



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee MINUTES

Date: March 21, 2023
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar

Staff Present: Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary, Chris Bantock - Deputy Clerk

Also present: Mayor Ritsma, Joani Gerber - SEEDCo., Member of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to Order.

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 disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the March 21, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation

4.1 SEEDCo Update July to Dec 2022 (FIN23-023)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo./investStratford) Update dated March 21, 2023, be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: Joani Gerber, CEO of the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo.), reviewed the report. Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, the following highlights from the period of July - December 2022 were provided by the CEO:

- the metrics being determined by a service agreement between the City and SEEDCo.;
- the key metrics from the report being reviewed;
- Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) being a partnership between six partner communities including Stratford, Woodstock, St. Thomas, Ingersoll, Tillsonburg and Perth County;
- being able to leverage federal investment dollars and double their budgets by working together;
- St. Thomas recently obtaining a Volkswagon battery factory, and the belief that Stratford will have interest as a result of that supply chain;
- there being two City-owned industrial parcels back in inventory as of October 2022, but Lot 3 now being in reserve and Lot 2 having several active inquiries;
- highlights on the Attainable Housing project as outlined in the report being provided;
- OMAFRA funding for the Attainable Housing Project ending March 31, 2023, but work on the project not ending;
- investStratford continuing to participate in the Attainable Housing Project as often as they can as employers continue to report that

workforce attraction and retention is a problem and employees need places to live;

- Sports Tourism Project highlights being provided as outlined in the report and investStratford playing an active role in the project;
- dollars invested in SEEDCo. translating into additional dollars invested into the community, including entrepreneurship support, special projects, and investment attraction; and
- two budget variances being noted, although they had no impact on City budgets as they are funded from external sources.

Highlights from the first quarter of 2023 were provided as follows:

- \$35,000 being invested into 10 local small businesses through Starter Company grants;
- Perth County partnering with the City so that 10 entrepreneurs can be supported, instead of 7;
- there being a lot of interest in the program this year and they would have had to turn three entrepreneurs away, but Perth County brought forward financial support; and
- investStratford staff attending the world's largest food show and had 19 meetings with food production, warehousing, and related industries who have expressed interest into expanding into Ontario.

A question and answer period took place between the Chief Executive Officer and Sub-committee as follows:

- the most pressing challenge for economic development being the availability of "shovel-ready" City-owned industrial land;
- there being zero available industrial parcels and a shortage of at least 130-200 acres based on the serious inquiries list;
- there being two industrial parcels currently in reserve;
- one parcel in reserve having significant servicing challenges as the road does not extend far enough to have a driveway, but staff being creative with it;
- site selectors and potential investors using online resources to source potential investment opportunities long before reaching out

in person and Stratford could be losing far more potential investment than they are even aware of;

- there being a Council-adopted Industrial Land Pricing policy that states 100% of input costs to bring industrial land to market are recouped and that policy is adjusted for inflation and other factors annually;
- with respect to workforce challenges, investStratford discussing this with companies and supporting awareness of initiatives such as the PC Connect transit service to bring people into the community and the Attainable Housing project;
- investStratford starting to see softening in the eagerness of companies talking about the number of jobs they have available;
- the Province doing a lot around immigration and skills development and the community needing to be ready;
- this being the first time that the hospitality food and beverage industry is competing with industrial and commercial companies for workforce due to Covid-19 impacts;
- with respect to newcomer attraction, there being work done around creating a welcoming community and there being a toolkit created with Perth County to be provided to employers with best practices in supporting new Canadians in being successful;
- there being a need to keep people coming into employment areas within the region;
- the 2022 budget included with the report being pre-adjustments and the completed financial statements being received by Council once complete;
- the importance of having a reserve and any surplus being transferred to that reserve; and
- the reserve also being needed for Provincial projects with the Small Business Centre as they have a holdback component that needs to be spent, but the funds are returned at the end of the contract.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo./investStratford) Update dated March 21, 2023, be received for information.

Carried

5. Report of the Deputy Clerk

5.1 2022 Lottery Licence Activity Update (FIN23-012)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report entitled, "2022 Lottery Licence Activity Update" (FIN23-012), be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Deputy Clerk provided an overview of the management report. Highlights of the overview included:

- this being an annual report that the Clerk's Office brings forward for the awareness of Council;
- revenue in 2022 returning to comparable levels pre-pandemic;
- the actual number of licences issued being only slightly higher than previous years;
- the key driver of the increased revenue was bingo events increasing in frequency as fees charged under that licensing type are per event;
- fees for lottery licensing being prescribed by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) as the Registrar; and
- the City, as the licensing authority, being able to charge below that amount, but not being able to exceed it.

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report entitled, "2022 Lottery Licence Activity Update" (FIN23-012), be received for information.

Carried

6. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

There were no Advisory Committee/Outside Board minutes to be provided to Sub-committee.

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting is April 18, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:53 P.M.