



## THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ROSSLAND

### Minutes of Meeting of Rossland Sustainability Commission Held September 17, 2009 KAST Boardroom

**PRESENT** Kelvin Saldern (chair)  
Sara Golling  
Steve Ash  
Aaron Cosbey  
Patricia Marshall-Thompson  
Jen Vogel

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE** Jennifer Ellis (Recording Secretary)  
Mike Maturo

#### **New Business**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** Kelvin Saldern called the meeting to order at 8:07 am. He noted that we no longer need to move to approve the agenda and requested that everyone keep their updates short.

**MANAGER'S UPDATE** Jennifer Ellis will be asking the Sustainability Commission for suggestions for the Communities Adapting to Climate Change Steering Committee. Laurie Cordell of the Fraser Basin Council requested that Jennifer let the Housing Affordability Task Force know that the Housing Affordability Workshop in Castlegar has been postponed. Kelvin Saldern noted that people need to be told that the Adaptation Steering Committee is project specific and needs to have an established beginning and end date.

**COUNCIL UPDATE** No councillors were present. Mike Maturo provided an update that the Council Meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup> is cancelled because of the UBCM and that a key focus for Council and staff for the fall would be the annual budget.

**TASK FORCE UPDATES** Housing and Affordability  
Patricia Marshall-Thompson noted that there are a few things that the HATF is working on:

- 1) Building a sphere of influence and looking for a bigger Rossland Housing and Affordability Committee by trying to connect with groups throughout the city who are interested including parents with young families, seniors, singles, low income.
- 2) Conducting a Housing Needs Assessment. The HATF has been reviewing similar studies from other communities and looking at options for funding. The Kimberley study is a very useful document. Some funding options include the BC Real Estate Foundation and the LeRoi Foundation. The goal is to get some grant applications written and have the assessment completed by 1 April 2010.
- 3) The HATF is exploring the potential for a public forum either tied to the

assessment or as a coffee house kind of evening for coop housing and new home buyers.

4) The HATF started to review indicators and a large number of TF members are coming to indicators workshop on September 24<sup>th</sup> and one or two may be able to make Strategic Planning session on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

5) Bob Reardon and Patricia Marshall-Thompson met regarding the Business Vitality Initiative (BVI). They met with Mike Stolte over the phone to discuss the possibility of the assessment happening in Rossland. The assessment will cost \$20,000 and the Columbia Basin Trust could probably come up with the funding with the help of the Commission or Council or another funder. Bob and Patricia will meet next week to look at the steps. Kelvin asked what kind of schedule is being looked at. Patricia responded that with funding, it could start in October. Kelvin noted that October is ambitious given the need for funding. Patricia noted that the next meeting is with the Chamber because they should be sponsors and the Core advisory group. Kelvin suggested that it is important to see the overlap with the indicators project and the energy survey and expressed a concern about burning the community out with surveys. Patricia noted that it is critical to get the Chamber on board to avoid this so it could be part of their business development this year.

#### Water Stewardship

Sara Golling provided the following update:

1) The Columbia Basin Trust cheque for the SHIM project has been sent made out to the Watershed Stewardship Task Force. Since it is preferred by the City that the Task Forces and Commission not have bank accounts, the cheque will have to be reissued addressed to the Task Force care of the City of Rossland. Invoices will then go through Jennifer Ellis for approval and will be paid by the City. Marshall-Thompson noted that it is important for future projects that Task Forces know that when receiving funds, cheques need to be made out to the Task Force care of the City of Rossland.

2) The SHIM project is underway. Jenn Vogel and Ami Haworth have been working on Streamkeepers event for October 9<sup>th</sup> in the watershed – both Grade 6s and 7s will be participating. RMV is one of the sponsors. The Stream of Dreams project planning is underway and is planned for October 22<sup>nd</sup> at Maclean School. Jenn Vogel needs volunteers to cut fish out of plywood.

3) The WSTF is continuing with the SWOT work: prioritizing things. Sara Golling asked what date the City needs to receive recommendations for this year's budget. Mike Maturo indicated that recommendations should come as soon as possible for the 2010 budget. Kelvin Saldern reminded everyone that recommendations must come from the Commission. Patricia Marshall-Thompson asked about the process of getting the Sustainability Commission budget approved for next year. Kelvin Saldern replied that it needs to be approved by the City and that the Commission should discuss budget at the October 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning session and bring it as a motion to Council.

