

MINUTES
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
February 15, 2018 at 4:30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Suzanne Bartel, Bill Mumford, Andrea Mercer, Lois-Leah Goodwin, Travis Lee, Peter Pokorny,

Staff: Rebecaa Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Maggie Baynham, Senior Sustainability Planner; Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Peter Rantucci, Sophia Baker-French

MINUTES

MOVED by Suzanne Bartel and Seconded by Bill Mumford: “That the Minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held January 11, 2018, be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

HOME ENERGY RETROFIT FINANCING PILOT

The Manager of Sustainability and the Senior Sustainability Planner provided the committee with an overview of the Home Energy Retrofit Financing Pilot. The following highlights are noted:

- Program is aimed at helping the District to meet the OCP target of a 33% reduction in GHG by 2020, as well as the newly endorsed targets as part of the updated Climate Plan, currently under development (100% Renewable Energy Community and 80% GHG reduction below 2007 levels by 2050)

******* A. Mercer arrived, 4:36 *******

- The program will utilize a financing model.
- Traditional rebate programs will not reach homeowners that can't afford capital costs.
- Program intends to utilize property assessed financing through the Local Area Service Charges (LASC)
 - Attached to property by by-law through LASC and repaid through property taxes.
 - Legal opinion provided to the District in 2016 interpreted service powers as encompassing authority to finance energy upgrades on private property.
 - BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing expressed they do not interpret local governments as having this authority. Further conversations are planned to explore a route forward with the Province.
- Municipal financing precedents:
 - Halifax, NS – Solar City
 - Toronto, ON – HELP

- Overarching program goals include:
 - Affordability
 - Accessibility
 - Stability
 - Simplicity
 - Quality
 - Impact
- Program Design Concepts
 - Keep it Simple – limit to the replacement of oil heating with air-source heat pumps. Oil to heat pump will have highest return on GHG reductions. Co-benefit of reducing oil spills and associated environmental impacts.
 - Loans of up to \$12,000 to be repaid over 10 years.
 - Make it irresistible: offer a 0% interest loan.
 - Prioritize lower-income households
 - e.g. 50% of loans per year reserved for households that meet a certain income qualification.
 - Create few hoops to jump through
 - Limit eligibility criteria
 - Make it turn key
 - Have a third party administer the program – existing organizations have expertise and experience administering energy retrofit programs.
 - Offset program costs with FCM Green Municipal Fund (GMF) Loan - \$1.62M (similar to MFA interests rates) and grant to cover administration costs (\$240,00)
- Requires a borrowing capacity of \$1.62M (repaid by benefiting homeowners)
- 0% interest loan requires \$28,875 per year. CARIP (or other funding) to be used over 12 year period.
- A 0.2FTE (Financial Analyst) is proposed to administer bylaw and billing process

In their concluding remarks, staff advised that they will circulate a memo to the committee in advance of their March meeting. The memo will outline program considerations and a possible motion to Council. Further, staff advised that they intend, with the support of the committee, to pursue the initial screening process for an FCM GMF Loan (March 1, 2018).

Committee discussion followed the presentation, the following highlights are noted:

- Province has not provided direction for financing programs to be administered in partnership with a utility provider e.g. Fortis.
- Program will not require mortgage lender approvals.
- Funds will be sought through a loan from FCM's GMF.
- Approximately 4000 oil tanks in Saanich
- No mechanism to penalize (higher mill rate, flat tax etc.) households using oil.
- A legal opinion would be required if the District were to consider a ban on future use of oil heating systems.
- Staff will convene a meeting with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to discuss the use of the LASC.
- Program will also look at covering ancillary costs such as electrical panel upgrades.
- Current focus of the plan is on the conversion from oil heating to air-source heat pumps as it will have the most meaningful impact with regard to GHG reductions and minimizing environmental impacts associated with oil spills.
- Municipality has authority to recover costs associated with spills.

MOTION

Moved by S. Bartel and Seconded by B. Mumford “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee support the District’s application to the FCM’s Green Municipal Fund Loan program initial screening intake, due March 1, 2018.”

CARRIED

WHY IS IT SPECIAL TO DO BUSINESS IN SAANICH

The Chair facilitated a committee discussion on why it is special to do business in Saanich, with a focus on both the District’s opportunities and existing assets. The discussion was supported by the Chair’s circulated memo, Economic Development Opportunities, of February 12, 2018.

The Chair provided an overview of the existing landscape highlighting the following:

- The District has an abundance of policies and programs that support Economic Development, but lacks a clear and concise focus.
- The tourism sector continues to experience significant growth both locally and nationally.
- The region saw a net loss of approximately 300 hotel beds in 2017.
- Greater Victoria Sports Tourism Commission to launch on April 1.

The committee highlighted the following economic development opportunities:

- Breweries/Distillery
- Entertainment/Hospitality
- Agri-tourism
- Sport and Eco-tourism.
- Commercial office space development
- Hotel development
- Sector clusters (high-tech, hospitality, offices etc.) in specific areas such as Centres, Corridors and Villages (Royal Oak, Shelbourne Valley, University Heights, Uptown-Douglas Corridor.)

After identifying the numerous opportunities, the committee discussed strategies, and action items that would help to support economic development, the following was highlighted:

- With the soon to launch Greater Victoria Sport Tourism Commission, locating in Commonwealth Place, enhanced cooperation with Tourism Victoria to support hotel development and promotion of Saanich’s existing assets.
- Could an on-line vacant property database work.(ie Yellowknife)
- Invest in Saanich (ie Invest Kelowna) recognizing financial resources
- Hotel/Hospitality Development – How?
- Economic development opportunities – How?
- Attracting businesses (ie government offices, like Office Park Chatterton) – How?
 - Could an EOI Framework work
 - How to encourage more hospitality industry (i.e. sit down restaurants and gathering places like Browns at Uptown).
- Grants for an economic development report/study.
- Contractor to develop Economic Development blueprint?

MOTION

Moved by S. Bartel and Seconded by B. Mumford “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee recommend that Council actively pursue

hotel development; and further, that the District work collaboratively with the tourism industry, through Tourism Victoria, to highlight Saanich’s numerous assets, and to support sustainable tourism growth throughout the region.”

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30p.m., and the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 8, 2018.

Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary