including;
- engagement between Council and the Committee;
 - sharing of perspectives on economic development;
 - Council and Committee education regarding the value of community economic development and tourism;
 - input on the Economic Development Office role and responsibilities;
 - defining the Committee's top priorities; and
 - forming a collaborative relationship with Council and a common understanding of economic development expectations.

3. James Palmer Presentation

James Palmer Presentation

- 3.1 James Palmer, the principal consultant of Golden Rule LLC., provided an overview of his education and professional background. Mr. Palmer gave a presentation on implementing economic development, including the:
- purpose of economic development;
 - organizational structures through the economic development growth stages from the early to mature stage;
 - staffing and functions for each growth stage to form and implement an economic development strategy that focuses on business retention, recruitment, expansion, and community organizing; and
 - metrics indicators ranging from financial to business indicators, and how to measure the focus areas.

Organizational Structures

Mr. Palmer noted the importance of the Economic Development Committee was noted as they are responsible for bringing in the values, preferences, needs, and voice of the community and girding a foundation of understanding back to the community.

It was recommended to hold a monthly 'touching base' meeting between the Economic Development Committee and the City to ensure that the voice of the Committee is reflected in the decisions Council is taking. A regular interaction that is sanctioned was suggested.

It was noted that the Economic Development Committee should meet informally throughout the month and converse regularly via social media platforms.

The intersection to regional and federal organizations was highlighted as was the necessity to work with other local communities as a collective group.

Economic Development Strategy

A commitment to economic development over the long term is required through the political cycles since changing one's community and building significance around economic sustainability and growth takes time.

Economic development projects must closely align with the strategic plan, and the Economic Development Manager is responsible and accountable for implementation of these projects.

Business retention is by far the more financially rewarding strategy and the Economic Development Manager should spend a significant portion of their time engaging with businesses to learn what they need, learn about their profile, and understand their challenges. This will build up public trust and the foundation under the City's strategy when execution and support is required. The Economic Development Manager needs to be embedded in the industry groups and networks and know the real estate inventory.

Although attracting businesses is a popular focus for economic development, business retention and expansion are also crucial and can help increase revenues more than attracting businesses.

Metrics Indicators

The City should be duteous in conducting annual business ambassador surveys and combining surveys with surveys conducted by other local or regional groups and chambers of business. This helps to focus on problem areas and proactively find solutions. The holding of open houses and personally visiting the top business tax payers regularly assists in determining business priorities, the voice, and pulse of the community.

Mr. Palmer suggested partnering with economic engines that drive economic activities including local universities and hospitals.

Staffing and Functions

The primary function of the Economic Development Manager is to give effect to the economic development vision.

The Economic Development Manager should be a networker and administrator, good community organiser, have regional coordination understanding, intersect with regional partners, and sustain the long game.

**Regional
Community
Economic
Development
Initiatives and
Port Moody SWOT
Analysis**

4. Regional Community Economic Development Initiatives and Port Moody SWOT Analysis

4.1 Presented by EDC member Matt Ferguson.

Matt Ferguson gave a presentation on regional Community Economic Development (CED) initiatives, and highlighted the report compiled by the Economic Development Working Group that focused on:

- the 'best practices' undertaken by other local municipalities placed in the context of Port Moody;
- CED vision statements placing an emphasis on community, social fabric, community amenities, innovation, quality employment opportunities, strengthening the business sector, and increasing or diversifying the tax base;
- the competitive advantages that differentiate Port Moody;
- the pillars of success that Port Moody could enhance;
- the action plan and leadership requirements to achieve CED; and
- the 'best in class' CED strategies.

CED Vision Statements

Almost all of the strategies reviewed had some form of a vision statement. Some appeared rather generic, while others reflected the unique circumstances and goals of the municipalities.

Core Values and Pillars of Success

Most comprehensive plans detailed the core values driving their CED strategy; four themes were most common:

- Infrastructure: is the municipality helping to create a built environment that will promote a vibrant, sustainable, and diverse local economy?
- Human Capital: what can the municipality do to help promote learning opportunities for local entrepreneurs and businesses?
- Business Enhancement, Engagement, Attraction, and Retention: how does the municipality engage with the local / regional / national / international business community to seize opportunities and grow the economy both internally and externally?
- Sustainability: how does the municipality ensure that any economic development undertaken meets the environmental, social and economic goals of the community in a sustainable manner?

Sectoral Focus

Many of the plans identified key business or industrial activities where their municipality had a competitive advantage or opportunity, such as proximity to major transportation hubs,

existing industrial agglomeration(s), educational institutions, quality of life, etc. The Working Group felt that this should be an important component to a Port Moody CED Strategy as it would enable Port Moody to target resources most effectively and increase the opportunities for success, rather than trying to be all things to all people.

Neighbourhood/Area Focus

Some of the municipalities with a large and diverse land area (e.g. Abbotsford, Delta, Surrey) had plans that contained strategies for specific neighbourhoods. The Working Group doubted if this should be an option for Port Moody given the relatively small amount of land and the possible strategic benefits of having one integrated plan across the entire municipality.

Business and Industrial Activity Inventory

The more comprehensive plans contained and referred to an up-to-date survey of the businesses within the municipality. In most cases, these surveys went beyond basic information (name, contact, location, number of employees, etc.) as contained in Port Moody's 2015 Economic Profile to better understand the nature of their business (import/export, years in business, subsidiary vs. head office, self-financed vs. investor-backed, etc.).

Commercial/Industrial Land and Building Inventory

Most plans referred to the need to have an up-to-date list of land and buildings available for commercial and industrial activity, including projections for expansion of additional business/industrial area under their OCP.

