

**MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers and via MS Teams  
770 Vernon Avenue  
April 03, 2025 at 5:30 PM

**ROLL CALL**

**In Attendance:** Karen Harper (Chair), Jason Arruda, Russ Benwell, Raymond Chan, Amber Hockin, Richard Michaels, Rachid Ouache, Tim Petropoulos, Ingrid Strauss  
**Regrets:** David Lewis and Rob Wickson  
**Staff:** Mitchell Edgar, Economic Development Manager; Nichole Brown, Economic Development Coordinator and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by Amber Hockin and Seconded by Raymond Chan: "That the Minutes of the Economic and Development Advisory Committee meeting held February 20, 2025, be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**RESULT: Carried 10 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Arruda, Benwell, Chan, Hockin, Michaels, Ouache, Petropoulos, Strauss, Wickson, Harper

**OPPOSED:** None

**COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS**

**CHAIRS REMARKS**

- The next meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2025.

**THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACCELERATOR PROGRAM**

The Economic Development Coordinator provided a presentation (PowerPoint on file) on the Circular Economy Accelerator Program. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Circular Economy Accelerator Program is delivered in partnership with the Synergy Foundation and aligns with Saanich's Climate Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.
- The program aims to retain and attract sustainable businesses into Saanich.
- Benefits include cost savings, reduced waste and energy use, and an enhanced reputation for sustainability.
- Approximately 40 regional spots are available; Saanich has secured 14 in total, of which 12 are still available.
- The culinary and hospitality industry may benefit from participation.
- Follow-up is conducted periodically to track implementation of recommendations and identify further opportunities.
- Grants may be available on a case-by-case basis.
- Outcomes are used to measure the program's overall impact.

**DESTINATION VICTORIA – TOURISM AND THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**

A presentation was given by Destination Greater Victoria on the Tourism and Hotel Industry (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Sports Tourism Commission is a valuable community asset.
- Hotel development is a possibility in Saanich and could help diversify the local economy.
- A hotel boom cycle is underway in North America; Vancouver has created a hotel development task force, and Saanich is exploring a similar approach.
- Hotel investment is considered higher risk than residential development, with investors typically seeking at least 70% occupancy and a five-year growth trend.
- Victoria attracts millions of visitors annually, including over 900,000 cruise ship passengers, and hosts a record number of conferences each year.
- Single sports events are successful in the region and provide economic benefits to local businesses.
- Many local hotels are family owned and operated, contributing to reinvestment in the community.

**MOVED by Raymond Chan and Seconded by Amber Hockin: “That the Economic and Development Advisory Committee recommend that Council consider that the criteria for the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) process for 4500 block West Saanich Road highly encourage hotel development and use.”**

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- Various ideas for the land could be explored; further information and research would be beneficial.
- This consideration is partly due to the lack of other suitable locations and the high demand with limited availability.
- The area of land is currently undeveloped, with no existing buildings.

**CARRIED**

**RESULT: Carried 9 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Harper, Arruda, Benwell, Chan, Hockin, Michaels, Ouache, Petropoulos, Strauss

**OPPOSED:** None

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR END CHECK IN**

**MOVED by Jason Arruda and Seconded by Ingrid Strauss: “That agenda item B4 – Economic Development Annual Report, be postponed until the next meeting.”**

**RESULT: Carried 9 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Harper, Arruda, Benwell, Chan, Hockin, Michaels, Ouache, Petropoulos, Strauss

**OPPOSED:** None

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

**MOVED by Tim Petropoulos and Seconded by Raymond Chan: “That the meeting be adjourned.”**

**CARRIED**

**RESULT: Carried 9 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Harper, Arruda, Benwell, Chan, Hockin, Michaels, Ouache, Petropoulos, Strauss

**OPPOSED:** None

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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COMMITTEE CLERK

DRAFT