



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

Date: July 16, 2024

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, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary, Dave Bush – Director of Human Resources, Joani Gerber - CEO, SEEDCo./InvestStratford, Zac Gribble - Executive Director, Destination Stratford

Also present: Members of the public and media

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Workplace Policy Statement

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

Councillor Beatty declared a pecuniary interest on Item 4.1 "SEED Co/Invest Stratford Update to March 31, 2024 (FIN 24-020)" regarding Crane Lots 2 and 3. Councillor Beatty's business associates have an interest in the lots.

3. Delegations

3.1 Request for Delegation by Ellen Hurley, Chair, Board of Directors, Playmakers! Theatre School

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT Ellen Hurley be heard.

Carried

Ellen Hurley, Chair, of the Board of Directors for the Playmakers! Theatre School requested to address Sub-committee to request an increase in the amount of the Community Grant awarded to Playmakers! Theatre School regarding the Stratford Lantern Parade 2024. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Playmakers! Theatre School having provided programming and events in Stratford since 1993, including the Ghosts of Stratford Theatrical Walking tours, Stratford Children's Shakespearean Festival and the Stratford Lantern Parade;
- programs and events being severely impacted by the pandemic;
- there being increased enrollment and engagement in programs and events since the beginning of summer 2023;
- classes and workshops for youth and attendance at the annual Lantern Parade event having grown to more than 3,000 participants;
- the 2023 and 2024 season being supported by more than 60 volunteers;
- participation in physically and financially accessible communal celebrations being known to enhance the well being of individuals and communities;

- a connection identified between arts and culture activities and overall well being;
- community cultural experiences providing positive focus, bonding to the present moment and aiding to build a shared sense of identity;
- since the founding in 2017, a primary goal of the Lantern Parade being physical and financial accessibility for all participants;
- the Lantern Parade having some pay-what-you-can donations for activities such as lantern building or decoration and experience participation like the Labyrinth of Light, however most installations and entertainment are provided free of charge;
- sites along riverside parklands being wheelchair accessible and events welcome to children and pets to participate safely;
- the event occurring in the shoulder season and attended by thousands annually who patronize shops, restaurants and accommodation;
- there being no comparable event closer than Toronto and the event having potential for growth;
- since 2017, Lantern Parade events having partnered with local artists, businesses and not for profit organizations including Off The Wall Arts Alliance, the Stratford Gallery, the Stratford Perth Museum and Stratford Summer Music Festival;
- since 2017, funding having been received from the Destination Development Fund, RT04, Stratford Perth Community Foundation and the City of Stratford and the event being featured in promotional materials for RT04 and Culture Days;
- the theme of the 2024 event being "Light Up the Future", illuminating youth arts in Stratford;
- partner organizations, schools and businesses being requested to bring forward volunteers with opportunities to showcase and promote their activities, making it possible to increase participation to the event this year, but this will not make the event possible financially;

- the purpose of the community grant for 2024 being to attract and retain local artists for the event but the amount does not provide significant support for this;
- requesting a funding increase for the 6th annual Lantern Parade with the event having potential to act as a point of destination to attract visitors to Stratford;
- requesting funding comparable to peers and to other community events receiving funding of \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually; and
- in 2016 the event having received \$1,000.00 which funded tuition assistance of five students in Playmakers! education, and the support of \$1,000.00 for 2024 being disappointing in comparison.

Discussion on this matter occurred between members of Sub-committee and the delegate. Highlights of the discussion included:

- the Lantern Parade taking place in October annually, typically the Saturday after the Thanksgiving Weekend placing the 2024 event the weekend of October 19, 2024;
- funding dictates if the event will be a variety of events or a single event; and
- as a volunteer organization dependent on funding, they have to focus resources on the primary event however the hope is to expand and offer year round workshops and pop up events and to partner with other events happening throughout the year.

The Chair noted this item will be addressed in item 4.3.

