

Bowen Island Municipality  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**2014 ANNUAL REPORT to COUNCIL**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

As a committee of the Bowen Island Municipality, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) is pleased to present this annual report, as per its Terms of References, as amended December, 2013. The purpose of the report is to provide a summary of the committee's activities and accomplishments within its allotted budget.

The committee held 11 formal committee meetings over 12 months. A branding sub-committee met four times throughout the year. The committee also hosted a number of public gatherings, workshops educational and networking sessions. It appeared before Council on several occasions, liaised with various BIM committees including the APC and BIMTAC, welcomed delegations from various community groups including the Bowen Island Community Foundation, and connected with other stakeholders such as the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce.

The committee kicked off the New Year by recommending that Council approve the draft 2014-2015 Economic Development Action Plan. Council reviewed and approved the report early in 2014, and it was later presented to the public in March of 2014.

A considerable amount of the committee's time and effort over the ensuing year was focused on the implementation of the Action Plan. That Plan is organized around four main goals, and this reports highlights activities undertaken towards the achievement of each of those goals.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Enhance Local Business Climate**

- The need for an effective Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program was recognized and the exploration of what a locally designed program would look like began. Research into a Business Visitation and Business Walks program progressed throughout the year. The initiative is still underway and will continue in 2015.
- Initial discussions were held with the Bowen Public Library in regards to setting up a Business Resource Library.
- In order to ensure supportive local government policies, Committee members reviewed the Official Community Plan to ensure it would not deter desirable economic activity on the island. A number of suggestions for revisions were brought forward to Council, who then advised staff to prepare a bylaw. After first reading of the bylaw, a public information meeting was held by the municipality. The meeting, hosted by BIM staff, was very well attended by the public who spoke out both in favour and against the proposed revisions. The Municipality also received numerous written submissions on the subject. Upon review and consideration of the public feedback and input, the EDC revised its recommendations, withdrawing a number of the proposed changes. It passed a motion indicating this decision and recommendation to Council.
- The EDC also considered the Land Use Bylaw in terms of its effectiveness in supporting potential economic activity. Work completed on this was submitted to BIM staff for their review.

- EDC researched the concept of establishing a redevelopment zone. After considerable research into the matter, it passed a motion recommending that Council develop a revitalization tax exemption program for Snug Cove properties.
- The EDC and BIM staff pursued options for improving telecommunications and connectivity on Bowen Island, contacting service providers and working with others to encourage enhancement of current conditions.

### **Create a Welcoming Community with a Strong Identity**

- The art and business of community branding has been a major focus for the EDC, and subsequently a sub-committee of EDC. Much time has been spent by the committee understanding why a brand is necessary and how it can articulate the values and assets of the community in a way that brings positive results, for citizens, visitors and business alike. EDC committee members have attended webinars and workshops on the subject, inviting the public to join them on a number of occasions. The committee worked with professionals to develop a work plan for the development of a brand. It developed and circulated a call for EOI, directed at firms interested in helping the community develop its brand and programs. The branding sub-committee received 35 EOI submissions, which they scrutinized and short-listed to a total of 9.

As part of the branding process, the EDC developed, analyzed and later presented a Visitor Exit Survey, conducted over the summer, to gauge the experience of visitors to the island. This is the first in three surveys that will be conducted to help inform the branding process. It will be followed by a survey aimed at business, and one gathering residents' input.

The EDC has explored how to minimize the cost of a branding exercise, and studied other communities' branding experiences to understand best practices and develop a template for success. In forming the branding subcommittee, the EDC has reached out to a broad section of the community to ask for input and participation. The subcommittee will continue to take steps to ensure a process that suits our community and respects and honours our island and all its inhabitants.

- EDC recognizes that a Community Profile, with accurate demographics and statistics, is an important tool for business, residents and visitors alike. While various resources and information is available, some of it is outdated or incomplete. An application for a Labour Market Partnership grant to help fund this program was unfortunately not successful. The EDC worked with Douglas College students who conducted a "Market Intelligence" scan on Bowen, which was of some value. While much data has been collected, the work of compiling the report is yet to be undertaken.
- The EDC recognized the importance of efforts towards the improvement and beautification of Snug Cove and has supported groups, such as the Garden Club working towards that achievement. It invited Holly Graph to discuss the Garden Gateway concept and gave its endorsement of that project as well as the proposed Library-Gallery project in the cove.

