

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
April 03, 2025, at 5:31 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 A. Hockin and Seconded by R. Chan: “That the Minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held February 20, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

RESULT: Carried 9 TO 0

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

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIRS REMARKS

- The next meeting is scheduled for June 25, 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 particularly 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 currently underway in North America; Vancouver has established 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 sporting events are successful in the region and generate economic benefits to local businesses.
- Many local hotels are family owned and operated, contributing to reinvestment in the community.

MOVED by R. Chan and Seconded by A. Hockin: “That the Economic 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.

The Motion was the Put and 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 J. Arruda and Seconded by I. Strauss: “That agenda item B 4 – Economic Development Annual Report – Year End Check In, be postponed until the next meeting.”

CARRIED

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 T. Petropoulos and Seconded by R. 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

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK