



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Date: Monday, April 15, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Council Chambers, Stratford City Hall, 1 Wellington St, Stratford, ON

Committee Members: Dan Mathieson – Chair, Mayor Ritsma, Mark Vandenbosch, Stephen Mitchell, Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman, Franklin Famme, Andy Bicanic

Absent: Paul Parlee

Staff: Tim Wolfe – Director of Community Services, Emily Robson – Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joan Thomson – CAO, Adam Betteridge – Director of Building & Planning, Krista Robinson – CEO of Stratford Public Library, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

Also Present: Working Group Coordinators and Members, Paul Kalbfleisch, Media, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Joan Thomson, CAO read the Respect in the Workplace Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None were declared.

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mayor Ritsma

Seconded by Franklin Famme

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated March 18, 2024, be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Delegation Requests

None were scheduled.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1. GRANDTrunk Dialogues & Community Engagement

Emily Robson, Corporate Initiative Lead stated two public engagement events were held on March 26 and April 13 with 130 and 120 attendees respectively. She thanked various members for their contributions to the events.

Ms. Robson noted the turnout for the events was very positive and she is hopeful this will start to frame a discussion moving forward.

Mr. Robson stated the draft Guiding Principles are going forward on the next Council agenda. Once approved by Council the draft Guiding Principles will be useful to assist with feedback and consultation data.

The next phase of engagement is going to the public, for example, attending locations such as the Rotary Complex to obtain feedback from across the community.

Ms. Robson noted John Kastner has been working with the Stratford Perth Museum to create and install large interpretive panels on the fencing at the Cooper Site as an additional form of engagement. She noted there is potential for additional tours of the building for small groups.

Motion by Barb Cottle

Seconded by Melanie Hare

THAT the report on the GRANDTrunk Dialogues and Community be received for information. Carried

5.2. Committee Workplan

Dan Mathieson reviewed the committee workplan noting the following:

- preparation of a complete business case for the Grand Trunk site has been identified for 2024 to 2025 which build on the 2018 Master Plan and provide recommendations and insights on key project components including vision and development principles, partnership models for anchor tenants, financial modeling, community impact, financial implications, operating and capital proforma budgets and phasing;
- next steps are to take the information and communicate it to the community;
- there is an opportunity to have the community come to the site and to have the Committee to go into the community to obtain feedback;
- a tour of the West 5 Townhouses has been confirmed for May 3, 2024;

- over the next 120 days a review of partnership models including finding partners and opportunities and financial models including funding for builds and the long term effect and how the funds will be repaid;
- ideas such as a play date to encourage a youth visit, small scale visits, Lights on Stratford display have been brought forward;
- over the next 120 days the Committee will start to work on future engagement ideas and working towards the end of the August.

Motion by Mark Vandebosch

Seconded by Andy Bicanic

THAT the report on the Committee Workplan be received for information. Carried

Emily Robson confirmed a panel exhibition of the Grand Trunk and the railway is to be installed on the exterior fence of the site to contextualize the history of the building, connecting the past with the possibilities of the future.

6. New Business

6.1. How does Your City Play? A Framework for City Building

Paul Kalbfleisch presented to the Committee based on the book The Joy Experiments which he co-authored with Scott Higgins. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the Cooper Site is a very unique opportunity;
- we need create cities that actively moderate the connection between citizens and become engines of collective optimism;
- use common language to get to a common place;
- need to consider what cities need to become in the future and how we need to start planning cities for the future;
- community is becoming the new hope and faith;
- through play we learn to collaborate, co-operate and innovate;
- need to move from a Live, Work, Play priority to Play + Live + Work = Joyful cities;
- need public spaces that are purpose built to engage;
- joy feed the human spirits, making us more inventive, resilient and tolerant;
- use public engagement to create a compelling and collaborative innovation;

Franklin Famme questioned how it can work to have an economically viable and successful model and create cost-free joy.

Mr. Kalbfleisch responded there are many paths to creating a cost-free space and it does not need to be huge and expensive but rather thoughtful.

Andrew Hilton asked if Mr. Kalbfleisch had any insight on the approach of going out into the community and how to make it a lighter footprint.