4. Report of the Director of Corporate Services

4.1 SEEDCo/investStratford Update to March 31, 2024 (FIN24-020)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo./investStratford) Update for the period ending March 31, 2024, be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: Joani Gerber, CEO of the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo./InvestStratford) provided an update for the period ending March 31, 2024. Highlights included:

- the report covering the first quarter of 2024 from a city funding perspective and the fourth quarter from a provincial funding perspective;
- January to March 2024 seeing positive ongoing industrial, commercial activity, expansions and existing companies growing on current footprints where manufacturing is concerned;
- start ups and small businesses being active with 96 consultations in the first quarter, a consultation being defined as an hour with individual business owners or potential entrepreneurs;
- hosted the annual Women's Day event with over 100 attendees;
- 73 new jobs having been created by their Small Businesses;
- participated in trade shows and missions;
- noted foreign direct investment work is done with Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance partners being Woodstock, St. Thomas, Tillsonburg, Ingersoll, Perth County and Stratford;
- attended Consumer Electronic Show and, as a group, the Hannover Messe 2024, the world's largest industrial equipment show;
- noted Canada is a host country in partnership with Hannover Messe 2025 with federal and provincial partners having preparations underway for March 2025;
- there being activity in the Wright Industrial Business Park with Lot 6 and Part Lot 1 development being underway and all parcels in the Crane West Business Park being purchased or in reserve;
- the Summer Company 2024 Program having launched on July 4th;
- the contract with the Province of Ontario to fund the Small Business Enterprise Centre having been extended through March 2026 with an increase to grants and the amount of administration to run the programs;
- Starter Company Plus in 2024 focusing on arts and culture companies in keeping with the Cultural Master Plan, and the Sports Tourism Master Plan;

- there being approximately 18 grants focusing on arts and culture companies;
- business owners under this grant being employed in seasonal work with the Stratford Festival or Summer Music and have trades with entrepreneurial interest and 18 new businesses will be brought to forefront in the fall;
- noted the small business team are always entrepreneurs themselves and looking at the programs from the lens of an entrepreneur to work smarter not harder;
- investStratford having an active role in the development of the Grand Trunk District Site and working with the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee to bring an updated workplan forward for Council's consideration;
- four individuals working as housing specialists with a specific priority of adding dwelling units to the City of Stratford's inventory;
- partnering with the Stratford Perth Community Foundation on the Housing Summit 2.0 which scheduled for October 1st;
- the City and investStratford having partnered with the Community Foundation through the leadership of the Ollie Henry Memorial Fund for 2024 with the theme "Stop Talking, Start Building" and the mandate being less problem identifying, more problem solving;
- the initial conversation with United Housing being on bringing creative ways to finance housing and get dwelling units built; and
- the budget being on par and there being no requirements for further funds.

Discussion on this matter occurred between Sub-committee and the CEO of investStratford. Highlights of the discussion included:

- SEEDCo./InvestStratford only supporting for-profit businesses from the Starter Company; and
- there being a requirement for businesses to be brand new or operating for less than two years.

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo./investStratford) Update for the period ending March 31, 2024, be received for information.

Carried

4.2 Destination Stratford Update (FIN24-024)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Destination Stratford Update (FIN24-024) dated July 16, 2024, be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford, provided an overview of the update. Highlights included:

- the spreadsheet included with the agenda representing actuals and the budget being on track with the forecast;
- one unknown being Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) funding as the first three months of the year are the slowest;
- more information to be provided at the next presentation regarding how MAT is tracking;
- the Sports Tourism Office and the City will be applying in partnership for grants through to 2028, of over \$6 million dollars of grant applications that they are aware of but not limited to these;
- an important function of the Sports Tourism Office being to apply for larger infrastructure grants;
- a focus of the grants being accessibility and sustainability together with Sport Infrastructure that benefits the community and visitor economy;
- Destination Stratford using Culinary Trail sales as a gauge as these have been running for many years, with the benchmark being 2019 pre pandemic;
- to date the Chocolate Trail being up 68% from 2019 and the Bacon and Ale Trail being up 130%, which is more than double;
- the trails in 2023 resulting in over 20,000 visits to businesses in Stratford and the County;

- Destination Stratford having received a \$200,000 grant for LightsOn Stratford Winter 2024/2025 from the Federal Debt Tourism Growth Program and \$50,000 from the Experience Ontario grant program;
- the combined contribution of the City and Destination Stratford on the event being essential to obtaining multi-level government contributions to maximize the impact for the community and the event itself;
- there being two displays in Market Square with the first display being "Emergence" and the second display being "Star Gate";
- focusing on working with Canadian artists to increase light culture in the region and within Canada;
- more announcements coming and the full season announcement anticipated in early August; and
- Destination Stratford being in the process of developing a Strategic Plan that will be brought back to Council and undertaking stakeholder engagement.

It was questioned and confirmed that the intent is to present the Strategic Plan to Council in the last quarter of 2024.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Destination Stratford Update (FIN24-024) dated July 16, 2024, be received for information.