4) Sara Golling indicated that the WSTF is looking at the POLIS project out of UVic and suggested that having the City work with this group would be very useful. The WSTF may come up with recommendation regarding this.

5) Sara Golling noted that they have not yet found any other volunteers for the WSTF.

6) Sara Golling indicated that the Telegraph blog section is not working very well for them in terms of communicating with the public and that Jenn Vogel has started a Bhubble group as a different approach.

**WATERSHED  
STEWARDSHIP  
TASK FORCE**

Moved by Aaron Cosbey/ Seconded by Sara Golling

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Sustainability Commission provide \$2400 from the

**MOTION**

Grant Seed Money line item in the Sustainability Commission budget for the SHIM project as per the original SHIM project budget.

Discussion

Steve Ash queried whether the SHIM project budget could be tailored to work without the additional money. Aaron Cosbey responded that it would not be good to continue with the project without the funding that was contained in the original project budget proposal. The proposed use of the money fits with the mandate of that budget line item. The seed money is available and should be utilized for its proposed purpose. Patricia Marshall-Thompson expressed concern that Task Force Chairs were not made more aware of the grant seed money. Jennifer Ellis noted that Chairs were informed at the April and May meetings and were reminded that it is available. Patricia Marshall-Thompson requested that Task Forces submit consideration of what the seed money and this money should be spent on. Mike Maturo noted that workplans must also be prepared before Task Forces apply for grants if there is going to be City Staff time implications to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to undertake the project on the part of the City. Kelvin Saldern noted that workplans also need to address time requirements for Jennifer Ellis and that if City Staff are being stretched too far by Commission projects that Mike Maturo needs to report back on that.

CARRIED

**TASK FORCE  
UPDATES  
CONTINUED**

Energy Task Force

Steve Ash provided the following update regarding the ETF:

- 1) The Community Energy Survey is ready to go out. It was tested at the Fall Fair and will include prizes from Terasen and Fortis. The goal is to get results back by end of October and collate in November to finish by November 15th. Ken Holmes and Steve will do all of the 500-600 expected responses. Kelvin Saldern reminded Steve Ash that any projects requiring expenditure of Commission money (such as photocopying) must go through Jennifer Ellis. Jennifer Ellis noted that in terms of the budget in order for the ETF to have a budget she would like to take the \$9000 for the three TF and divide it by 4 and reallocate part to ETF. Kelvin Saldern requested an amended budget for next meeting.
- 2) Based on the Energy Survey and other inputs, Steve Ash and Ken Holmes hope to have an Energy Plan by end of October. They are working with Fortis and Terasen to get key data. The Energy Plan will set out key supply and demand issues for Rossland and identify priorities. Kelvin Saldern noted that before it goes to the City it needs to be on the Commission agenda and should be circulated amongst the Commission for comment and feedback in advance.
- 3) The ETF has a goal of November 30th to do some sort of public meeting to increase awareness.
- 4) Steve Ash and Ken Holmes went to a meeting in Grand Forks that was well attended (150 people) about alternative energy.

Kelvin Saldern commented on Commission presence at Golden City Days: Jennifer Ellis did a great job with the banner and brochure. Jenn Vogel did a great job for WSTF and Ken Holmes and Steve Ash were there with Fortis representing the ETF. For our first year in the community, it was worthwhile for building awareness of the issues.

**PRINCIPLES AND  
PROTOCOLS  
MOTION**

Moved by Patricia Marshall-Thompson/Seconded by Steve Ash

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Principles and Protocols be referred to a subcommittee consisting of Jennifer Ellis, Aaron Cosbey and Sara Golling to review

and prepare a final proposed draft for the October Commission Meeting.

CARRIED

**GRANT WRITING  
VOLUNTEER  
PROPOSAL**

Jennifer Ellis expressed a concern that having a group of grant writing volunteers might be too administratively burdensome. Patricia Marshall-Thompson expressed a concern is that paying Task Force members to complete grant applications created a conflict of interest that Task Force members could be remunerated for certain activities and not others. Jennifer noted that she would rather the Task Forces inform her what grants they would like to apply for and if she cannot complete the work she will hire someone with the appropriate skills to complete the application and that non-Task Force members are equally eligible for those positions. Aaron Cosbey queried whether the Commission has the budget to hire grant application writers. Jennifer Ellis indicated that she would provide full budget report on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The issue was tabled and left with Manager.

