

Minutes of a Meeting of the Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee held in room 207 at the Municipal Offices in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, commencing at 8:45 AM.

Present:

Bryce Kumka, Chair, Business Community (via MS Teams)
Jennifer Vardy, Vice-Chair, Public At Large
Alex McKenzie, Land Development Sector
Aurick DeSousa, Community Development
Dan Soupal, Land Development Industry
David Secord, Business Community Representative (via MS Teams)
Raj Vasal, Community Development
Rene Wells, Public-At-Large
Steven Hale, Education Sector (via MS Teams)
Stu Wigle, Councillor

Absent:

Bilal Abbas, Public-At-Large
Ijeoma Uche-Ezeala, Public-At-Large
Purva Sharma, Arts, Culture and Recreation Representative

Administration:

Kelly Hansen, Director, Organizational Support Services
Monica Lance, Department Administrator, Organizational Support Services
Sonia Soutter, Manager, Senior Legislative Officer
Destiny Hilliard, Clerk, Legislative Services

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Jennifer Vardy called the meeting to order at 8:47 a.m.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

2.1. Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee Meeting - November 1, 2023

THAT the Minutes of the Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee Meeting held on November 1, 2023, be approved as presented.

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rene Wells
SECONDER:	Aurick DeSousa
FOR:	DeSousa, Hale, Kumka, McKenzie, Secord, Soupal, Vardy, Vasal, Wells
ABSENT:	Abbas, Sharma, Uche-Ezeala

3. New and Unfinished Business

3.1. Small Business and Northern Development; Tany Yao; Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

Tany Yao, Parliamentary Secretary, Small Business and Northern Development, provided an overview of Small Business and Northern Development, noting that a report is being created to help guide Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments on the expansion and development of the Northern regions over the next 20 years. It was further noted that to assist with the creation of the report, engagement will occur with the public, with Council and with the city of Edmonton's Economic Development groups, including post-secondary, health and small businesses.

It was indicated that the Committee would serve as a conduit for the report and an opportunity to engage with Committee Members would be welcomed.

3.2. Rural Business Development; Kevin Weidlich; Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism AND

Downtown Opportunities Assessment - Lisa Sweet, Director, Business and Investment Attraction, Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism

With consensus of the Committee, Agenda items 3.2 and 3.4 were combined.

Kevin Weidlich, President and CEO, Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism, provided an overview of the Downtown Opportunity Assessment Project, noting that the project aligns with Council's strategic priority of Downtown Visualization and the Downtown Area Development Plan adopted by Council. It was further noted that the goal is to increase development investment in the downtown core as there are developable opportunities readily available.

Lisa Sweet, Director, Business and Investment Attraction, Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism, noted the forecasted growth of the downtown population is consistently 1 or 2 % a year, and advised that the next steps for the project is to engage with landowners in the downtown as well as stakeholders.

Committee Members expressed their concerns that the development of Parsons Creek and Downtown will have a negative impact on each other. Members further discussed how to address the empty properties currently in the downtown area.

A request was made for members of the Committee to participate in an interview with the FMWBEDT consultant.

MOTION:

THAT the Economic Development Working Group, on behalf of the Committee, take part in an interview with the Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo and Economic Development and Tourism Consultant regarding Downtown Opportunities Assessment.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rene J.K. Wells
SECONDER:	Bryce Kumka
FOR:	DeSousa, Hale, Kumka, McKenzie, Secord, Soupai, Vardy, Vasal, Wells
ABSENT:	Abbas, Sharma, Uche-Ezeala

3.3. Rural Development Process Discussion; Such Chandhiok; Planning and Development

Amanda Haitas, Acting Director, Planning and Development, provided an update on Rural Development noting that changes have been made to the capital planning process in an effort to stop process gaps that have been seen in the past, confirming that there is now a one point of contact system.

3.4. Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program Engagement; Jennifer Wardle; Planning and Development a

Jennifer Wardle, Planner, Planning and Development, and Mychaela Risling, Urban Systems, provided an overview of the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program objectives and updates. It was noted that this program was launched in 2020 in response to Council's Strategic Plan and was developed to help revitalize internal and external components of downtown businesses.

A review of the program evaluation was provided, noting that the intent is to determine the impact and effectiveness of the program, obtain feedback from stakeholders, and to identify recommendations to improve the program. A review of the engagement activities was provided, noting that review is currently in phase three which includes public engagement on program feedback, impact, and current needs.

Committee Members were invited to participate in a working group with the consultants for the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program Engagement.

MOTION:

THAT Rene Wells and Jennifer Vardy on behalf of the Committee, participate in a working group with the consultant for the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program Engagement.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Alex McKenzie
SECONDER:	Dan Soupal
FOR:	DeSousa, Hale, Kumka, McKenzie, Secord, Soupal, Vardy, Vasal, Wells
ABSENT:	Abbas, Sharma, Uche-Ezeala

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Chair