### **Enhance Tourism & Artisanal Economy**

- In support of the tourism sector, earlier identified as a key economic driver, the EDC hosted a meeting in early January attended by more than 40 members of the community. Participants agreed there was a need for a community-based coordinating body for tourism. Members of EDC worked to establish Tourism Bowen Island as a separate entity. The new organization revived the Community Tourism Plan as a template for action and began to formulate its own vision and mandate. EDC continues to monitor and support TBI and its activities.

- As a component of its Action Plan, the EDC endorsed the Bowen Island Arts Council's endeavour to review and update the Cultural Master Plan, which speaks to economic development. The committee agreed to comply with Council's request to support the initiative.

### **A Strong Economic Development Function**

- Members of EDC played an immense role in advocating on behalf of Bowen Island. The Chair, Council liaison representatives and others maintained a high profile networking with a number of government officials.
- Members of EDC attended the Minister's dinner hosted by the BC Economic Development Association.
- Ingrid Strauss, Regional Manager of the Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training department of the provincial government announced in April the appointment of a new Regional Manager to Bowen Island. Lindsay Bisschop (assigned to the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley region) subsequently visited Bowen and now joins committee meetings via telephone whenever possible. Lindsay helped the EDC connect with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure staff so that EDC could initiate dialogue regarding the inadequate highway signage marking the exit (via the BC Ferries terminal) to Bowen. Following a letter from the Mayor and further pressure, the Ministry of Transportation finally conceded and agreed to erect signs (both eastbound and westbound) indicating Bowen Island.
- EDC was committed to assisting and working with BIMTAC. This included the Chair attending numerous BIMTAC meetings. He also participated in a conference call with the Federal Minister of Transportation, Lisa Raitt, and local MP, John Weston, regarding ferry issues.
- The Chair again met with the Minister of Transportation and John Weston to discuss marine traffic through Howe Sound. Following that, the Chair and Mayor Brenda Broughton of Lions Bay provided John Weston with a draft letter to Minister Raitt outlining the concerns from both sides of the Sound.
- The Chair met with Jordan Sturdy, MLA, on a number of occasions as well.
- EDC members attended the BCEDA Economic Summit in April. While there, the Chair presented a report on volunteerism. The EDC was nominated for recognition by the provincial body.
- In April, EDC partnered with Bowen in Transition and the Bowen Island Arts Council to host a presentation by David van Seters on the Sharing Economy.
- Throughout the year, the EDC maintained open and consistent communication, informing the public of its actions and intentions through press releases and BIM newsletters, as well as through articles written by the Undercurrent.

In addition to the above initiatives, the EDC reviewed and responded to referrals from Council. These included the Community Lands Lot 2 OPC Amendment Application and Rezoning Application Bylaws and the Pub Rezoning Application. In both cases, after due deliberation, EDC supported the applications under consideration.

### **2014 BUDGET**

Many of the EDC programs and initiatives in the Action Plan are underway and are multi-year activities. We have proposed the unused budget allocations of \$24,000 in 2014 be carried over to 2015 so the work may continue. We plan on seeking private as well as municipal funding to continue the branding initiative.

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of 2014, the EDC was comprised of the following members:

Gordon Ganong, Chair  
Jacqueline Massey, Vice-Chair  
David Bellringer  
Glenn Cormier  
Barry Thomas  
Murray Atherton  
Michael Kaile  
Councillors Tim Rhodes and Alison Morse

Sheana Stevenson acted as the Committee Clerk and Minute-Taker. However Sheana left for maternity leave in April and was replaced by Hope Dallas. Both staff have been essential to the work of the EDC, and are considered key team members who add immeasurably to the committee. We also recognize the ongoing support of CAO Kathy Lalonde and other BIM Staff that assist the EDC and other committees.

Barry Thomas resigned from the committee in May and the vacancy was not filled. A municipal election in November meant that the council liaison positions would be reassigned.

The committee recognizes the huge role played by Tim Rhodes and Alison Morse, both whom dedicated enormous time and expertise towards moving forward economic opportunities for the island.

We are also immensely grateful to Council, both past and present, for its leadership and understanding of the need for a vibrant and healthy local economy. We believe that the EDC has played an integral role in affecting positive change towards a robust economic and social life on Bowen. Under your authority and with your continued support and direction, we look forward to continuing our work and the implementation of the 2014-2015 Economic Development Action Plan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bowen Island Municipality Economic Development Committee