

**2017 Annual Report
Economic Development Committee**



To: Mayor Skeels and Council
From: Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Date: February 16, 2018 Meeting Date: March 26, 2018
Subject: **Economic Development Committee (EDC) 2017 Annual Report**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Economic Development Committee (EDC) 2017 Annual Report for information as per the EDC Terms of Reference.

PURPOSE

This report is intended to provide an overview for Council of the activities and initiatives of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) in 2017.

DISCUSSION

On the heels of the intense, action-packed couple of years that preceded, 2017 was a time for the EDC to settle, re-group, and set its sails to new directions. With an eye to both continuing ongoing initiatives and responsibilities, and to embarking upon new priorities at the hands of the skill-sets and passions of new members, 2017 marked the beginning of a new era for the EDC.

This report has been broken down into the following components:

1. General Information
2. Priorities and Subcommittees
3. Additional Goals and Initiatives
4. Moving Forward

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Membership

With Gordon Ganong chairing his last EDC meeting in January of 2017, and only two meetings attended by Sheree Johnson, Ed Wachtman and Murray Atherton, membership for the remainder of the 2017 was as follows:

- Chris Corrigan, Co-Chair
- John Park, Co-Chair
- Glenn Cormier
- Robyn Fenton (*joined July 2017*)
- Rod Marsh
- Jacqueline Massey
- Dan McBurney (*resigned March 28, 2017*)
- Michelle Nelson
- Barry Pynn (*joined February 2017*)
- Shana Richmond (*began February 2017*)
- Councillor Maureen Nicholson
- Councillor Michael Kaile (*as internet connectivity liaison*)

The Economic Development Committee held eleven (11) meetings in 2017, one (1) Strategic Conversations planning session, and thirteen (13) subcommittee meetings.

Ministry Support

Until August of 2017, the Committee received support, information, and leadership from Lindsay Bisschop, Regional Manager, Economic Development, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training. Ms. Bisschop attended EDC meetings either in person or by phone, and was a valuable source of information regarding provincial network contacts and resources, activities and initiatives in other municipalities in BC, funding and grant opportunities, and economic development resources such as the [Strategic Planning Toolkit for Local Economic Development](#). Upon request, Ms. Bisschop provided a [presentation](#) that clarified Community Economic Development for Committee members and was an invaluable source of information for the group.

In August, Lindsay Bisschop moved on to a new department in the Ministry and her position has yet to be filled. However, since November 2017, the EDC has benefitted from the knowledge and expertise of Cheryl McLay, Regional Manager Vancouver Island/Coast Regional Economic Operations, Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, who has been liaising in a temporary capacity. Ms McLay provided, for example, invaluable support regarding the effort required to earn an exemption to the Rural Dividend funding program. Efforts continue to be made toward acquiring this significant funding resource.

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Professional Development, Networking, Memberships

Bowen Island Municipality is a member of the British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) and the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce in order support the pursuits of the EDC with information and networking opportunities. In April 2017, one EDC member attended the [Hopeful Economics Leadership and Innovation Summit](#) in Vancouver.

Council Referrals

The EDC had two Council referrals in 2017.

In May, Committee members were asked to comment on Proposed Grafton Lake Lands Development Project rezoning application. Their recommendation included emphasis on diversity of housing, flexibility of zoning for retreat and guest house areas, and inclusion of more indoor common use areas.

In October, the Committee was asked for its input on an application to amend the Water Commercial (WC) 1(a) (Marina) zoning at 431 Trunk Road to allow an increase from three to nine floating homes. Comments to staff included prioritizing local workers as tenants, ensuring rental affordability, mixing free-market and restricted rental, and prohibiting future tourist-commercial use.

2. PRIORITIES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

In November 2016, the EDC met to workshop goals for the following year. Priorities were identified, and subcommittees were struck to accomplish these goals.

Business Retention and Expansion Working Group

(Members: Michelle Nelson, Chris Corrigan, Sheree Johnson, Ed Wachtman, Jacqueline Massey, Murray Atherton, Robyn Fenton, Lindsay Bisschop (on-call resource)). The BRE met five (5) times in 2017.

The BRE identified three themes at its inaugural meeting: information gathering, awareness and relationship building and encouraging local growth and sustainability. The group also generated a substantial list of possible initiatives, the breadth of which incited discussion at the committee level of proposing that a full time Economic Development Officer be hired (see Section 3 of this report below).

Branding Working Group

(Members: Sheree Johnson, Ed Wachtman, Michelle Nelson (Representing Bowen Tourism), Chris Staples (Representing Rethink), Glenn Cormier, Jacqueline Massey, John Parker, Shana Richmond, and Owen Plowman). The Branding Working Group met twice in 2017.

The Branding Working Group identified the next step in the branding process as implementation. Significant brand implementation took place at the Municipal level, including the branding of the proposed Health Centre and the proposed Community Centre. In addition, a new, branded municipal website was created. Staff also began applying the brand mark to signage, municipal correspondence and other communications.

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Business Licensing Task Force

(Members: Rod Marsh, Barry Pynn, Chris Corrigan, Shana Richmond, Councillor Maureen Nicholson, Lindsay Bisschop (on-call resource)). The Business License Task Force met five times in 2017.

The Business Licensing Task Force responded to Council direction by providing a report to Council in November 2017 regarding the feasibility of implementing business licensing on Bowen Island . The Task Force met both in person and by email and, over the 12 months of 2017, provided the EDC with a preliminary report for discussion, proposed a timeline for Council presentation, presented an update on questions for stakeholders and comparative communities, and produced a subsequent report on interviews with those communities. The Task Force ultimately provided a draft for EDC feedback and finally, upon recommendation by the EDC, submitted a report to Council recommending implementation of Business Licences on Bowen Island which Council approved.

Internet Access Task Force

(Members: Councillor Michael Kaile, Lindsay Bisschop (on-call resource), Barry Pynn, Councillor Maureen Nicholson, Shana Richmond, Andrew Brownsword, David Verlee, John Parker). The Internet Access Task Force met once in person in 2017 along with several group email discussions.

Early in 2017, the EDC requested that Council formally direct the Committee to work towards improving internet connectivity. Following such, the Internet Access Task Force was struck. Discussion by this group included Councillor Kaile and Andrew Brownsword providing an overview to the Task Force of the work accomplished by the former Internet Connectivity Working Group (Committee of Council).

Councillor Kaile provided the EDC with an update on progress regarding improving internet connectivity on Bowen Island in March, and in June advised that conversations with the two major providers, Shaw and Telus, were ongoing, that improvement was imminent, and that the information regarding such was proprietary.

3. ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

In addition to the four priorities identified above, the EDC identified the following goals in 2017.

Community Economic Development Model

A shift from the Economic Development model to the Community Economic Development model was an ongoing topic for discussion in 2017. The Ministry Liaison provided a presentation on such in February, and in December Wes Regan of Simon Fraser University provided a [presentation](#) as well (attached to this report). Discussions regarding making the shift to the Community Economic Development model official are ongoing, but there is general agreement within the Committee that the change would be organic as the role that the EDC has historically played in the community fits seamlessly into this paradigm.

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Hiring a Full-Time Community Economic Development Officer Staff Member

The absence of a Chamber of Commerce on Bowen Island, along with both the extensive work of the primarily volunteer-run Tourism Bowen Island and the significant list of ideas generated by the BRE, motivated some members of the EDC to prioritize the hire of a full-time Community Economic Development Officer for Bowen Island Municipality. The EDC Staff Liaison researched and interviewed nineteen (19) BC comparator and proximate communities in BC and presented the results of this work to the Committee in November 2017. Discussions regarding recommending that Council direct staff to take this step are ongoing.

Other Initiatives

The EDC embarked on addressing its role in identifying the importance of Business Continuity and Emergency Planning in 2017; it also contributed to work towards mitigating the impact of possible logging on Bowen Island. Finally, there was some discussion of supporting the growth of technical industry on the island.

4. MOVING FORWARD

Ongoing Discussions and Future Plans

2017 discussions that may be followed up on in the upcoming year include the hiring of an economist to conduct an analysis of the island; taking advantage of MITACS research funding opportunities; providing information to Council regarding Food Trucks; and collaborating more effectively with Tourism Bowen Island to craft a tourism strategy.

As of February 2018, three EDC memberships expired, and their replacements are pending. When the new group is in place, priorities for 2018 will be more specifically articulated, but as it stands, the Economic Development Committee intends to move forward with enhancing the tourist experience and engaging the community in developing a thriving local economy. These ends will be supported by a speaker series of experts to educate both the committee and community members which will commence in April of 2018. The Economic Development Committee will also be submitting its 2018 Work Plan and Budget Request to Council.

5. ATTACHMENT

Please find the following presentation attached to this report: "What is Community Economic Development?" Bowen Island EDC, February 10, 2017. Lindsay Bisschop, Regional Manager, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training.

Stefania Shortt, EDC Staff Liaison