

March 31, 2017

To: Bowen Island Mayor and Council

From: Chris Corrigan and John Parker, Co-Chairs, Economic Development Committee

Re: **2016 Annual Report of the Bowen Island Economic Development Committee**

As Co-chairs we are pleased to submit a summary report of the 2016 activities of your Economic Development Committee.

This year was characterized by two main pieces of work in support of Council's objectives for a vibrant and resilient local economy. Your committee's most visible accomplishment was completing the branding development work and beginning the process of brand implementation. We also focused on business research and information sharing and networking.

This past year saw a transition in our leadership as well, as Gordon Ganong wrapped up his tenure as EDC chair and several new members joined the committee.

This report also outlines a summary of our major activities for 2017.

Branding

The major initiative of 2016 was completing the branding work that was begun in 2014. This was made a priority by Council as Strategic Pillar F1 in the Island Plan 2016 and we are pleased to report that we have accomplished this work.

In 2016 our work on this priority included raising money and working closely with Rethink who used our branding research to generate a new set of branding assets for Bowen Island Municipality. Additionally we developed a set of brand images and tag-lines that generated intense interest across the country and globally. The intense interest in our branding work led to over 1 million impressions on the Bowen Island Municipality website and an estimated \$180,000 of earned media value. We were covered by television, radio and print media and have had more than 850,000 social media impressions.

Here at home, our wordmarks and logos began appearing on Municipality communications materials.

For 2017 we are moving into brand implementation within the municipality and a working group has been established that is overseeing this work within the municipality.

Milestones

- Completed the Bowen Island branding exercise with the help of ReThink and
- Moved from creating the logos and tag-lines to brand implementation, including designing brand use standards.
- Began work to expand awareness of the brand from the visual identity (logos and tag-lines) to the deeper brand essence and brand promise
- Bowen Island branded merchandise has appeared at BowFest, The Christmas Craft Fair, tourism trade shows, and has been licensed and is for sale at the Union Steamship Company store.

Business Retention and Expansion working group

Business research and networking

As a part of its work, the EDC conducts research and engages in strategic planning and responses related to economic issues.

Milestones

- In 2016 we completed an extensive series of Business Conversations aimed at understanding how and why people do business on Bowen. This research contributed valuable information for both the branding and for further planning discussions about how best to support our local economy.
- We produced a “Bowen Island Best Business Practices” guide to capture the distilled wisdom and advice from the nearly 50 business owners that took part in the Business Conversations.
- The results of the business research were presented at a Bowen Island business summit held at the Bowen Island Lodge on October 18. Over 60 business owners attended to learn about the results of the research, delve deeper into the the brand, exploring the brand story, brand essence, and brand promise. All indications show that this summit was a success. The feedback we received on that day has been rolled into the business licensing work that the EDC is pursuing in 2017.

Community Profile working group

With the clear writing of Heather Prittie, we produced two other notable publications in 2016: a community profile and a newcomers guide:

- The community profile was designed to give a data-based overview of Bowen Island, and was developed in a way that is easily updated as we receive new information from future censuses and surveys. Two versions were created, one as a summary and a second which covers more detail.
- The working group also produced a Newcomer’s Guide to Bowen which was designed to be both “practical and whimsical” and contains nuggets of advice collected from islanders over social media. The purpose of the Guide is to help orient

newcomers to basic information while at the same time giving them an introduction to Bowen Island culture.

Networking events

In addition to the above mentioned business summit, we worked closely with our contact from the Ministry of Jobs Skills and Training to host a one day event to explore a variety of issues facing our local economy. Nearly forty people met at Evergreen Hall on March 31 to listen to presentations on internet connectivity, local government business relations, local economy branding and models for small town community economic development.

Referrals

We continued to receive referrals and requests for support for the establishment of local businesses and we provided formal feedback on the economic development components of the Grafton Lake lands development application. This is part of our ongoing work as a Council committee.

Rural Dividend Exemption

The EDC was successful in obtaining an exemption that allowed us to participate in the Province of BC's Rural Dividend Program. The municipality has obtained a small grant to promote energy efficiency for 2017.

Connections with other committees

EDC members sit on the Cultural Master Plan Steering group, the municipal service task force, and we actively liaise with Tourism Bowen Island, local business networks and the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce. These connections keep us close to the ground and allow other committees and groups to access the knowledge and resources of our members on local economic development issues.

Planning and succession

The EDC held a planning day in November to discuss 2017 plans. We set several priorities for 2017 including:

Village as a Venue: a developing concept to connect together accommodation providers, amenities providers, caterers and workers to intentionally work at hosting gatherings and retreats on Bowen Island.

The Year Ahead

A full update of our action plan will follow soon but here are some of the ways your committee hopes to support Council in service of our local economy in 2017:

Internet. The work of the Internet Connectivity Working Group has been rolled into the EDC and will continue to work on this issue.

Business licenses. As per Island Plan 2017, Strategic priority B2.6, a task force is looking into the feasibility of a Bowen island business license program, to bring our policies in line with our Land Use Bylaw. We expect to report on this by April 2017.

Brand implementation. With our brand assets now in place and brand implementation under way a working group will work with the municipality to roll out the brand work and seek other opportunities for our brand assets to be used in the local economy and community. A Managers' Meeting has been designed to assist the Municipality in how to 'live the brand.'

Flat Iron District. We hope to be involved in referrals and providing feedback on current zoning proposals including the light industrial zoning proposed for Lot 1.

Networking events. Our networking events have proved very popular and we will plan to hold one in the fall of 2017. Additionally we are looking at hosting a small community economic summit on Bowen in the winter of 2018.

Think Tank. Our research work will continue as we look into the data that will be released through 2017 from the recent census. We will also be in a position to consider using some of our resources to conduct some basic research on the nature of Bowen's local economy.

Membership changes

At the end of 2016, we also prepared to say goodbye to members Sheree Johnson, Edward Wachtman, Heidi Kuhrt and Murray Atherton whose terms were due to expire around the beginning of 2017. We also prepared to bid farewell to Gordon Ganong who, after five years, was stepping away from the chair position and also stepping down from the committee. He leaves us in great shape for a transition and his service is deeply appreciated.

We hope this report provides you with a useful overview of the work of your committee in 2016. We look forward to serving Council in 2017 with new members and new ideas.

Chris Corrigan
John Parker
Co-Chairs