

Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Minutes
April 15, 2021 – 8:00 AM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Yvonne Chornobay
Kimberly Copetti, Chair
Jennifer Jenkins
Rick McDonnell, Heritage Whitby Advisory Committee Representative
Meg Moraine, Olde Whitby Neighbourhood Association Representative
Matt Parish
Lara Perroni (logged on at 8:19 a.m./logged off at 9:00 a.m.)
Natalie Prychitko, Whitby Chamber of Commerce Representative (logged off at 9:29 a.m.)
Paul Rolland, Vice-Chair
Paul Scott
Chris van der Vliet

Also Present: Councillor Leahy, Mayor's Designate
Rhonda Jessup, Chief Executive Officer, Whitby Public Library
Paul Pirri, Senior Manager, Economic Development
Brayden Siersma, Economic Development Coordinator
Gerrit Van Heuvelen, Operations Technician
Christy Chrus, Staff Liaison, Manager, Creative Communities
Heather Oerlemans, Council and Committee Coordinator (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: Karey Anne Large, Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area Representative

Call to Order

1. Disclosures of Interest

1.1 There were no disclosures of interest.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

2.1 Minutes - March 18, 2021

Recommendation:

Moved By Yvonne Chornobay

That the Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee minutes of March 18, 2021 be approved.

Carried

3. Presentations

3.1 There were no presentations.

4. Delegations

4.1 There were no delegations.

5. General Business and Reports

5.1 Introduction of Paul Pirri, Senior Manager, Economic Development Department, Town of Whitby

Kimberly Copetti introduced Paul Pirri, Senior Manager, Economic Development Department, Town of Whitby, to the Committee.

Paul Pirri provided an overview of initiatives within the Town's Economic Development Department which included:

- the Elevate-Talent Initiative, a 90-day learning program in the field of technology for the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) community; and,
- the launch of a new Economic Development Strategy.

5.2 Recap and Key Learnings: Joint Brooklin Downtown Development Steering Committee and Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Meeting Presentation

Kimberly Copetti requested feedback from the Joint Brooklin Downtown Development Steering Committee and Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee meeting presentation.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- developing a tourist strategy;
- building tourist destinations during the fall, spring, and winter seasons;

- developing destination networks with the entertainment, waterfront, sports, restaurant, and business sectors in the community;
- connecting several festivals to build on single events;
- hosting theme nights;
- linking culture, heritage, and tourism together;
- seeking opportunities to establish a convention centre within the Town;
- re-introducing an ambassador program;
- canvassing local businesses to participate in a sports tourism coupon program; and,
- connecting with local Airbnbs to offer tourism packages.

A question and answer period ensued regarding:

- whether specific locations would be considered as tourists destinations such as a downtown spa or heritage sites; and,
- whether an information booth could be set up at the Farmers' Market for businesses to advertise their services on a rotational basis.

5.3 Metrolinx Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Proposal

Kimberly Copetti requested feedback from the Committee regarding the Metrolinx Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposal.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- diverting traffic and intensification projects within the downtown such as developments at Reynolds Street and Garden Street, the Fire Hall at Colborne Street East and Brock Street South, and 513 Dundas Street East;
- developing a strategic plan to make the downtown walkable; and,
- using the Metrolinx BRT as a model for a future development of a North-South bus route along Brock Street.

A question and answer period ensued regarding:

- whether future traffic patterns were considered by Metrolinx based on intensification within the downtown;
- how to keep traffic on the thorough-fares and off the side streets while implementing a bus rapid transit route;
- whether short and long-term issues resulting from a bus rapid transit route could be studied; and,
- whether the Metrolinx BRT presentation at the Special Council meeting on April 22, 2021 would focus on new options.

5.4 Healthy Communities Initiative Grant Funding

Christy Chrus advised that the Healthy Communities Initiative Grant Funding was a federal funding application for the creation of healthy spaces within downtowns during COVID-19. Ms. Chrus advised that the Town's grant application included key features such as a LOVElock, hand sanitizer station, benches, raised planters, game tables, art features and an astroturf lawn area. She further advised that enhancements to the WIFI in Celebration Square, as well as the installation of game tables and shade features were planned. Ms. Chrus stated that feedback regarding the application would be received in May, 2021.

5.5 Joint Brooklin Downtown Development Steering Committee and Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Subcommittee Update: Newsletter and Workshops

Paul Rolland provided an update regarding the Joint Brooklin Downtown Development Steering Committee and Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Subcommittee which included:

- the Joint Brooklin Downtown Development Steering Committee and Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Newsletter's feature articles; and,
- two webinars, Window Displays for Businesses on April 29, 2021, and Signage for Businesses on May 6, 2021.

5.6 Tourism Strategy Update

Christy Chrus advised that an update was provided under Item 5.2, Recap and Key Learnings: Joint Brooklin Downtown Development Steering Committee and Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Meeting Presentation and that an additional update would be provided at a later date.

5.7 Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Strategic Plan Review

Kimberly Copetti requested that the Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee Strategic Plan review be deferred to the June 17, 2021 Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee meeting.

5.8 Department and Organization Updates

Heritage Whitby Advisory Committee

Rick McDonnell advised that several heritage permits were being reviewed by the Heritage Whitby Advisory Committee.

Whitby Public Library

Rhonda Jessup provided an update regarding the Whitby Public Library which included:

- offering contactless pick up at all library locations;
- offering contactless pick up for print jobs and library-to-go kits for families;
- offering assistance in booking COVID-19 vaccination appointments; and,
- preparations were underway for the installation of the Sir William Stephenson statue in Celebration Square.

Economic Development Department

Brayden Siersma provided an Economic Development Department update which included:

- initiating rollouts from the Economic Recovery Plan;
- releasing business support videos to local support organizations;
- developing a new Economic Development Strategy; and,
- a presentation by the Town on current projects and attracting investment in light of COVID-19 on April 20, 2021 during the Whitby Chamber of Commerce Networking session.

Public Works Department

Gerrit Van Heuvelen provided a Public Works Department update which included:

- preparing plant baskets for the downtown;
- a new flushing and sweeping program in Whitby's downtowns;
- a litter pick up program in the downtown; and,
- the installation of downtown boardwalks was on hold due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

6. Correspondence

- 6.1** There was no correspondence.

7. Council Update

- 7.1** Councillor Leahy provided an update regarding:

- a presentation regarding the Metrolinx Bus Rapid Transit project on April 22, 2021 at a Special Council meeting; and,
- the Election Sign By-law was deferred to the April 19, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting.

8. Other Business

8.1 There was no other business.

9. Next Meeting

9.1 Thursday, June 17, 2021 - 8:00 a.m.
Virtual Meeting

10. Adjournment

10.1 Motion to Adjourn

Recommendation:

Moved By Paul Scott

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

Note: These minutes were approved by the Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee on June 17, 2021.