

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee held via Electronic Communication, a combination of video conferencing and teleconferencing, in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Thursday, July 16, 2020, commencing at 5:00 PM.

Present:

Roy Williams, Vice Chair, Land Development Industry
Owen Erskine, Recreation, Culture and Heritage
Carolyn Evancio, Seniors Representative
Cheryl Golosky, Indigenous Representative
Jean-Marc Guillamot, Business Community
Todd Hillier, Safety and Security Sector
Sheri Pidhirney, Business Community
Renee Moulard, Public-at-Large
Verna Murphy, Councillor

Absent:

Brianne English, Oil and Gas Industry
Melanie Walsh, Community Development
Jeff Peddle, Councillor

Administration:

Matthew Hough, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer
Brad McMurdo, Director, Planning and Development
Amanda Haitas, Senior Manager, Planning and Development
Monica Lance, Manager, Special Projects
Nicole Van Kruistum, Senior Executive Liaison, Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Sonia Soutter, Manager, Senior Legislative Officer
Darlene Soucy, Legislative Officer

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Roy Williams called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. New and Unfinished Business

2.1. Committee Membership Update

Vice Chair Roy Williams noted that Trent Keough had resigned from the Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee effective March 10, 2020, and that a new Chair would need to be appointed. A recruitment campaign will be conducted to fill the position of Education Representative.

2.2. Appointment of Chair

Darlene Soucy, Legislative Officer, called for nominations for the position of Chair. Roy Williams was nominated and, as there were no other nominations, was appointed Chair through consensus of the Committee.

Assuming of the Chair

Roy Williams assumed the Chair at 5:15 p.m.

Chair Roy Williams called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Jean-Marc Guillamot was nominated and, as there were no other nominations, was appointed Vice Chair through consensus of the Committee.

2.3. Action Log

Chair Roy William reviewed the Action Items from the March 4, 2020 meeting, noting that members will continue to research comparable community initiatives and beautification options for future projects. It was noted that the design charette was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions and that all other action items are complete.

2.4. Advisory Committee Updates - Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Matthew Hough, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, provided an update on COVID-19, noting that the Municipality continues to develop its relaunch plan while being mindful of the needs of staff.

With respect to Flood Recovery, it was indicated that the report on Improving Community Resilience was presented to Council on July 14, 2020 and a Council meeting has been scheduled for July 28, 2020 to review the proposed options.

Conflict of Interest, Vacating the Chair and Exit

Chair Roy Williams declared a potential conflict of interest in the Franklin and Main Park Project due to an employment relationship, vacated the Chair and exited the meeting at 5:36 p.m., at which time Vice Chair Jean-Marc Guillamot assumed the Chair.

2.5. Committee Priorities and Projects Review

Franklin and Main Park - Community Engagement

Monica Lance, Manager, Special Projects, provided an update on the community engagement for the Franklin and Main Park project, noting that due to COVID-19 restrictions, virtual engagement tactics will be used to focus on continuous validation of community sentiment regarding the intent and use of the proposed park during its development.

Franklin and Main Park Project

Bipul Bhowmik, Transportation Engineer, Engineering, provided an update on the current progress of the Franklin and Main Park project, noting that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for pre-design, design and construction closes August 4, 2020 with the intent to have the contract awarded by the end of January, 2021 and construction of the park completed in July 2021. The RFP does include flood risk and mitigation factors as per the June 23, 2020 Council resolution, which requires the WBDRAC to take into account the flood mitigation project and flood risk when putting forward any plans or projects.

Return and Resuming the Chair

Chair Roy Williams returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair at 5:45 p.m.

Review Committee Priorities and Other Actions That Support Revitalization Progress

Monica Lance, Manager, Special Projects, reviewed the priorities of beautification, placemaking, neighbourhood safety, and being pedestrian friendly, which have all been included in the recent RFP for the Franklin and Main Park Project, and indicated that the key actions required to achieve these priorities would be highlighted in the Municipal Projects Update agenda item. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Safety Priority needs to be updated to include COVID-19 precautions.