Mr. Kalbfleisch noted the joy wall he created for a project cost approximately \$400 and was able to be moved to various locations. He stressed the concept that the engagement does not have to be expensive but rather thoughtful.

6.2. Stratford Public Library & the Grand Trunk Community Hub

Krista Robinson, CEO Stratford Public Library presented to the Committee regarding the potential of a new library at the Grand Trunk Site. Highlights of the presentation included:

- The Stratford Public Library was established in 1987 and the Carnegie library opened in 1903 with additions in 1926 and 1975;
- Total square footage of the library is 12,472;
- In 2022 a Lamay Space Needs Analysis Assessment indicated the library is only 37% of the size it should be for a community the size of Stratford and recommended a minimum of 44,000 square feet;
- Currently struggling with building logistics, accessibility, parking, public service, safety, program space, collection and staff space;
- Stratford Public Library has 134,884 visitors annually, 463,440 items borrowed, 21,878 computer uses and 21,937 program attendees;
- The Board is looking to explore the possibility of the library as an anchor tenant at the Grand Trunk site;
- The library is looking to be a space for community, engagement, meeting, creation, innovation accessible, and energy efficiency;
- The project meets the guiding principles of the Grand Truck Ad Hoc;
- Options available to generate revenue through rentals in a new space;

Franklin Famme questioned the net space required for the collection versus shared space opportunities.

Ms. Robinson confirmed 44,000 square feet would be solely for the core library and the additional space up to 60,000 square feet would include shared spaces.

Karen Haslam questioned the number of youth attending the library and if they use the collection.

Ms. Robinson noted their staffing compliment includes a teen librarian who engages the youth by simply asking what the library can do for them. An example of this is a Nerf gun night and a zombie exploring evening.

In response to questions Ms. Robinson noted the Library Board owns the current building and would be open to a new build or a readaptation of the currently Grand Trunk building. Without knowing the operational model and ownership will look like it is difficult to determine where the funds will come from. Ms. Robinson stated the Board has started reserves and intends to apply for grants and encourage community fundraising.

Motion By Mayor Ritsma

Seconded By Stephen Mitchell

THAT the correspondence from the Stratford Public Library Board requesting that the Library be considered as an anchor tenant in the Grand Trunk Community Hub be received. Carried

7. Reports of the Working Groups

7.1. Vision, Planning and Architecture

Melanie Hare provided an update on the draft Guiding Principles noting the working group did their best to incorporate the feedback received, however some of the feedback could not be addressed through the Guiding Principles.

Ms. Hare stated feedback was received regarding ensuring clarity on the audience for the Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles are directly at multiple audiences and as a draft document and will continue to evolve. One part of the is Council to be used as a tool for making decisions, another part is for the community to provide clarity on what the Ad Hoc is trying to achieve. Ms. Hare noted the Guiding Principles also speak to accountability to ensure the Committee is achieving the goals set forth.

Ms. Hare noted the Guiding Principles might not provide clarity to those who have not been involved in the development and the Committee may need to expand on the concepts. She noted the Guiding Principles will continue to evolve as the work evolves.

7.2. Communication, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

John Kastner stated the public meetings were very positive and encouraged great conversation with the opportunity for information to come back to the Committee.

Mr. Kastner noted when the Grand Trunk Exhibit was at the Stratford Perth Museum it included a timeline of the site from the inception of the shops to when they closed in the 1950's. The Committee created a timeline from 1974 to 2024, which has been approved by City Council. Panels are in production of the timeline

to be placed on the fencing around the building in late April or early May. The panels have been made to ensure they can be moved into the building at a later time if desired.

Melanie Hare noted the panels are an opportunity to signal change to the community and questioned if there are other ways to activate the site.

Mr. Kastner responded the Working Group has been approached by various groups included Stratford Summer Music and Lights on Stratford to use the building for various events. The interested from the community is happening very organically at this time and there is a potential in the not too far future for things to start happening in the building.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Mayor Ritsma

Seconded by Melanie Hare

THAT the April 15, 2024, Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 7:02 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 8:57 p.m.