

# MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDTAC) OF PARKLAND COUNTY HELD January 14, 2013

## CALL TO ORDER

**Chairman Kobasiuk** called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm with the following members in attendance.

### *Council*

Phyllis Kobasiuk, Councillor  
Darrell Hollands, Councillor

### *Public Members*

Pat Brennan  
Les Mroz  
Tom Schafers  
Dean Whitford  
Natalie Birnie  
Ruby Swanson

### *Staff*

Al McCully, General Manager, Community Services  
Vanessa Heitt, Economic Development & Tourism Assistant  
Dominika Pekarova, Special Projects Assistant, Economic Development & Tourism

### *Regrets*

Diane Wilvers  
Rod Shaigec, Mayor  
Dianne Allen, Councillor  
Ralph Leriger  
Tom Koep, Economic Development & Tourism Manager

## ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Kobasiuk asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

### **Natalie Birnie MOVED:**

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

EDTAC-13-01  
Carried Unanimously

## ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairman Kobasiuk asked if there were any additions or deletions to the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Minutes.

### **Natalie Birnie MOVED:**

That the minutes be adopted as presented.

EDTAC-13-02  
Carried Unanimously

**BUSINESS ARISING  
FROM THE MINUTES**

None

**APPOINTMENTS/  
PRESENTATIONS**

Chairman Kobasiuk introduced a new EDTAC Tourism Representative, Ruby Swanson, from Devonian Botanic Garden. Roundtable followed.

**STANDING ITEMS****6.1. Implementation of Economic Development Strategic Plan**

None

**6.2. Council's Strategic Plan**

Chairman Kobasiuk advised that this year's Council's Strategic Plan Session would take place in February 2013.

**COMMITTEE  
DISCUSSION ITEMS****7.1. Building Permit Update**

Vanessa Heitt briefly reviewed the November & December 2012 Industrial/Commercial building permit stats and compared them to 2011 stats. Vanessa Heitt referred to some development updates in the Progress Report.

**7.2. Business Partnership Program Grant**

This agenda item was carried over from the November 2012 Meeting. Chairman Kobasiuk reported there were no further updates from Council regarding this program.

**7.3. Business Visitation Program Update**

Chairman Kobasiuk noted that there was a slowdown in the program due to a busy season in Acheson. The program had been very well received so far. She mentioned it took about 1-1.5 hrs per visit. Natalie Birnie mentioned she had received two requests for visits. She said she would forward the business contacts to Vanessa.

**7.4. Federation of Canadian Municipalities**

Chairman Kobasiuk advised that Councillor Allen and Tom Koep recently left for Belize to participate in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities International Caribbean Local Economic Development Program. The program runs from January 11, 2013 until February 2, 2013. She provided a brief overview of the

program and noted the first report on this program would be ready at the next EDTAC meeting in March. Further background on this program can be found in the Progress Report.

7.5.

#### **Business of the Month/Year Update**

Chairman Kobasiuk advised about November 2012, December 2012 and January 2013 Business of the Month recipients and encouraged the committee to send their nominations to Dominika or Vanessa.

Dominika mentioned she had received some BOTM feedback from both the staff and Councillors and suggested changing the format of BOTM to "Featured Business of the Month". This change will allow some flexibility as to what kind of businesses we could promote.

#### **Natalie Birnie MOVED:**

That EDTAC recommends to Council a name change of the Business of the Month to "Featured Business of the Month"

EDTAC-13-03

Carried Unanimously

7.6.

#### **New Economic Development Brochure**

Vanessa Heitt reported on the new Economic Development Attraction piece – *'Make the Leap...And Land in Parkland County'* that will replace the "old" Locating your Business in Parkland County package. The new information in this piece includes: Developers contacts, Ec. Dev. initiatives as well as centre pull-out maps. The goal is to have it ready for distribution at our Developer's Forum on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2013.

7.7.

#### **County Bountty Adventure Days**

Vanessa Heitt said a discussion needed to take place that would give Ec. Dev. direction in regards to this initiative. Chairman Kobasiuk said the committee needed to keep in mind the new Ec. Dev. branding initiative and how this idea would fit into the concept. Vanessa Heitt said we would need to start small, because of the number of volunteers, cost involved etc. Natalie Birnie agreed we would need to start small. She then suggested partnering with our "neighbors" and perhaps doing a barbecue or a cook-off. Dean Whitford said we needed to be careful about where the economic development resources are allocated. He then mentioned that Ec. Dev. should be facilitating not organizing these events (the 'benefiters' of these events should be the main drivers, Ec. Dev. should only facilitate).

Natalie Birnie recommended picking one event and starting there. Councillor Hollands said the Kinsmen took care of a lot of the

coordination. He then mentioned trouble with recruiting and retaining volunteers for such events.

Pat Brennan suggested contacting local entertainer, Danny Hooper, and asking him about his ideas for this event.

