

**TOWNSHIP OF BILLINGS**  
**Economic Development Committee**  
**MINUTES**

February 10, 2020, 7:00 pm

Electronic Meeting (Zoom Meetings)

**PRESENT:** Councillor Sharon Alkenbrack (Chair), Suzanne Darlaston, Councillor Sharon Jackson, Diane Larocque, Tracy Paris

**Staff:** Todd Gordon, Economic Development Officer; Kathy McDonald, CAO

**REGRETS:** Rick Rusk

**Members of the Public:** Yes

**1. Opening of Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the chair.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Diane Larocque; Second by Sharon Jackson:

That the agenda for the February 10, 2021 meeting be accepted as revised (items d and e added under new business). Carried.

**3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

None

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Motion by Sharon Jackson; Second by Tracy Paris:

That the minutes of the December 9, 2020 meeting be accepted as presented. Carried.

**5. Delegations:**

None

**6. Council Update Report**

Chair Alkenbrack provided a brief overview of the previous Council meeting (Regular Council meeting of February 02, 2021).

**7. Financial Report**

- The EDO provided a brief update: No EDC-related revenue or expenditures since the previous meeting (December 9, 2020).

**8. Old Business**

**a) Community Planters/Benches – Discussion**

The EDO provided an update on benches and planters. A design has been chosen that maximized the use of the material at hand. Public Works staff, who have had more time than normal because of the very mild winter, have completed 9 units to-date – planters, benches and/or various combinations. The committee asked for dimensions of the planter boxes (interior) for future reference. Some discussion of the need to line the boxes with landscape cloth; Discussion of soil/organic material needs.

**b) Billings Promotion Strategy – Discussion**

Given the passage of time and the lack of a January meeting, recommended a minor change of direction on this topic: continuing to think about and discuss a bigger picture “strategy” for township awareness and promotion, but in the meantime, considering re-vamping and updating

the amenity/site/business map brochure as developed by Kendra Edwards Design - and last updated in 2018. This would provide an updated hard-copy promotion item for 2021 – and effort could be made to harmonize the material in this document with web and social meeting promotional material. The committee agreed to this and all agreed to consider updates/revisions to the existing brochure/map document. The EDO was asked to contact Kendra Edwards regarding some design/revision work. The CAO reminded the EDO and the committee that a recommendation on this matter, including direction for the EDO to engage with Kendra Edwards Design and some consideration of expenditure on this item in the 2021 budget.

Motion by Diane Larocque; Second by Suzanne Darlaston:

The EDC recommends that Council direct staff to engage with Kendra Edwards Design, as designer of the existing brochure/map, to discuss revisions and updates for 2021, and that Council consider inclusion of expenditure on this item in the 2021 budget. Carried.

**c) Social Media Workshop – Discussion**

The facilitator for this event would very much like it to be an in-person, hands-on event, so it is on hold until the COVID-19 situation changes enough to allow in-person meetings - likely 2022.

**d) Jabbawong Story-Telling Festival – Discussion**

The parameters have not changed, although everyone is concerned about the impact of the ongoing pandemic. So, the event remains on hold. There was discussion of whether provision could be made in some of the sessions for the hearing impaired – American Sign Language.

**9. New Business**

**a) Economic Development - a discussion:**

I. EcDev/ComDev/CED

The EDO facilitated a discussion with the committee about economic development terminology, especially the related, but different terminology around economic development, *local* economic development, community development, and community *economic* development. Members were asked to describe what they thought economic development is, and in what ways can EDC realistically contribute to ecdev in the township.

II. Community Development: “The New Local” – Principle #4: Diversification

The principle was discussed with reference to the questions presented by the EDO in the agenda pkg.

The discussion for both the above items ran together – understandably because they are linked discussion points. There was broad discussion on demographic change in the municipality, the desire for, but difficulty in obtaining local demographic and economic information, the unfortunate trends in volunteerism (fewer volunteers, aging volunteers, and the increasing burden on those who *do* volunteer.

**b) Winter Tourism**

Discussion of what might be done to promote and increase winter tourism, and the pros/cons of promoting tourism activity in the off-season, especially full winter, and what kinds of supports and synergy would be needed to tangibly increase winter tourism activities in Billings and on the island generally. The committee agreed to think about this topic as individuals and bring ideas and discussion points to the next meeting.

**c) Trail Signage**

The committee feels that more/better signage is needed at various locations on the river trail system. The EDO reminded the committee that new trailhead signs are in the works, and that staff continue to discuss and attempt to develop better village signage within the context of the need for much replacement/improvement of municipal signage generally. The committee agreed to defer further discussion until a future meeting, allowing staff to have more discussion on the fit with existing initiatives/efforts.

**d) Poetry Boxes**

The committee discussed continuation of the poetry box concept, and expansion to include art – sketches, etc. The committee needs to determine exactly what is needed and where to source. If more or different boxes need to be purchased, then the committee will need to request the funds from Council

**10. Correspondence**

None

**11. Information**

None

**12. Recommendations to Council**

1. That Council direct staff to engage with Kendra Edwards Design, as designer of the existing brochure/map, to discuss revisions and updates for 2021, and that Council consider inclusion of expenditure on this item in the 2021 budget. Carried.

**13. Next Meeting:** March 10, 2021, 7:00 pm, Zoom Meetings

**14. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m. on a motion by Diane Larocque.