

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
June 25, 2025, at 5:30 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Karen Harper (Chair), Jason Arruda (via Teams), Russ Benwell (via Teams), Raymond Chan (via Teams), Amber Hockin (via Teams), David Lewis (via Teams), Richard Michaels (via Teams), Rachid Ouache (via Teams, 5:46 p.m.), Tim Petropoulos (via Teams) and Ingrid Strauss (via Teams)

Regrets: Robert Wickson

Staff: Mitchell Edgar, Economic Development Manager; Alanna McDonagh, Senior Planning Technician (via Teams) and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by K. Harper and Seconded by A. Hockin: “That the Minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held April 5, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 10 TO 0

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

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair reviewed a piece of public correspondence concerning the current zoning bylaw for short-term rentals in Saanich. Key points from the discussion informed the following motion:

MOVED by T. Petropoulos and Seconded by I. Strauss: “That the Economic Development Advisory Committee recommend that Council review the current regulations for short-term rentals and consider amending them to align with the BC provincial regulations.”

RESULTS: Carried 9 TO 1

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

OPPOSED: Arruda

Note: Following the meeting, Jason Arruda later clarified that their vote was a misinterpretation of the motion. The he was in support of the motion and did not oppose it.

TILlicum BURNSIDE PLAN

The Senior Planner Technician provided a presentation (PowerPoint on file) on the Tillicum Burnside Plan. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Tillicum is seen as a potential high-functioning community hub, similar to the Gorge Village.
- There is an existing culture of collaboration among local businesses which presents opportunities for future growth.
- 15-minute walkable communities are central to the plan.
- This committee could play an important role in providing feedback and helping shape this and future Centre, Corridor and Villages (CCV) plans.

- Benefits and potential risks for businesses could be analyzed.
- The plan aims to support and enhance local programs, services, and organizations.
- A 20-year plan provides the foundation for long-term data collection and analysis.
- Exploring a shared dock program for the Gorge waterway in collaboration with the City of Victoria and Township of Esquimalt is ongoing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR END CHECK IN

The Economic Development Manager provided an overview of the Economic Development Annual Report. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The BusinessCare program engages one-on-one with business owners to gather insights on challenges, opportunities, and trends. The program aims to visit 250 businesses per year.
- Immigration trends highlight the need for housing policies that support a growing and diverse population.
- Modernizing and updating bylaws could be a topic for future discussion.
- Saanich faces challenges with limited business and industrial space/parks. However, opportunities exist in life sciences, defense and security, drones, and aerospace research. Collaboration with Vancouver Island Technology Park is ongoing, and the Capital Regional District's industrial land inventory is being closely monitored.
- An inventory of federal lands and buildings could be valuable.
- Saanich has hired a full-time Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Manager.
- The Saanich Flavour Trails Festival features a self-guided culinary tour showcasing local farms, food producers, chefs, and beverage makers.
- A film promotion fee schedule for use of District facilities may be a future consideration for Council.
- The Intelligent Saanich initiative is projected to launch in January 2026.

ROUND TABLE

The Committee members participated in a Round Table discussion, and the following was noted:

- Short-term rentals are not permitted in Saanich, except where the homeowner operates a licensed guest accommodation within their principal residence.
- Current regulations are in place to preserve the long-term rental supply and support housing availability.
- A review of short-term rental regulations is anticipated.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by A. Hockin and Seconded by K. Harper: “That the meeting be adjourned at 7:37 p.m.”

RESULT: Carried 10 TO 0

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

OPPOSED: None

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK