



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

MINUTES

Date: Monday, January 15, 2024

Time: 7:03 pm – 9:10 pm

Location: Council Chambers, Stratford City Hall, 1 Wellington St, Stratford, ON

Committee Members: Dan Mathieson – Chair, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Stephen Mitchell, Trudy Jonkman

Absent: Mark Vandenbosch, Franklin Famme, Georgia Neely, Paul Parlee, Andy Bicanic

Staff: Tim Wolfe —Director of Community Services, Emily Robson – Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joan Thomson – CAO, Joani Gerber – CEO of InvestStratford, Lindsay Van Gestel – Recording Secretary, Adam Betteridge – Director of Building & Planning, Krista Robinson – CEO of Stratford Public Library

Working Group Members: Andrew Hilton

Coordinators: Alan Kasperski, Ray Harsant

1. Call to Order

Dan Mathieson, Chair

- The Chair to call the meeting to order at 7:03 pm
- Land Acknowledgment

Chair Mathieson noted a letter which was received by mail from a citizen dated Sunday, January 7, 2024, and received at the Mayor's office on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. The letter was received after the January 15, 2024, meeting Agenda was finalized.

Section one of the letter requested clarification on the Clerks statement at the inaugural November 23, 2023 meeting, on a Conflict of Interest and asked for specific examples to be provided. Due to the timing of receiving the letter, clarification from the Clerk will occur at the February meeting.

Section two of the letter questioned the Chair's indication of the costs of the GTR site development to be upward of \$600-\$800 Million. Chair Mathieson noted that the estimate provided was the value of the build-out from a 2018 report, based on the plan laid out at that time.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None were declared.

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mayor Ritsma to accept the November 23, 2023 and December 18, 2023 minutes.

Seconded by Barb Cottle.

Carried.

Emily Robson noted that moving forward, all the Minutes will be posted to the Council Calendar on the City's website (stratford.ca) along with all the materials after approved by the Ad-Hoc Committee.

4. Presentations

Joan Thomson, CAO provided an introduction of Jim Archibald and the work he has completed as the City advances the project, and his background in Municipal Environmental Engineering.

4.1. Overview of Environmental & Engineering Site Works

Jim Archibald, Consulting Structural Engineer

- Recent and upcoming site work
- Round table discussion: What do you want to know more about?

Jim Archibald provided a background on his business, and the work that has been completed to prepare the site to be shovel ready when Council provides direction to commence the development process.

A Draft Conceptual Development Plan was prepared for the property and shared with the Committee. It was noted that the proposed roadway on the Plan was an important part of the Master Plan, to have a way in which the community could walk through the site. The road allowances will include the new services, water, sewer, storm water, natural gas, underground electrical services. The Bus Terminal and University of Waterloo are existing. The parking block was identified in the Master Plan; and it could be multilevel or surface and would be based on density of the project(s). The parking needs will be detailed as the specific uses of the site are determined.

The numbering system on the Plan is from an old study where the site was divided into approximately fifteen parcels (previously). The numbering system was retained, as a significant amount of work had been done where this system was used.

The noted blue area is where the University of Waterloo is considering a possible campus. The University of Waterloo has been reviewing this area and doing internal process work to evaluate and determine the feasibility.

The use of the central part of the property is still to be determined, and it is premature to speculate on what may be in this area until Council provides direction.

Questions arose and discussions took place on:

- The University's block on the Concept Plan does not conform to the Master Plan. Jim Archibald noted that the map is conceptual and for discussion purposes only.
- A question was asked about the vision of the project, and whether it should be pedestrianized, with walking paths, bicycle paths, etc. Jim Archibald noted that further discussion would take place with the committee and Council, and that the map presented today was to show the detailed building blocks as outlined in the Master Plan. This concept can be amended.
- A discussion took place on the roadway, if decided, and having traffic calming measures throughout. It would be a way to enter and exit the property. Trails, walkways are all yet to be developed. The work completed throughout the past two to three years have been site readiness activities and are not meant to lean towards any specific type of development or land use. The site services, water and sewer have provided insight in the conditions of the site, such as the environmental status of different areas.
- A question was raised about reviewing and considering offsite parking options, such as Wellington Street or St. Patrick Street. The Official Plan Review will consider both parking on the site and beyond.

Jim Archibald continued his presentation with information about the original roof (from 1910) leaking and the asbestos. It was noted that regardless of what was going to be done with the building, the roof had to be removed. By removing the roof, the City eliminated the environmental risk and the unknown. When the roof was removed, and the steel trusses were sandblasted, it was noted to be in largely the same condition as it was in 1910, with little deterioration. Therefore, the environmental liability (asbestos, lead paint) and unknown risks were now mitigated.

Additional questions were raised and discussed with Jim Archibald:

- What level of work has been done on the roadways and on services? What level of development is expected? Is there enough servicing for a housing development or will it need to be revisited? Jim Archibald spoke about water mains, and land uses and that the services would accommodate significant development. The site has been advanced as much as possible, but not to a point where it's locked into certain uses.

- Has there been any work started on the Mackenzie link over the Rail? Jim Archibald noted that there have not been any discussions with the rail authorities yet. Typically, there is a lot of paperwork and time, as well as additional details on the site development required. If connecting the neighbourhood is seen as important for the site and community this can be done.
- Have any investigations been done on geothermal for the site? Jim advised, not yet.

Attached to the Draft Concept Plan was a 2023 Year-End Status Summary document prepared by Jim Archibald, which included a list of previous preparatory activities (2021 to 2023) and planned activities for 2024. Further discussion took place regarding the noted points. Jim reminded the Committee that the work completed to date, is for site preparedness. Previously the structure's condition and soil conditions were unknown. Now the land use and structures can be determined based on all the findings.

Environmental approvals will be handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the development that is chosen and the specific location within the site.

Questions from the Committee were taken and discussed with Jim Archibald:

- A comment was made about concerns of the financial impact of the work that has been done to 70% completion and the general capacity of water mains, roadways, and electrical; and having to re-design if the services capacities are too small.
- A question arose about 'budgeted' planned activities, and what would come next logically. Joan Thomson, CAO, spoke about the 2024 budget deliberations with proposed activities that are still subject to Council approval. There are a range of activities that are proposed to be completed in the year, and there is flexibility. We need to plan out the work for the year, for staffing, and to support the University and the YMCA. Joan reiterated that Council approval is required for the final decisions.
- Discussion on public money which has been spent this past year. The CAO spoke about the Cooper Reserve Fund, which are funds from the proceeds of the sale and disposition of the former fairgrounds and former Tom Patterson Theatre. Work to date has been funded by this reserve account. There has been no direct impact on the tax levy.
- A question was posed regarding the recuperation of costs associated with connecting to municipal services. The CAO spoke briefly about the framework in place for new residential subdivisions where the City is responsible to bring services to a certain point, then the developer is required to follow through with the rest. Joan noted that if there is interest, the Director of Building & Planning could bring this item back to a future meeting for discussion on development charges and recovery costs to connect to municipal services.

- A question was raised regarding if there were funds set aside from the Lakeside Adults Association from when the facilities were part of the Tom Patterson Theatre originally. Joan Thomson noted that the funds from the former Tom Patterson and fairgrounds were placed in a reserve; and specific funds were not identified.

5. Discussion Items

5.1. 120-Day Work Plan *Dan Mathieson, Chair*

PowerPoint presentation by Chair Mathieson, outlining the 120-Day Work Plan. Including a 2024 Business Case which will be subject to Council approval; Outputs for Council consideration; 120- Day Area of Focus for the Committee Meetings and Community Engagement. The presentation will be a schedule to the Minutes.

Motion by Stephen Mitchell to adopt the 120-Day Workplan.

Seconded by Ron Dodson

Carried.

5.2. Grand Trunk Vision Process & Community Engagement Strategy *Melanie Hare, Chair of the Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group*

Melanie Hare presented the Vision Process & Community Engagement work plan, noting that the intent of the process is to build on the 2018 Master Plan, critically review it, and refine the guiding principles. The objective is to be clear and concise; and to capture the intent of the redevelopment of the Grand Trunk site. The Ad Hoc Committee will work together to create a draft vision and a draft set of guiding principles for Council's consideration. Next Melanie spoke about the Community Engagement strategy, where a series of events will highlight the project, share inspiration from communities that have undertaken similar projects, and engage the community in review the draft vision and guiding principles. The City and Committee will host events, open houses, stakeholder meetings, workshops, etc. These exercises can be captured through podcasts, digital and interactive inputs, and websites. It is the intent to align with other City initiatives and the Official Plan Review.

