



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

MINUTES

Date: Monday, June 17, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

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

Committee Members: Mayor Ritsma – Chair Presiding, Mark Vandenbosch, Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman, Franklin Famme, Andy Bicanic, Paul Parlee

Absent: Dan Mathieson, Stephen Mitchell

Staff: Tim Wolfe – Director of Community Services, Emily Robson – Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joan Thomson – CAO, Adam Betteridge – Director of Building & Planning, Joani Gerber – CEO of investStratford, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

Also Present: Working Group Coordinators and Members, Jed Kilbourn, Media, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Land Acknowledgment

* Mark Vandenbosch now present at 7:01 p.m.

Respect in the Workplace Statement

Moment of Silent Reflection

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None were declared.

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Andy Bicanic

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated April 15, 2024, be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Delegation Requests

None were scheduled.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1. Updates & Housekeeping

Mayor Ritsma, Chair Presiding stated Dan Mathieson requested the Committee consider changing the start time of meetings from 7:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. moving forward.

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Mark Vandenbosch

THAT commencing at the July 2024 meeting all Grand Trunk Ad-Hoc Committee meetings commence at 4:00 p.m. Carried

Mayor Ritsma stated the August meeting is scheduled concurrent with AMO Annual Conference and various staff will be unable to attend the Ad-Hoc meeting. He questioned if the Committee would like to cancel the August meeting or reschedule for an alternate date.

Melanie Hare recommended the discussion be held at the end of the meeting after all items have been heard.

Paul Parlee noted the April 15, 2024, minutes state over the next 120 days a review of a 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 will take place. Mr. Parlee stated the Committee is now 60 days into the 120 days noted for the review and no reports have been brought forward to the Committee. Mr. Parlee stated he believes there are three obvious business partners: YMCA, University of Waterloo, and the Stratford Public Library and four issues: childcare, parking, housing and if the University of Waterloo is willing to relinquish any of the land under contract.

Mayor Ritsma responded on-going dialogue is taking place with potential business partners.

Emily Robson stated Council has directed the Committee to work with the YMCA and the Stratford Public Library and discussions are taking place with each of the partners. Findings will be brought back to the Committee for review.

Joani Gerber stated the Vice President of Government Relations for the University of Waterloo is relatively new to the position and it is understood they will be the lead negotiating on the land under contract.

Mr. Parlee questioned if any discussions regarding childcare had taken place.

Ms. Robson responded the YMCA has noted childcare is part of the vision of a new and expanded facility. The need for childcare is at the forefront of the conversations.

Barb Cottle questioned if the City is looking at creating their own community space or if a partnership model is being looked at.

Ms. Robson stated various options are being considered at this time including City-owned or partnership.

Ron Dodson noted the Partnership Committee is understaffed and questioned when the Partnership Committee will be activated.

Ms. Robson stated work for each of the specific working groups is being compiled and will be shared with the Working Group Chairs and with the Committee in July.

Mr. Dodson stated he has been approached by members of the community who are interested in being involved in the Partnership Committee. He expressed concern that he does not know the mechanism or the timeline for the interested citizens.

Ms. Gerber stated at this time there is further work to be completed prior to bringing in further community volunteers. She also cautioned the committee that part of the partnership process is agreements with the City which Council must provide direction and authority for.

Karen Haslam stated the sub-committee is two or three people, however, they will reach out to volunteers when the time is appropriate.

Mayor Ritsma noted there is a mandate in the working groups to allow specialists to be brought in for assistance.

Alan Kasperski questioned how other partners of a significant nature will be considered, for example, a potential developer for housing.

Mayor Ritsma responded potential partners should be directed to Ms. Gerber or Joan Thomson, CAO.

5.2. Draft Guiding Principles & Community Engagement Updates

Emily Robson provided an update noting the following:

- January 2024 the need to develop a business case and items related to was identified.
- Looking to 2025 for implementation of specific aspects of the business plan.
- The first community engagement took place in March with 130 people from the community attending.
- A second community engagement was held in April with speakers from various municipalities with an attendance of 122.
- In May further community engagement was developed and Community Pop-ups are currently taking place.
- Information will be brought to the Committee in the future to revise set the guiding principles based on the response from the community engagement.
- Working Group Chairs meeting on July 3 to discuss the scope of work.
- A plan will be provided at the July 15 meeting for consideration and feedback.

Barb Cottle spoke to the Community Pop-ups noting the feedback and participation is very positive and it is a great experience. She stated House of Blessing was most excited to share their thoughts and encouraged members to volunteer for the engagement.