Tom Schafers said an event like this needed to first start as a non-profit. He said he was involved with the rodeo through 4H group; where they helped with clean-up, selling 50-50 tickets, etc. He provided an example of the Heritage Days as a successful event in Stony Plain. Natalie Birnie asked if we could invite Blueberry Hall and ask them to partner with us on an event e.g. a cook-off. Chairman Kobasiuk said the community halls volunteers were 'stretched' and agreed that Ec. Dev. should play a facilitating role only. Vanessa Heitt said she had a meeting with Town of Stony Plain regarding a Tri-municipal tourism initiative and the idea was that the 1<sup>st</sup> year they would create a landing page with all the western operators as well as packages, etc. 2<sup>nd</sup> year they would maybe organize an event. Vanessa continued that it was important to establish presence first and then build on that. Chairman Kobasiuk asked the group what they wanted to get out of this idea. She encouraged the Committee to submit more ideas to Vanessa. Tom Schafers said the main goal was to attract business into Parkland County; Natalie Birnie said we wanted to increase tourism dollars in the County. Also, Natalie asked if it was possible/feasible to establish a 'Parkland County Volunteers Association' that would help put together those events. Al mentioned this might qualify for work experience (high school students volunteering); Natalie said that would be a great way to engage the youth. Someone mentioned 'Geocaching' which is an emerging outdoor recreational activity. Please send all other ideas to Vanessa.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **8.1.**

#### **The Acheson Business Association Update**

- December 18<sup>th</sup> 2012- During the Make a Difference Christmas campaign, there were 8,000 pounds of food and clothes raised as well as just over 12,000 dollars in cash donations
- Updating 2013 ABA Directory, collecting the advertisements and updating the Acheson map
- Preparing 2013 business luncheons and seminars for ABA businesses
- Spring luncheon – still looking for a speaker

### **8.2.**

#### **The First Start Program**

Natalie Birnie said the idea for this program was taken from the City of Edmonton. The idea was to attract & retain young people

and foreign workers in the Edmonton area by allowing them to purchase their first homes for affordable prices. The program provides entry-level market housing for employed, first time home buyers with modest incomes. Natalie Birnie said Acheson desperately needs workers and that the County should take a proactive approach in attracting and retaining young and skilled workforce to the tri-area.

**Natalie MOVED:**

That EDTAC recommends to Council to consider, review and provide comments on the First Place Program.

EDTAC-13-04

Carried Unanimously

8.3.

**The Entwistle Business Association Update**

Vanessa Heitt said there was no update from the EBA. In Tom Koep's absence, Dominika will attend a meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> held by Evansburg and Entwistle Chambers of Commerce. The meeting would take place at Trestle Creek and the invitation was extended to Brazeau, Lac Ste Anne and Yellowhead Counties to assess the tourism potential of the area.

8.4.

**Economic Development & Tourism Progress Report**

Vanessa Heitt provided an update on the progress report. The AIESEC Intern from Equator we hired in October 2012 unfortunately declined our job offer and therefore we offered the position to another student, Agnieszka from Poland. She will commence on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Vanessa Heitt mentioned the upcoming 2013 Economic Development & Tourism Events:

- Developer's Forum, February 27<sup>th</sup>
- Realtor's Breakfast & Tour, March 13<sup>th</sup>
- Tri-Municipal Trade Show, April 5-7<sup>th</sup>
- Spring Acheson Business Breakfast, May 8<sup>th</sup>

Natalie Birnie said she would like to attend the Developer's Forum.

**BRAINSTORMING**

**Pat Brennan** – Pat said Ec. Dev. should look into approaching agricultural businesses to see what their needs are and try to attract them

**Dean Whitford** – Dean suggested the first start housing program should be developed into a cluster

**Chairman Kobasiuk** – provided an update on the Acheson ASP, the Acheson ASP will be going to CRB on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Al McCully** - provided an update on the Intelligent Community Program & International Awards Program. He also said he was in contact with the engineering program at NAIT regarding a student tour of all the towers. His goal was to get some students involved in a wifi research project. Al also provided an update on the tenancy of all towers. Al also noted that there was free wifi available in most community halls.

**Les Mroz** – amazed by the amount of documents circulating and projects Ec. Dev. had been working on; his question was if this information is being communicated to all Parkland County employees. He suggested maybe the all staff workshop would be a good opportunity to provide this update to staff. He also mentioned that Chickakoo and Muir Lakes are heavily used by Edmontonians during the summer and if there was a way we could promote these areas a little bit more. He also suggested the public facilities needed an upgrade. Chairman Kobasiuk mentioned that the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan addresses all these issues.

**Tom Schafers** – mentioned that our little tweak to the BOTM program would definitely help Ec. Dev. in recognizing small businesses. Regarding the lake issue he recommended placing a “suggestion box” at both lakes.

**Ruby Swanson** – observed everyone was committed to this Committee.

**Natalie Birnie** – thanked for the opportunity to be able to serve on this committee for the past year.

**Darrell Hollands** – said EDTAC should focus on what our needs are and then move ahead.

**Chairman Kobasiuk** – mentioned there would be an appreciation dinner on March 7<sup>th</sup> for all public members – everyone should receive their invitation soon.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013** at 5:00 p.m. in the Parkland Room.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.