



**The Corporation of the City of Stratford**  
**Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee**  
**MINUTES**

Date: August 25, 2025  
Time: 4:00 P.M.  
Location: City Hall Auditorium

Ad-Hoc Committee Present: Dan Mathieson - Chair Presiding, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Barb Cottle, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandembosch, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Paul Parlee, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman, Ryen Ropp-Robinson

Staff Present: Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Emily Robson - Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joani Gerber - CEO of investStratford, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Victoria Trotter - Recording Secretary, Melanie Reasbeck - Project Coordinator, investStratford

Absent: Stephen Mitchell

Working Group Members Present: Working Group Members, Media, Members of the Public

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgement.

Moment of Silent Reflection.

## 2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

### Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No declarations were made at the August 25, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting.

## 3. **Adoption of Previous Minutes:**

Barb Cottle noted her name was incorrect in two locations of the minutes.

**Motion by:** Melanie Hare

**Seconded by:** Franklin Famme

**THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated June 16, 2025 be adopted as amended.**

**Carried**

## 4. **Delegation Requests**

None were scheduled.

## 5. **Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

### **5.1 Thank you from Mayor Ritsma**

Mayor Ritsma thanked members of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee for their work over the past two years. He noted they have completed a tremendous amount of work and learning and have inspired Council to give direction on the project. He stated that the work that has been completed to date is very impactful and is a large part of this legacy project.

### **5.2 Staff Update**

Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead presented on the staff report. Highlights of the presentation included:

- interim uses being undertaken at the Grand Trunk including a story telling event and the Destination Stratford LED heart being mounted to the outside of the building;
- Council providing direction to advance Scenario Two (Keep Part) including feasibility study and YMCA/library study.

Mayor Ritsma noted the Committee's work continues to inspire others and stated a request has been received to potentially use the site.

A discussion took place regarding the direction provided by Council to pursue Scenario 2, to keep part of the structure. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Council having a fulsome discussion when the recommendation was presented;
- having not made a final decision on how much of the structure is to be kept;
- Svec Group to scope and cost out what's required to develop a site plan including the YMCA/Library options and cost of current with expansion versus a new build.

Barb Cottle questioned why fundraising for the project has not commenced. She expressed concern that if fundraising is not undertaken the City will not be able to retain a large of the land.

Mayor Ritsma noted staff are working the YMCA as they will spearhead fundraising where donors can choose which portion of the project they would like to allocate their funds towards.

Ms. Robson stated they need to know the costs for in project in order to know what needs to be fundraised.

### **5.3 Refreshing the Grand Trunk Master Plan**

Melanie Hare reviewed the Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group Report noting a review of the Grand Trunk Master Plan 2018 was completed and areas to be refined and updated based on the work completed by the Ad-Hoc Committee were identified.

Emily Robson stated the updates identified will be the basis of a management report to Council to recommend these points be addressed when the Grand Trunk Master Plan is reviewed. In response to questions

Ms. Robson noted how the updates are completed can happen in various way depending on the direction from Council.

Barb Cottle noted community members have an understanding that the Committee will be making specific decisions for the site and questioned who will make the final decisions on what is placed where on the site.

Dan Mathieson confirmed the final decisions will be made by Council.

A discussion took place regarding the next steps and if there are sufficient resources to move the project forward once the Committee has completed their term.

Mayor Ritsma stated as the need for resources come forward Council can make suggestions to the budget process and considering funding resources.

Chair Mathieson noted the carriage of the recommendations made by the Committee and Council will be responsible for making decisions on how to proceed.

Paul Parlee questioned if there has been any consideration into extending the term of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Mayor Ritsma stated at this time there has not, however, if there is a need one or more of the working groups could be requested to provide feedback.

Karen Haslam stated the Committee was given a specific job to give recommendations and it is now the responsibility of Council to move it forward.

## **6. Working Group and Staff Updates**

### **6.1 Partnership**

*Herb Klassen & Karen Haslam, Co-Chairs*

No report provided.

### **6.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture**

Report included under Item 5.3 of the agenda.

### **6.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance**

*Franklin Famme, Chair*

No report provided.

#### **6.4 Communications, Advocacy, Civic Engagement**

*Andrew Hilton & John Kastner, Co-Chairs*

No report provided.

#### **6.5 Infrastructure & Environment**

*Stephen Cooper, Chair*

No report provided.

#### **6.6 Working Group Coordinators**

*Alan Kasperski & Ray Harsant, Coordinators*

No report provided.

#### **6.7 Staff Update**

Report included under Item 5.2 of the agenda.

### **7. New Business**

None noted.

### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is September 15, 2025 in the Auditorium at Stratford City Hall.

Emily Robson noted the main item for discussion at the September meeting will be the revisions to the Grand Trunk Master Plan 2018 and a recommendation to Council.

A discussion took place and it was determined that Ms. Robson will send out the current recommendations from the working group to all members to review and provide feedback prior to the September meeting.

### **9. Adjournment**

**Motion by:** Franklin Famme

**Seconded by:** Barb Cottle

**THAT the August 25, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.**

**Carried**

Meeting Start Time: 4:02 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:57 P.M.