Motion by Nic Flanagan to approve the Vision Process & Community Engagement Strategy as presented by Melanie Hare.

Seconded by Trudy Jonkman

Carried.

5.3. Terms of Reference Amendments *Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead*

Emily Robson discussed the Terms of Reference Amendments that had been made based on the feedback received from the last committee meeting. Emily noted that on page two where it speaks of composition, a request was made to change the Theatre representative to Arts and Culture to broaden the perspective.

A discussion took place regarding Working Groups, which is on pages 2 and 3 of the Terms of Reference. Emily noted that this section needs to be refined to clarify which Working Group meetings will be open to public and how they will be managed.

A discussion took place regarding public participation and what guidelines the City already has in place. Emily noted that the TOR are more specific to voting and motions. The CAO commented on the Procedural By-law and how meetings are governed. Items need to be noted on the Agenda (Advisory Committee) so the public is aware of the meeting and items for discussion.

A member of the audience requested to speak. The Chair provided Paul Brown the opportunity to stand and address the Committee. Paul Brown stated he sent a letter to the Chair and CAO (letter as outlined in section 1 of the minutes). Paul asked for the letter to be read to the Committee. The CAO read the letter out loud. The Chair advised that as previously discussed earlier in the meeting, section one of the letter regarding pecuniary interest would be clarified at the next meeting.

Emily Robson advised that the Ad-Hoc meetings will be held in Council Chambers and livestreamed moving forward with Escribe (the platform the Council meetings use) where the public and members can access all the documents, agendas, and attachments.

Motion by Melanie Hare to adopt the Terms of Reference as presented.

Seconded by Barb Cottle

Carried.

5.4. Working Group Composition *Alan Kasperski & Ray Harsant, Working Group Coordinators*

A discussion took place on the following items:

- Working groups and tasks
- Permanent members of the Working Groups (PowerPoint slide shared showing Working Group composition)
- A question was asked if members were prepared to work on more than one working group. The Working Group Chairs are going to be looking for community members with expertise to advise their Working Groups. It was asked if those who previously applied for the Ad-Hoc would be considered and how many members should serve on a working group.? Alan Kasperski, Coordinator, noted that anyone interested in being on a second committee, to email him.

- Discussion took place on how many Ad-Hoc Committee members should be on a Working Group and amending the Terms of Reference accordingly.

Motion by Barb Cottle to update the Terms of Reference to state that there may be up to three additional Committee members in each Working Group.

Seconded by Nic Flanagan

Carried.

Andrew Hilton provided an update to the Committee on preparing content for the City's website including: meeting schedules, FAQ section, committee details, historical and project background, the City's current challenges on the project, inspiration development models, and public engagement opportunities. The content will be provided to CAO for approval. A request was made of the Committee to share their personal lists of contacts at community organizations to support future community engagement efforts. It was also noted that there should be a mailing list created for those that sign up for automatic updates and for sharing information.

6. Working Session

- 6.1.** Generative Conversation on Vision & Guiding Principles
Melanie Hare & Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead

Emily Robson asked each Committee Member to share the guiding development principles they feel are most relevant to the Grand Trunk Renewal project.

This exercise was the first step in the process of articulating a draft vision and set of guiding principles to be shared with Council in April. The February and March committee meetings will largely be dedicated to developing these draft statements.

7. Information Items

- 7.1.** Members & WG Chair Updates
Alan Kasperski & Ray Harsant, Working Group Coordinators

Ray Harsant spoke to the Committee for feedback and any requests for the Coordinators.

Alan Kasperski asked if there were any funds available to support the Committees' work. The CAO noted that funds to support the project have been requested through the 2024 budget process. These funds are sufficient to support the administration of the committee, to a reasonable amount. Allocation of these funds are subject of the approval of the CAO.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20th in 7:00 pm Council Chambers at City Hall.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ron Dodson to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Mayor Ritsma

Carried.

9:10 pm

THAT the January 15, 2024, Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.