



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

Date: September 16, 2024
Time: 4:00 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Ad-Hoc Committee Present: Dan Mathieson - Chair Presiding, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Andy Bicanic, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Nic Flanagan, Paul Parlee, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman

Regrets: Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Stephen Mitchell

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Office, Emily Robson - Corporate Initiatives Lead, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Taylor Crinklaw – Director of Infrastructure Services, Victoria Trotter – Recording Secretary

Also Present: Andrew Hilton, Stephen Cooper, Karen Haslam, Herb Klassen, 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

None declared at the September 16, 2024 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes:

Motion by Paul Parlee

Seconded by Mayor Ritsma

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated August 29, 2024 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Delegation Requests

None were scheduled.

5. New Business

5.1 Developing Evergreen Brick Works: Case Study, Context and Insights

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Ron Dodson

THAT Seana Irvine be heard regarding Developing Evergreen Brick Works. Carried

Dan Mathieson introduced Seana Irvine noting Ms. Irvine dedicated much of her career to transforming Toronto's Don Valley Brick Works from an abandoned brick factory and brownfield, into Evergreen Brick Works, an award-winning showcase for innovation and sustainability. Ms. Irvine's PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies at Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario) explores how more equity-based approaches to redeveloping post-industrial landscapes can contribute to creating more inclusive cities.

Ms. Irvine presented on creating the Evergreen Brick Works. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the brick factory operated for almost 100 years until closing in 1984;
- expropriated in 1989;
- owned by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and managed by the City of Toronto;
- design challenges included brownfield, floodplain, four (4) levels of government, complex program ambitions;
- eight (8) years from concept to opening;
- partnerships created with organizations who had a mandate that was relevant to the site;
- partnerships from the beginning of the projects were not all at the table by the end of the project;
- created Living Labs to test ideas at scale before breaking ground;
- key lessons learned:
 - engage the community early and often;
 - focus on big picture but take it one step at a time creating milestones and celebrating successes;
 - ask for help, know your strengths and weaknesses and bring in experts;
 - reveal experiential layers of programs over time;
 - triple your time expectation and brace for budget realities.

Mark Vandembosch questioned if the \$55 million budget covered all of the building components.

Ms. Irvine stated the initial budget of \$55 million only covered phase one of the project. She noted all costs on the industrial pad Evergreen paid for and the City of Toronto paid for any assessments outside of it.

In response to questions Ms. Irvine noted the following regarding partnerships:

- used various types of partners including community and business;

- community partners in the beginning were those willing to lend their names and logos and brought programs and energy with their own funds;
- did not have agreements for initial activations;
- evolved to legal contracts once work and money was brought into the picture;
- various scales of partnership with people who supported the vision with various levels of risk;
- reached out to potential partners at the beginning, once momentum was gained partners started reaching out on their own accord;
- start with light touch activations.

Nic Flanagan asked if the Conservation Authority owns the land, the City of Toronto manages it and Evergreen is a non-profit.

Ms. Irvine stated the Conversation Authority owns the land and has a 99-year agreement with the City of Toronto. Evergreen is a third-party non-profit with a 21 year less a day headlease.

In response to questions Ms. Irvine recommended engaging community partners to complete activations and make it easy for groups to get involved. She noted light touch activations should have a light touch system, for example, would the City be willing to hold the insurance. Make it easy for people to participate and remove barriers.

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1 Indigenous Engagement & Consultation Strategy Update

Oonagh Vaucrosson, Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator provided an update on the Indigenous engagement and consultation strategy noting the following:

- currently in the pre-consultation phase or relationship building phase;
- first step is determining the various nations to ensure a comprehensive representation;

- completing preliminary work with the City of Guelph to understand the process;
- second step is reviewing the land acknowledgement;
- third step is the initial outreach to send formal correspondence to Indigenous governments and organizations;
- will provide updates to the Committee as available.

Emily Robson noted the group will be completing a draft plan for the committee to consider.

Paul Parlee noted in the last minutes there was a wish to try to incorporate Indigenous perspectives in design and space use and questioned if any thought has been given to providing a dedicated space for the exclusive use of Indigenous communities so they can present their own messages at their discretion rather than the Committee trying to develop protocols.

Ms. Vaucrosson stated preliminary discussions with the Kaswentha/Two Row Now group and they came up with a number of ideas thinking about the space and how their culture can be represented in such a space including what a friendship centre might entail. There are many groups that need to have a voice.

Mr. Parlee questioned if the Committee should allow the Indigenous community to determine what groups should be included in the process.

Ms. Vaucrosson stated we have a duty to inform all groups this is taking place and understand what is happening.

6.2 Draft 2025 Budget for The Grand Trunk Renewal Project Update

Joan Thomson, CAO provided an update on the 2025 budget for the Grand Trunk Renewal Project noting the following:

- the workplan has been incorporated into the draft and the description of items has been broadened;
- a high level overview has been added to the allocation for site servicing, etc.;
- with approval of Council funds can be allocated from the reserve as needed;

- fund will be allocated to investStratford to support staffing for the project, which will require approval from Council and the investStratford Board.