2.6. Municipal Projects Update

Beautification Initiatives (Floral and Lighting)

Nina Caines, Senior Manager, Parks, Roads and Rural Operations, indicated that floral pots have been put into the empty tree wells and hanging baskets have been installed in the area around Franklin and Main, and that they are working with ATCO regarding updated lighting in the area, with the finalized design being provided to the WBDRAC.

Community Policing Office

Nicole Chouinard, Manager, RCMP Support and Victim Services, noted that the Community Policing Office in the Jubilee Centre is anticipated to be open by the end of 2020 and will provide an RCMP and Bylaw Services presence in the downtown area. Once finalized, the programming plans would be provided to the WBDRAC.

It was suggested that the Wood Buffalo RCMP Community Advisory Committee may be able to provide some feedback into any potential safety concerns related to the Franklin and Main Park Project. In addition, it was noted that Alberta Health Services' (AHS) Healthy Communities by Design may also be able to provide valuable feedback on the project.

Sidewalk Upgrades

Mazhar Hajhossein, Infrastructure Planning and Development Services, Engineering, indicated that some sidewalk updates are complete with others in the works around Jubilee Centre and Hardin Street. It was indicated that upgrades to other areas of the downtown core are ongoing to address safety concerns and some sidewalk gaps, and that input from the WBD Rac into future upgrades would be welcome.

Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program

Amanda Haitas, Senior Manager, Planning and Development, provided an overview of the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program, noting that it is a \$5 million matching grant program. Businesses and property owners can apply under any or all of the four grant streams available: exterior façade; patio; beautification / mural; and interior improvements. It was noted that the WBD Rac has an opportunity to promote and raise awareness of the program to all the business and commercial property owners in the downtown area.

Tax Incentive Program

Amanda Haitas, Senior Manager, Planning and Development, provided an overview of the Tax Incentive Program, which could provide businesses with a municipal tax exemption for up to 5 years, and is focused on attracting new commercial development in the downtown area.

Conflict of Interest, Vacating the Chair and Exit

Chair Roy Williams declared a potential conflict of interest in the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan due to an employment relationship, vacated the Chair and exited the meeting at 7:00 p.m., at which time Vice Chair Jean-Marc Guillaumot assumed the Chair.

Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan

Amanda Haitas, Senior Manager, Planning and Development, noted that the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP) is on schedule to be completed by the end of 2020 but indicated that timeline is dependent on flood mitigation decisions yet to be made by Council, which could include changes to land development in the flood plain. Community engagement around the visions and principles of the DARP is ongoing, with the majority being held virtually. Brad McMurdo, Director, Planning and Development, also indicated that the proposed new Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is also moving ahead and noted that the DARP will provide the policy and vision for the LUB, which then supports and enables the development in the downtown area.

Return and Resuming the Chair

Chair Roy Williams returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair at 7:15 p.m.

2.7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2020; however, based on Committee Member input, there are not enough Members available on that date to constitute quorum. The next meeting will be held on September 2, 2020.

MOTION:

THAT the August 5, 2020 Wood Buffalo Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee meeting be cancelled.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Owen Erskine, Recreation, Culture and Heritage
SECONDER:	Todd Hillier, Safety and Security Sector
FOR:	Evancio, Guillamot, Golosky, Pidhirney, Moulard, Williams, Hillier, Erskine
ABSENT:	English, Walsh

Action Items:

- The WBD Rac's Priorities and Proposed Early Actions list will be updated to include COVID-19 Precautions under Neighbourhood Safety.
- Administration will provide the updated lighting design for the Franklin and Main area to the WBD Rac when it is finalized.
- Administration will provide the Community Policing Office programming plans to the WBD Rac when finalized.
- Administration will invite the Wood Buffalo RCMP Community Advisory Committee to review the Franklin and Main Park design for safety concerns when that Community Advisory Committee resumes meeting in the fall.
- Administration will invite Dominic Gniewek, AHS Healthy Communities by Design, to review the Franklin and Main Park design for walkability and safety and to present at the next meeting.
- Members will review the WBD Rac's mandated area downtown to identify future sidewalk upgrades for 2021.
- Chair Roy Williams, on behalf of the WBD Rac, will send a letter to businesses and property owners that are eligible for the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program to encourage them to apply for the grant program.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Chair