Ms. Robson noted engagement is also available on Engage Stratford and 60 responses have been received through this option to date. She requested volunteers for the remaining Pop-ups and if a member has a suggestion for a location for an additional Pop-up to please bring it forward.

5.3. investStratford & Work Plan Implementation

Joani Gerber stated investStratford is an economic development organization which supports the City of Stratford; however, they are a separate corporation which is governed by a board of directors. She also stated they report back to Council four times a year including budget.

Ms. Gerber stated the investStratford role in the Grand Trunk development project is to assist in developing a comprehensive business plan, securing initial approvals, and preparing for detailed planning.

Ms. Gerber noted there is currently an operating component of the site, transit hub. It is important to remind the community there is activity on the site with transit, PC Connect, etc.

Developing partnerships and a key model are key components that need to be clear and concise to determine a tactical way to move forward with potential partners. The project is going to take a lot of time and effort and we need to think strategically about the site can look in 10, 20, or even 30 years from now.

In response to questions from the Committee Ms. Gerber noted the following:

- There is no shovel in the ground date currently.
- Close to being able to apply for funding, not there yet.
- Parking will be lost as soon as development starts and locations for additional parking will need to be discussed.

6. New Business

6.1. Partnership Models for Urban Revitalization

Jed Kilbourn of Waterfront Toronto presented on catalyzing revitalization through partnership. Highlights of the presentation include:

- Creating enduring value through well-designed and vibrant cultural, recreational, civic, and public spaces.
- Advancing Complete Communities that address the need for housing, mobility, accessibility, connectivity, and inclusivity.
- Leveraging innovation and partnerships to deliver economic growth and jobs.
- Waterfront Toronto started with \$1.5 billion in seed capital which has been paid back to all levels of government.
- Critical challenges include sustainability, neighbourhoods, destinations, and engagement.
- Feedback of priorities included inclusive, great place to live, work and play, vibrant economic activity supporting retail and economic activity, environmental leadership, and iconic architecture.

- Multiple decade projects demand plans be revisited and revamped as needs change.
- Stratford has advantage of being so close to the downtown core with this project.
- Servicing of the site may be required to move the project ahead.
- Each section of land should be comprehensively master planned.

In response to questions from the Committee Mr. Kilbourn noted the following:

- Rent on the affordable waterfront units is set under the City of Toronto.
- Land trust developments were not used.
- Waterfront Toronto uses Indigenous consultants and are developing a close relationship with Treaty holders.
- Report to a Board of Directors with appointees from each level of government with all work being subject to municipal approval.
- \$1.5 billion was granted to implement the public realm with the idea that land would be taken to market and the profit from the sales would fund additional public realm projects.
- Advisory committees were formed for specific parts of the project as sounding boards to ensure the project is going in the correct direction.
- A master plan was created, acknowledged key infrastructure would need to be included, priced it, and started to deliver those items. Once major pieces were completed the land went to market and sold to provide developers and the funds were used to pay the project back and to pay for more infrastructure work.
- Recommends looking at the current plan and gauging what the future might bring.
- Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is over 800 acres and is handled by approximately 85-100 staff not including outside contractors.
- Industrial structures were retained and designated as heritage to preserve the industrial legacy.
- Adaptive reuse was made a priority.

- Create interim uses which can be easily dismantled when it is time to develop.

7. Reports of the Working Groups

7.1. Vision, Planning and Architecture

Melanie Hare thanked the volunteers who have assisted to date with the Community Pop-ups. Ms. Hare stated next steps will include meeting to review the outcome of the community engagement, refresh the draft guiding principles and revisiting the master plan.

7.2. Communication, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

Andrew Hilton presented a Communications Proposal on behalf of the Communications, Advocacy and Civic Engagement Working Group asking for the Ad-Hoc Committee, in consultation with City Staff, to draft a new storyline for use by the Committee and the City that positions Grand Trunk Renewal not as a stand-alone project, but as a part of the larger solution to managing population growth, economic competitiveness and their related challenges over the coming decades.

Mr. Hilton also asked members to remember to use the Talking Points and FAQs to answer questions from the public when completing community engagement.

Ron Dodson agreed linking the project to a larger story is important.

Nic Flanagan asked for clarification between a storyline and the current vision and guiding principles.

Mr. Hilton noted the vision and guiding principles are large, where the storyline is explaining the purpose what the Committee is doing for the site.

It was agreed the word narrative could be utilized rather than storyline.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 15, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

A brief discussion took place regarding the August meeting, and it was decided the Committee would rather adjust the meeting date than cancel the meeting. Ms. Robson will contact the Committee with potential dates.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Melanie Hare

THAT the June 17, 2024, Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 9:05 p.m.