



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development
October 31, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.
Council Chamber

MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, October 31, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. in Council Chamber. The following Committee members were in attendance:

Present: F. Afane,
E. Binion,
C. Bolstad,
L. Chen,
D. Connelly,
P. Gruner,
M. Robitaille,
K. Ruptash,
V.L. Sacrey,
T. St. Denis,
K. Thomas, and
R. Warburton.

The following Consultants were in attendance:

P. Chugh,
R. Raizada (via conference), and
T. Weicker (via conference).

The following members of the Administration staff were in attendance:

S. Bassi-Kellett, Chair, and
B. Poeschek.

Call to Order & Introductions

1. Chair S. Bassi-Kellett called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m., and led a roundtable of introductions.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

2. There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

Approval of the Agenda

3. Committee approved the Agenda as presented.



Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting

4. Committee approved the Minutes of the meeting held on August 22, 2019.

Introduction of Consultants

5. Chair S. Bassi-Kellett introduced P. Chugh and T. Weicker (the “Consultants”), inviting them to proceed with discussion on the *Draft Work Plan*. T. Weicker provided background on FWCO Management Consultants Ltd. & GGI Platform and summarized their preparation of the *Draft Work Plan*, highlighting the necessity for input from Committee on the proposed approach and the remaining steps to be undertaken by the Consultants.

Next Steps

6. The Consultants led a brief overview of their planned next steps as follows:

(i) Finalize Draft Work Plan based on feedback

T. Weicker provided a summary of the *Draft Work Plan* and its functions as well as the *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats* (“SWOT”) *Analysis*, specifying the purpose of reviewing the *Draft Work Plan* was for Committee input and that any interviews conducted so far were only preliminary.

(ii) Complete stakeholder interviews

The Consultants indicated they had completed nine of the ten interviews from contacts previously provided by Administration, and that they will be conducting approximately another twenty-five interviews (including Committee members) plus others, based on recommendations received from Committee.

(iii) Complete survey of businesses

The Consultants noted they have a list of businesses to distribute the *Yellowknife Economic Development Strategy Business Survey* (the “Survey”) to, and would be adding economic development program initiative organization representatives to it as well, in addition to recommendations received from Committee.

(iv) Determine a date for Roundtable discussion with the Committee

The Consultants further detailed their proposed timeline: meet with Committee at the end of November for a Roundtable to get feedback; in December, follow up on opportunities and complete the *Survey*; develop the *2019-2024 Economic Development Strategy* (the “Strategy”) by the end of December; meet with Committee in January to finalize the *Strategy*; and have a finished product completed by the end of January. The Consultants asked Committee for feedback on their overall approach. Chair S. Bassi-Kellett discussed additional documents circulated that would need to be included in the Consultants’ work and overall analysis, and suggested moving the Roundtable date to December 12, or to poll for another date in early December.

Action Item: Administration is to propose options for the next meeting in December to Members and Consultants and confirm the date as soon as possible.

Discussion regarding Draft Work Plan

7. Chair S. Bassi-Kellett opened the floor to Committee for their comments on the *Draft Work Plan*.

(i) Objectives for economic development, and the Strategy specifically

Committee noted the following objectives: attracting revenue through a smart airport / stand



alone airport authority, developing academic and research specialties, increasing local employment opportunities, investing in hydro expansion, exploring new mining and mineral resource opportunities, promoting a polytechnic university, attracting high-earners to remain in the North and inject their spending back into the economy and overall diversification of the economy.

(ii) Key opportunities for economic development, particularly related to specific sectors

Committee identified the following sectors of opportunity: cold-weather testing, data processing and high-tech, fishing, hydroelectricity, mineral / new mining, natural resources, post-secondary education, renewable energy sales and small business incentives.

(iii) Key factors contributing to and constraining growth

Committee discussed the following contributing factors: mineral industry (including prospecting, exploring, permitting, enforcement, monitoring, mining and reclamation), tourism industry and transfer payments from the government.

Committee discussed the following constraining factors: aging infrastructure, increase in living wage, employment and labor market shortage, high energy costs / cost of living, market limitations, reclamation efforts and supply transportation costs.

(iv) Additional key issues that need to be addressed in the Strategy

Committee noted the following key issues: information from additional documents as circulated pre-meeting, attraction of funding for a post-secondary institution, the City's *Community Plan*, downtown revitalization, housing costs, poverty and homelessness, incentivizing and supporting small business development and growth, investment in real estate and development, land-use planning, new mining opportunities versus progressive reclamation and the impact / benefits of mining, resource allocation, short-term rentals and the upcoming amendment to zoning by-laws.

(v) How the Strategy might be implemented, including the leadership, support and resources that could be contributed by the City and others

Committee examined the following implementation strategies: tying the *Strategy* with the GNWT's *Economic Opportunities Strategy* document as well as with the City's *Community Plan*, consideration of the upcoming amendment to zoning by-laws and regulations, promoting the mining sector as a positive impact and not focusing on environmental liability in order to prevent animosity, and lobbying and competing for economic development money at the territorial level with regional initiatives receiving consideration in addition to local ones.

(vi) Identification of key stakeholders to be approached for input into the Strategy

Chair S. Bassi-Kellett initially instructed Committee to provide their recommendations directly to the Consultants for consideration. Committee noted that one main point of contact for provision of feedback to the Consultants would be prudent to ensure that they receive everything. Chair S. Bassi-Kellett noted that K. Penney would be the lead contact on this initiative.

Action Item: Committee is to provide comments / additions on the SWOT Analysis, as well as any additional reference documents, to K. Penney to forward to the Consultants. The Consultants will share the proposed Survey with Committee prior to commencing interviews



so that Committee guidance can be incorporated. Administration will also establish a document sharing site for the Committee.

8. Committee discussed sharing the *Draft Work Plan* with other industry professionals. The Consultants asserted that nothing should be circulated prior to the finished product. Committee suggested feedback could be utilized to better the document in the meantime but ultimately decided it should not be shared in its current state. The Consultants also detailed their intent to incorporate Committee's feedback and concerns presented in this meeting to influence both the *Survey* as well as the *Strategy*.

Action Item: The Consultants will share the proposed Survey with Committee in advance of sending it to city businesses.

Next Meeting

9. The next meeting, scheduled for November 28, 2019 will be rescheduled to sometime in December 2019.

Adjournment

10. The meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

Prepared: November 8, 2019 /BP