Carried

4.3 2024 Community Grant Appeal Request (FIN24-023)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the appeal of Council's decision regarding the 2024 community grant award to Playmakers! Theatre School be received and considered.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT the request from Playmakers! Theatre School to amend Council's decision regarding the 2024 community grant award to Playmakers! Theatre School be approved and the grant provided be increased to \$5,000.00.

Sub-committee Discussion: Members of Sub-committee discussed the Playmakers! Theatre School appeal of the 2024 Community Grant Award amount, highlighting the following:

- the Destination Stratford Update speaking to shoulder season events to attract year round tourism, and Playmakers! Lantern Parade being held in the fall;
- the event being free and accessible for Stratford citizens and supporting the local economy and showcasing local artists;
- a challenge being significant tax increases for residents, every dollar comes from tax money and this being an involuntary donation;
- the Community Grant Program being under review; and
- a member proposed requesting Destination Stratford expertise to identify the tourism value of a particular event.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

4.4 Property Tax Arrears and Tax Sales Update (FIN24-025)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Property Tax Arrears and Tax Sales Update" (FIN24-025), be received for information.

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Property Tax Arrears and Tax Sales Update" (FIN24-025), be received for information.

Carried

5. Report of the Council Committee Coordinator

5.1 Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee Funding Request (FIN24-018)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the request from the Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee for an additional \$500.00 to assist with expenses relating to hosting information sessions for the January 2025 New Zealand Stratfords of the World Reunion, funded from the Advisory Committee reserve be considered and direction be provided.

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the request from the Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee for an additional \$500.00 to assist with expenses relating to hosting information sessions for the January 2025 New Zealand Reunion, be approved and funded from the advisory committee reserve.

Carried

5.2 Communities in Bloom 2024 Additional Funding Request (FIN24-022)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the request from the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee for an additional amount of up to \$5,000.00 for expenses related to sending two members of the Committee to the 2024 Communities in Bloom Symposium in Charlottetown to be funded from the Council Committees Reserve, be considered.

Motion by Councillor Beatty

THAT the request from Communities in Bloom Advisory for an additional amount of up to \$5,000.00 to assist two members with expenses related to travelling to Charlottetown for the 2024 Communities in Bloom Symposium, be approved and funded from the advisory committee reserve.

Sub-committee Discussion: Members of Sub-committee and the Treasurer discussed the request from Communities in Bloom for additional funding, highlighting the following:

- Stratford being the host of the 2025 National Symposium which will bring a significant number of Canadian and International guests to the event;
- Stratford hosting an event on the Friday night of the 2024 event in Charlottetown and engaging delegates to address questions, market the community and welcome people for the following year;
- it being anticipated there will be 250 people in attendance at the event which is challenging for two people to speak to all guests;
- the request being "up to \$5,000.00" as the cost of airfare and hotels are unknown;

- two representatives of the Committee, Councillor Beatty and a staff member potentially attending the Charlottetown Symposium;
- this request not being included in the 2024 budget as the Committee did not know they were being considered as a host for the 2025 Symposium; and
- this request being funded through the reserve and not the tax levy.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

5.3 Climate Conversations Steering Committee 2024 Request for Financial Assistance (FIN24-026)

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be provided on the options identified for the financial assistance request from the Climate Conversations Steering Committee for the eight (8) Climate Conversation events to be held from September 2024 to April 2025.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT a Community Grant in the amount of \$3281.42 be provided to the Climate Conversations Steering Committee in kind for their Climate Conversations to be held in 2024 and 2025 to fund the following:

- **Auditorium Rental Fee - \$1,281.42**
- **Technical Support - \$2,000.00**

Sub-committee Discussion: Members of Sub-committee discussed the Climate Conversations Steering Committee 2024 Request for Financial Assistance, highlighting the following:

- the refreshments and speaker gratuities possibly being funded from the E&E regular budget;
- the Climate Coordinator being funded, and the budget challenged, to be respectful of everybody's money by keeping spending limited;
- the event being worthy of support, but we already put money in this area and an expansion is challenging to support; and
- considering the opportunity with Climate Action Plan being brought forward and the future implementation of that plan, this being a

good time for this event and for the auditorium to be used for this, for people to get together and appears several good speakers lined up for the program.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

6. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

The following Advisory Committee minutes were provided for the information of Sub-Committee:

- Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee minutes of February 22, 2024

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting is September 17, 2024 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: 5:18 P.M.