6.3 Grand Trunk Site Activation & Animation Updates

Tim Wolfe, Director of Community Services spoke to the activation and animation updates at the Grand Trunk site noting the following:

- there is an interest in the Community to see activation on the site;
- various staff met to discuss what steps are required to move forward including permits, occupancy, site remediation;
- some sections of the site can be used immediately, others require work to be completed;
- staff are meeting again this week to go to the site and start generating ideas;
- will come back to the Committee with a process for groups who wish to use the site;
- working to determine if winter activation is possible;
- would like to see quick, easy wins this fall.

Emily Robson stated along with Community Services, she is working with Destination Stratford and Stratford Summer Music to determine what a footprint for use would look like and what safety measures need to be in place. She noted the process needs to be easy and accessible for groups to use the space.

6.4 Discussion Points from the Real Estate, Legal & Finance Working Group

Franklin Famme stated the Real Estate, Legal & Finance Working Group met in August and from that meeting came the discussion points listed in the working group update.

Taylor Crinklaw, Director of Infrastructure Services spoke to the environmental considerations at the site noting how the City proceeds with remediation depends on various factors including interest from the development community as some developers are more apt to take risk and would be willing to take on remediation whereas others would not. He

noted the funds are available to proceed with remediation if Council decides to do so. Mr. Crinklaw stated there are various levels of contamination on different sections of the site.

A discussion took place regarding the contamination of the site and the previous studies and work that has taken place. It was noted the recent record of site condition for the building shows a map of all of the boreholes and helps guide where the investigation can move forward. The need for a complete examination of all of the areas and an updated report including what is contaminated and the costs to remediate was discussed.

Andrew Hilton stated it would be beneficial to have a presentation on Brownfield development and the process to members a better understanding.

Motion by Paul Parlee

Seconded by Mark Vandembosch

THAT staff to investigate a presentation with regards to the risk mitigation and the addressing of environmental concerns and the inventory of those concerns on the site and to assist in developing a strategy to move forward. Carried

Mr. Famme stated the working group is looking at models that will be potential uses to defray costs, including residential, and questioned if staff would consider a reduction in parking requirements.

Joan Thomson stated at the previous meeting the Director of Building and Planning presented and spoke to community benefits and parking. The City would be supportive of reducing parking requirements, particularly if underground or structured parking facilities were created on the site or in the downtown core were constructed to absorb the demand. This would help maximize land use and support sustainable development goals. Currently parking reductions are considered on a case by case basis and would ultimately require Council approval. With key considerations including the community benefits offered, proximity to transit, overall environmental stewardship and the long term impact on downtown parking availability.

Mr. Famme questioned if the considerations are site specific or City wide.

Ms. Thomson responded it is both as we need to consider where can we make up the parking if needed and consider the entire system and not individual lots as changes can affect other parts of the parking system.

Mr. Famme spoke to community benefits and stated in the past there has been apprehension to approve buildings of a higher number of stories and noted this project may not be viable if the number of stories cannot be increase.

Ms. Thomson stated at the previous meeting the Director of Building and Planning spoke to community benefits and how existing community benefits are already in place for this site. The City is prepared to allow for an increase in the number of stories for community benefits as listed under the Official Plan and to include agreements as potential tools to secure the desired benefits. Ms. Thomson noted the final decisions rests with Council.

Mayor Ritsma stated in Council's visionary process early on there was support of higher density and higher heights on the site.

7. Reports of the Working Groups & Staff Update

7.1 Partnership

Karen Haslam stated the working group is visiting with many community groups and service clubs to discuss the potential community space at the site.

7.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture

7.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance

See report in item 6.4

7.4 Communications, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

John Kastner stated himself and Andrew Hilton have updated the Frequently Asked Questions to reflect the current environment as well as the draft speaking points.

Mr. Kastner noted the group is involved in the further leveraging of the current assets including the timeline panels at the Grand Trunk site and the virtual walkthrough of the building that was commissioned by Steve Cooper. Additionally, Andrew Hilton has worked with staff to create a form for groups who wish to be part of activation on the site.

Ron Dodson asked if there was a consistent response from groups when meeting with them.

Mr. Kastner stated the response is generally that people are excited to see movement on the project and want to start to see activation on the site.

7.5 Infrastructure & Environment

Stephen Cooper noted he plans to bring a report to the next Committee meeting regarding the environmental work which has been completed and some of the restrictions on the site in regards to environmental concerns. He noted this is a brownfield which brings challenges.

Mr. Cooper stated most of the contaminants on the site do not go deep and only certain areas are impacted.

7.6 Working Group Coordinator(s)

Dan Mathieson stated Ray Harsant requested the Committee to consider changing the meetings from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. No motion was brought forward.

7.7 Staff Update

Emily Robson stated the working group reports are attached to the agenda as challenges around sharing of information was discussed at a previous meeting. She noted suggestions regarding communication are always welcome. The Vision and Guiding Principles are scheduled for the September 23 Regular Council meeting.

Ms. Robson noted Ray Harsant has provided 20 copies of Valley of the Birdtail for any members who would like one.

7.8 Youth Representative Update

Vicky Trotter advised staff contacted additional applicants, unfortunately, they were no longer interested in the youth representative position. This fall the position will be re-advertised with the anticipation of filling the position.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is October 21, 2024 in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Mark Vandenbosch

**THAT the September 16 2024 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal
Committee meeting adjourn. Carried**

Meeting Start Time: 4:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:39 P.M.