**STATE OF  
ROSSLAND  
DRAFT  
INDICATORS**

Jennifer Ellis distributed copies of the State of Rossland draft indicators. Patricia Marshall-Thompson requested guidelines for the Sustainability Commission ambassadors for the September 24<sup>th</sup> public event. Jennifer Ellis indicated that they would be distributed early next week. Kelvin Saldern inquired what kind of feedback Erin McGuigan is looking for from the Commission after the 24<sup>th</sup>. Jennifer Ellis indicated that this would be discussed after the public event. Patricia Marshall-Thompson suggested a working session on October 15<sup>th</sup> in which Erin McGuigan is teleconferenced in. Jennifer Ellis suggested that before we make a final decision we wait to see what kind of public feedback we receive on the indicators on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Patricia Marshall-Thompson noted that the intent of the indicators process needs to be made clear to the public. Kelvin Saldern indicated that on the 24<sup>th</sup> someone needs to make a statement with regard to why the City is undertaking the State of Rossland process and that the draft indicators need to be distributed to the public in hard copy and electronically immediately. Jennifer Ellis indicated that this would occur tomorrow.

**DEVELOPMENT  
COST CHARGES**

Kelvin Saldern indicated that the Commission agreed that it should make some sort of comment on Development Cost Charges (DCCs) with a goal of making a recommendation to the City. Steve Ash emphasized that in his view Rossland is becoming unaffordable to developers and the average person due to taxes, DCCs and the amount of money we pay the Regional District. Steve Ash suggested that there is a need for an independent review of structural problems in this community with regard to why our taxes are so much higher than in places like Fernie. This needs to be done by someone with significant experience in municipal cost structures. The Commission should recommend this to the City. Aaron Cosbey agreed but suggested that the discussion needs to be more broadly focused on economic challenges rather than just taxes and DCCs and wondered if City could undertake the study itself. Sara Golling expressed concern about undertaking another study and suggested that a lot of the facts are already known. We have high taxes and rotten infrastructure because we have a limited residential tax base. The City knows this and is trying to come up with the fairest outcomes. But perhaps the current proposed structure of the DCCs does not do enough to support the goals of the SSP and that should be addressed so that DCCs cover all the costs of development. Mike Maturo indicated raising DCCs to cover all the costs of development might make them so high it would prevent people from living here and

that it is not likely that Rossland will experience the kind of growth to collect significant DCC money anyway. Mike Maturo also referenced the DCC Report, which outlines a proposed DCC Project List. The overall cost of development infrastructure is projected to be \$12.64 million. Through the proposed new DCC scheme, \$6.7 million of that cost will be paid by developers and \$5.9 million must be raised by the City through other means, such as taxes. However this infrastructure may not be required if the projected growth does not occur.

Patricia Marshall-Thompson noted that DCCs don't address the current infrastructure issues anyway. They can only be applied to new development infrastructure. She further noted that if our number of houses continues to drop then the cost to each household goes up and the cost of infrastructure will have to be borne buy us – unless there is a diversification of the tax base which means we bring more businesses, industries, and people to town. She questioned why would people come here if there is no competitive advantage in our existing tax system. The key question is how can we make Rossland more affordable.

Kelvin Saldern indicated he understood Sara Golling's concern and that perhaps it was not a matter of doing another study but rather packaging the data in a form that allows all the cost factors to be examined. Steve Ash asserted that the only way to deal with the problem was a structural analysis because the City does not know why its taxes are so out of step or how much leakage there is to the Regional District. Kelvin Saldern noted that we do know that it is in part because of the lack of a commercial and industrial tax base. Steve Ash noted that other communities with a similar tax base, such as Fernie, do not have similar tax rates.

Kelvin Saldern indicated that he felt DCCs were just a small part of the picture and that the discussion needs to be broader, but that it is too big a piece to just hand over to the Economic Development Task Force. Jennifer Ellis suggested that if this is considered the priority issue for the Commission then perhaps it should be the focus of the Strategic Planning Session in two weeks, as that would allow for a longer discussion of the issue and the point of the Strategic Planning Session is to identify priorities. Kelvin Saldern agreed and suggested that the Commission needs to come out of the Strategic Planning Session with some recommendations regarding the economic sustainability of Rossland.

**NEXT MEETING DATE** It was proposed that the Commission meet on Friday October 16<sup>th</sup> since many people will be away on the 15<sup>th</sup> for the Communities Adapting to Climate Change Regional Workshop.

**CLOSE** Meeting adjourned at 10:27 am

I hereby certify the preceding to be a true and correct account of the Sustainability Commission Meeting held on 17 September 2009.

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**CHAIR**

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**RECORDING SECRETARY**