

TOWNSHIP OF BILLINGS
Economic Development Committee
MINUTES

November 18, 2020, 7:00 pm

Kagawong Park Centre, Upper

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

Staff: Todd Gordon, Economic Development Officer

REGRETS: None

Members of the Public: None

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the chair.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Sharon Jackson; Second by Tracy Paris:

That the agenda for the November 18, 2020 meeting be accepted as amended [Added items: New Business b) Old Church on the Hill; New Business c) Digital Directory; New Business d) Inter-meeting communication between committee members]. Carried.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None

4. Adoption of Minutes

Motion by Diane Larocque; Second by Rick Rusk:

That the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting be accepted as presented. Carried

5. Delegation:

None

6. Council Update Report

Chair Alkenbrack provided a brief outline of the previous Council meeting (Regular Council of November, 2020).

7. Financial Report

- The EDO provided a brief update: The only expenditure since the October 21st meeting was \$156.57 for new Christmas lights for the Maze and Park Centre area.

8. Old Business

a) Community Development – “The New Local” - Discussion

The committee had a brief discussion of Principle 2: “Regeneration” from *The New Local* community development program.

b) Jabbawong Story-Telling Festival – Discussion

Now an objective for 2021. Tentative date: July 17th and 18th, 2021. The intent is still for a 2-day event with one day focused on children. More potential speakers/storytellers have been contacted. It will take time to confirm.

c) Billings Promotion Strategy (Formerly Business Map) – Discussion

The Chair noted that Council passed Resolution #2020-337 (below), at the November 16th. The EDO took the committee through a preliminary discussion of the parameters of

2020-337 Alkenbrack – Jackson

BE IT RESOLVED that Council accepts the recommendation of the Billings Economic Development Committee and directs staff to begin developing a comprehensive Township of Billings promotion strategy, with staged implementation beginning for the tourist season. Carried

d) Social Media Workshop – Discussion

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the potential for business involvement in effective social media, so the notion of a workshop remains relevant. The Chair is still trying to confirm participation of the facilitator, as well

as get a quote. Timing: still looking at late winter (February?) before businesspeople are engaged in preparing for the summer season. The committee will continue planning for this event in collaboration with staff.

e) Community Planters/Benches - Discussion

The committee agreed that the EDO would get an accurate estimate of remaining Main St. Revitalization material resulting from a change in the boardwalk addition – The reconstruction of Main St. with an active pedestrian component will make one boardwalk component redundant. The Chair agreed to conduct an inventory of existing planters and benches. Individual committee members were asked to think about possible locations for planters/benches in the vicinity of the SCB. This information will be discussed at the December 2020 meeting, and go back to staff for further development, and eventual recommendations to Council.

9. New Business

a) Virtual Meetings (item added to agenda) – Discussion

Council passed a resolution (below) at the November 16 meeting to resume virtual Council and Committee meetings in response to the general resurgence of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Chair asked members to be prepared for a virtual setting (Zoom) for the December meeting.

2020-330 Alkenbrack – Jackson

BE IT RESOLVED that Council will resume an electronic format for all council and committee meetings, effective November 23, 2020. Carried

b) Old Church on the Hill (item added to agenda)- Discussion

The Chair updated the committee on the decision by Council to have staff conduct a feasibility study regarding development and use of the Old-Church-on-the-Hill.

c) Digital Business Directory (item added to agenda) - Discussion

The Chair asked Suzanne Darlaston to speak again to this topic, which she had raised at the October 21, 2020 meeting. Committee discussion ensued. Members could understand the issue(s) – the need for locals and visitors alike to be up to date on business opening hours, etc. However, it wasn't clear what a "directory" would actually look like in this case, whether it be manageable/useful, because it would still be dependent on accurate and timely updates of business hours, etc., on the part of business owners themselves. It is also not clear how this might be initiated by Billings given that it would be most effective on an island-wide basis. The committee agreed to think more about this and discuss further at the next meeting.

d) Communication Between Meetings (item added to agenda) - Discussion

Susan Darlaston sought information on the proper procedure for, and limitations on, communication between members outside the context of a meeting. The Chair explained that members could provide information, or request agenda items for the next meeting, etc., but any communication that advanced the business of the committee (and therefore Council) had to be conducted within a proper meeting setting which followed the Township's procedural by-law. A discussion of social media posting also took place, and the committee agreed to decommission the EDC Facebook page, and have desired posts made, as appropriate, through the Municipal Facebook page as administered by the Administrative Assistant, Tiana Mills. Further, the committee expressed their approval of the work the administrative assistant is doing with the Facebook page.

10. Correspondence

None

11. Information

None

12. Recommendations to Council

None

13. Next Meeting: December 9, 2020, 7:00 pm, electronically via Zoom.

14. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m. on a motion by Diane Larocque.