

**Corporation of the District of Maple Ridge
ECONOMIC ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Economic Advisory Commission, held in the Blaney Room at Maple Ridge Municipal Hall, 11995 Haney Place, Maple Ridge, British Columbia, on **Thursday, April 20, 2006** at 7:30 a.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Ernie Daykin	Councillor, District of Maple Ridge
Commissioner Al Hogarth	Councillor, District of Maple Ridge
Commissioner Guy Flavelle	Community at Large, Chair
Commissioner Ken Galpin	Community at Large
Commissioner Peter Janis	Community at Large, Vice Chair
Commissioner Steve Pelton	Community at Large
Commissioner Terry Wilding	Community at Large
Commissioner Racine Barbour	Chamber of Commerce (check this)

STAFF PRESENT

Jim Rule	Chief Administrative Officer
Rick Laferriere	Business Retention & Expansion Officer
Pat Shiratti	Administrative Assistant

Delegates:

REGRETS

Commissioner Gordon Robinson	Mayor, District of Maple Ridge
Commissioner Shane James	Home-based Business Representative

1. *Call to Order & Introductions*

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m.

2. *Adoption of the Agenda*

Motion to re-organize Agenda to cover Item #4.0 first and move Item #3.2 to Item #5.

MOVED BY: Guy F.
SECONDED BY: Rick L.

That the Agenda for April 20, 2006 be adopted as circulated.

3. *New Business*

3.1 *Business License Bylaw Review*

Circulated draft of revised Business License Bylaw. This Bylaw hasn't been updated since 1994 and needs to be modernized with an improved fee structure. Feedback is requested from interested Commissioners, which needs to be reported back by May 17, 2006. Any questions, comments or concerns regarding the draft Bylaw can be emailed directly to Rick L.

4. *Current Projects*

4.1 *Economic Development Strategy Report*

Guy F. began by asking for feedback on the second draft of the Economic Development Strategy Report from the EAC. This draft includes an executive summary, action plan and SWOT analysis, and the action items reorganized into two groups: 1) Community Development 2) Business Development. Round table discussion occurred with Commissioner's commenting on the draft report.

Al H. mentioned a change in the draft Economic Development Strategy Report from "seventeen municipalities within the GVRD" to "twenty-one municipalities within the GVRD".

Jim R. stated that there is too much information written in this report and is not strategic enough. It needs more critical structure, with a minimal number of pages and should only state exactly what we need to focus on.

Ken G. suggested the report to be a one page report in bulleted point form including just recommendations of how to build on our current strengths. There is far too much to accomplish in this report and should be broken down to a maximum of 5 points.

Ernie D. suggested that there be some "quick fix" goals to accomplish first of all and then focus on some longer term goals next.

Al H. thought this report as a background supporting paper and now we should focus on creating primary goals and objectives stemming from this. Need to determine order of importance such as: creating employment; business retention; infrastructure; post secondary education etc. Identify how it will impact and what this will mean to the community.

Ken G. said that the report shouldn't duplicate the OCP process. Our mandate is economically based. We are a "recommendation body" not the "employer". This report outlines EAC needs, council needs and community needs with too much information, losing its main focus.

Racine B. agrees with everyone's comments and stresses the need to simplify the draft report and be more proactive, providing direction and focus on attainable goals.

Terry W. noted that it is good background information but we shouldn't set ourselves up for failure. He felt that we shouldn't be too specific with goal setting as we need to work on achieving these goals continually.

Rick L. wants to identify which sections have the greatest potential, identify some strategies that have longer term processes to achieve and identified need to improve our Business Plan. Rick feels that we are not known as "the best place to conduct business" in at this point. Our Zoning Bylaw needs improvement and we need to review recommendations from the general public.

We need to identify and focus on two attainable strategies.

Al H. mentioned that it is important to measure goals and objectives so that we can manage and observe progress and clarify how these goals will impact the community. Target what, why and how to achieve the goals and begin with the end in mind. Al H agrees that we shouldn't have any more than a 5 page priority summary report. The support document is now completed and now an executive summary needs to be prepared.

Rick L. believes we need to tighten up our vision on our economy and develop a strategy to achieve it.

Guy F. said that we should prioritize strategies with early deliverables (to achieve within the next 6 months) initially. For example, promoting a marketing push (brochures, define land parcels, identify possible commercial sites, new residential area developments, downtown core revitalization, transportation, tourism, etc).

Ken G. thought we need to identify how to get the momentum going. Identify our strengths that the municipality has to offer and build on it. "Pick the fruit" that attracts companies to invest here, which brings employment opportunity and growth.

Jim R. says that one main attraction is the substantially lower land development costs for businesses and residents than in Vancouver. We also need connection with other downtown implementation programs.

Al H. mentioned the downtown core revitalization project which is currently being implemented by other departments with similar issues.

Jim R. referred to Page 6, indicating our goals to make our community more economically achievable. We need a business friendly environment, create value-added jobs. (Where are they and how do we go after them?)

Ken G. noted a few strategic possibilities such as a building a high-tech business park, or building an education centre, or focusing more on tourism or forest industry. Currently there is a huge demand for trades. We should only pick two to focus on at this point.

Other considerable strengths consist of the upcoming bridge and lower land costs. We need to focus on who the "users" will be, the need to create an export market and a need to creating a high value business park.

Jim R. excused himself from the meeting at this point.

Ken G. mentioned that there must be a synergy between with occupational training, technology, infrastructure, transportation, manufacturing etc.

Al H. agreed that technology and occupational training are significant. Fire training in Maple Ridge is already implemented. Need to attract a multitude of different types of companies and focus on business retention as well.

Identify possible business park commercial or industrial or institutional users and also identify possible areas to build a business park.

Steve P. emphasized that basic and non-basic industry was mentioned in the report, however, industries to exporting needs to be focused.

Racine B. summarized by saying that occupational training, technology and advanced manufacturing were areas constantly repeated throughout discussion. We need to attract these types of wealth generating, environmentally friendly (clean) businesses.

Reference was given to Page 6 and Page 28 where OCP shows no direction. Where would be the most desirable location to build an industrial park (for accessibility) or what types of businesses could be moved into the Downtown core office tower? Need a price comparison for office space per square foot between a downtown Vancouver, which is \$32/sq.ft versus downtown Maple Ridge at \$15/sq.ft., or Maple Ridge warehouse space at \$7.50/sq. ft.

Rick L. said that he will ask Paul Gill to present to the EAC Committee his report on the meaning of tax bases, facts about tax bases and how to sustain a healthy tax base in Maple Ridge.

Al H. would like to report back to the OCP team and incorporate this into the OCP. The objective for the OCP process is to have most of the report content completed by mid June.

Rick L. suggested that we have a joint meeting between OCP and EAC.

Items clarified to be addressed in the next draft report at next meeting are:

- 1) Refine strategy to include the economic vision, key larger activities, focal sectors and synergy between these key activities and focal sectors.
- 2) Prioritize strategies in revised report (a maximum of 5 pages).
- 3) Identify departmental support strategy which supports and creates the tools to generate economic growth.

5. *New Business*
5.1 *New Department Staff*

Rick L interrupted current project discussion to introduce Marg Johnson as the new Film Production Liaison and Pat Shiratti as the new Administrative Assistant in the Economic Development Department.

6. Committee Reports – Nil

7. Correspondence – Nil

8. Next Meeting

The next **Regular Meeting** is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 16, 2006** in the Blaney Room at Maple Ridge Municipal Hall at 7:30 a.m.

9. Adjournment

MOVED BY: Racine B.
SECONDED BY: Ken G.

That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Chairperson

/ps