Action Plan

Some plans laid out clearly-defined action items, with timelines, resources required, and individuals / departments responsible for their completion. The Working Group noted tremendous value in this because without clear objectives, appropriate resources, and accountability, any enthusiasm and momentum gained would be quickly lost.

Leadership

Among the municipalities that are making significant strides in CED, the dominant theme is that the Mayor and Council have made it a top priority ingrained in all aspects of municipal operations. Examples of this included the Mayor and senior staff being members of the CED Committee, CED Committee input to Industrial/Commercial development, regular audits of how they interact with business (e.g. 'Open for Business'), and regular meetings between municipal and business leaders to discuss CED.

'Best In Class' CED Strategies

The Working Group found that Abbotsford, Squamish, and Surrey had comprehensive strategies that reflected the uniqueness of their communities.

Mr. Ferguson noted that CED should be ingrained in municipal operations, including:

- Council and senior staff members represented on the CED Committee;
- the CED Committee providing input on development permits;
- customer service audits; and
- regular meetings between the Mayor and City Officials and high-level business leaders to discuss CED opportunities.

Mr. Ferguson introduced and tabled the SWOT Analysis for Community Economic Development in Port Moody noting that all relevant City Master Plans had been included in the preparation of this analysis.

5. Economic Development Committee Perspective – Key Questions

The facilitators presented key questions and facilitated discussion around each question. The input would be summarized into key findings and actions.

Key Questions

5.1 What are the key elements that would assist businesses in establishing and growing in Port Moody?

- understanding the inventory of office space;
- minimizing risks for businesses, in terms of business volatility by ensuring consistency over time of City processes, bylaws, processes, and stability of regulations;
- making investments in infrastructure, such as wayfinding, street beautification etc.;
- identifying geographic gaps;
- using wayfinding as a means to drive consumers to the rest of the City;
- focusing on the daytime economy;
- anchoring businesses already located in the City;
- enabling a strong connection and open communication between businesses and the City;
- improving steps to go through to establish and operate a business;
- making a concerted effort with business owners;
- updating and sustaining the business directory; implement a system to encourage an information update with the business license renewal process;

- establishing Port Moody as its own distinct business entity and not just as a member of the Tri-Cities;
- offering incentives around office space;
- taking time to establish what works for businesses through using the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to source information;
- introducing feedback metrics; and
- promoting the culture and vibrancy of the area.

5.2 What is needed to establish a 'One Stop Shop' for businesses?

- providing a primary contact who has the ability to interact with all aspects of the City (i.e. offering regulatory assistance that sets out the road map to establish and maintain a business in the City through a 'concierge' service);
- establishing a value statement and attitude shift that is customer centric, and focuses on being a facilitator rather than a regulator of businesses, for example how can the City make businesses fit;
- rebuilding the City website to be customer friendly with easy navigation and contact points to access the community profile, essential data, demographic trends, and a basic explanation of 'how to do business';
- creating easy to read community profiles;
- revamping and streamlining 'a one stop shop';
- fostering the political will;
- providing means of assistance through resources that are accessible to the Economic Development Office i.e. resources at hand including contracting support when necessary; and
- initiating customer service feedback.

5.3 How can connectivity between Council and the EDC be improved? What are the barriers that need to be overcome? What opportunities can be explored?

Barriers that were identified included:

- bureaucratic processes;
- lack of action on reports;
- failure to consult with the Economic Development Committee;
- strategy implementation efforts have been insignificant to date;
- unrealistic expectations;
- lack of understanding and direction from the City on what economic development means;
- the potential for the Chair of the Economic Development Committee to have their own agenda; and

- Clerks writing reports for committees that lack substantiation and motivation.

Opportunities that were mentioned included:

- engaging with Council on a regular and frequent basis;
- moving forward with the creation and resourcing of the Economic Development Office;
- making use of subcommittees and working groups;
- Council accepting the proposition of establishing an Economic Development Office;
- securing the ear of Council through the acceptance that resources are needed;
- acknowledging that the Economic Development Committee is willing to do more work;
- Committee members co-authoring reports to Council (rather than Clerks); and
- CFIB report – staff, Council, and the Economic Development Committee to come together more frequently.

5.4 How best can the EDC's knowledge and experience be leveraged? Specifically what topics/issues should be referred to the Committee for input?

- communication and understanding of roles and high-level goals;
- developing respect and understanding by allowing recommendations to be given real credence;
- developing a longer term plan and commitment, and the Economic Development Committee applying their experience against that plan;
- the annual work plan should be based against priorities – where the time of the Economic Development Committee is respected and their time valued;
- Council should provide feedback on reports submitted with the response accompanied by some details;
- consultation with the Economic Development Committee at the outset of the Council strategic planning process and allow for more briefing time;
- the recruitment of the members to the Economic Development Committee should be specifically aligned to strategic priorities;
- the Economic Development Committee should interface more often with Council in short, less formal opportunities, i.e. reverse public hearing; and
- leveraging the Economic Development Committee's networks.

5.5 What communication opportunities exist besides Committee reports to Council and Council referrals to the Economic Development Committee?

- the Economic Development Committee agenda providing for reports from the Chair of the Committee;
- formal reports back to the Economic Development Committee;
- viewing of the streamed Council meetings;
- introducing 'beer sessions' with staff, Council members, and the Economic Development Committee;
- catering for annual/semi-annual joint sessions to create a consensus of understanding; and
- the Committee presenting reports to Council as a designate for that topic to provide an additional perspective as a 'co-chair'.

The Working Group agreed that the balance of the agenda would be continued at the Economic Development Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday, July 4, 2018. Council members and staff were invited to attend this meeting.