



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, March 18, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

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

Committee Members: Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman, Franklin Famme, Andy Bicanic

Absent: Dan Mathieson – Chair, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Paul Parlee, Mark Vandembosch, Stephen Mitchell, Georgia Neely, Joani Gerber – CEO of InvestStratford

Staff: Tim Wolfe —Director of Community Services, Emily Robson – Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joan Thomson – CAO, Adam Betteridge – Director of Building & Planning, Krista Robinson – CEO of Stratford Public Library, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

Working Group Members: John Kastner, Steven Cooper

Coordinators: Alan Kasperski, Ray Harsant

Also Present: Paul Brown, Mike Ennis – CEO of the YMCA of Three Rivers, Jay Colquhoun – Operations Manager of the YMCA of Three Rivers, Media, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Joan Thomson, CAO read the Respect in the Workplace Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None were declared.

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Frankin Famme

Seconded by Ron Dodson

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated February 20, 2024, be adopted as printed. Carried.

Ray Harsant requested that himself and Alan Kasperski be added onto the agenda as attendees moving forward.

4. Delegation Requests

4.1. Request for Delegation by Paul Brown

Motion by Trudy Jonkman

Seconded by Andy Bicanic

THAT the delegation by Paul Brown be heard.

Paul Brown presented regarding a Community Home Care Hub as part of the Grand Trunk Renewal project. He provided a history of the health care system in Canada and Stratford General Hospital.

Mr. Brown stated that 75% of healthcare is provided in the home and community.

A copy of the full presentation and notes will be provided to the committee members for their review.

Nic Flangan questioned which amenities on this site would provide something more than a regular home.

Mr. Brown stated the units would be similar to a small apartment and therefore if the homes are not required for the elderly in the future they could be rented out.

Franklin Famme questioned the concept of a non-profit facility as opposed to a for-profit facility.

Mr. Brown responded that he has worked in both non-profit and private and he has a bias towards non-profit. He believes health care is not a place to encourage making money.

Ray Harsant stated the working groups are diligent in ensuring health care, wellness, and well-being are part of the project. He encouraged Mr. Brown to be actively involved in engagement sessions.

Mr. Brown spoke regarding the importance of an integrated health network and ensuring the services are integrated.

Mr. Kasperski noted best use of space is a priority. He asked why the home care facility should be located on this particular site.

Mr. Brown stated currently the homecare services are at various locations throughout the City and this would allow a single location close to transportation and potentially supportive housing.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1. YMCA of Three Rivers: A New Facility for Stratford

Mike Ennis, CEO and Jay Colquhoun, Operations Manager – Health & Wellness of YMCA Three Rivers presented to the committee regarding a new facility. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- YMCA of Stratford-Perth merged with Guelph-Wellington and Kitchener-Waterloo to become the YMCA of Three Rivers;
- the first YMCA opened in Stratford between 1867 and 1869 in Market Square;
- in 1904 first YMCA on Downie Street was built;
- current building opened in 1968 and did not have a second floor;
- programming is challenging due to the age of the building;
- no family or gender neutral change rooms;
- over 2000 members and 300 children participating in swimming lessons each week;
- YMCA needs a partner to make a new building possible;
- 1 in 4 members are assisted to ensure access to services;
- 11 associations across Ontario currently have municipal partnerships;
- YMCAs in Waterloo and London are co-located with the public library;
- most common agreements are where the City owns the facility and the YMCA runs the operations;
- 80/20 principal where 80% of the facility is the same as other YMCAs and 20% is unique to the community;
- currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with the City to explore the new facility on this site.

A question and answer period took place. Highlights of the conversation included the following:

- partnership discussions would explore capital contributions for the initial build;

- the current YMCA building and land is owned by the YMCA;
- fundamentals for a new YMCA would include a pool, arts and culture and day care;
- ideally the build would be in the CN shops;
- YMCA has confirmed a pool can be installed without digging up the current foundation;
- to be shovel ready in 2026 requires determination of a shared vision, values and a sustainable business model;
- YMCA is currently working on EDI and the new facility design would be inclusive.

5.2. Generative Conversation on Vision & Guiding Principles

Melanie Hare stated three working sessions for the Guiding Principles have taken place. The Ad Hoc Committee will have the opportunity to review the draft Guiding Principles and provide their comment this week. After this feedback is integrated, the draft Guiding Principles will be presented to Council for their consideration and request for endorsement to take these out for community engagement..

Ms. Hare noted the Master Plan Guiding Principles were created in 2018. Guiding Principles from 2018 that have been completed have been removed from the current draft Guiding Principles, such as the transit terminal.

In the draft Guiding Principles before the Ad Hoc Committee, there are seven key themes or directions:

- Sustainable and Fiscally Responsible;
- Inclusive and Connected;
- Integrated and Hard Working;
- Celebrate Past and Future Forward;
- Thrive and Vibe;
- Distinct and Diverse;
- Inspiring and Placemaking.

Emily Robson led the committee in a discussion with three key questions:

- are we on the right track?
- are there any red flags?

- is there anything missing?

Trudy Jonkman stated her passion and focus is ensuring that 55+ age group of citizens are represented in this project. She noted a place which is safe, welcoming and inclusive is important to all ages. During the organization of the comments a theme of interlinking generations, fostering a sense of belonging and incorporating health & wellness was found.

Ray Harsant requested the colour coding of the document to expand to all information to ensure threads can be easily seen. He noted the concept of the value of space is not noted. The concept of space needs to be mirrored and balance off the requirement for intensification. He believes the committee has a responsibility to the land and urged the group not to lose sight of the concept of space. He suggested a map be created where the size of the Grand Truck Site is shown in a different location to illustrate the magnitude of the land size. Mr. Harsant stated an overall sense of well-being should be considered.

Barb Cottle noted the term Community Hub is not included in the document.

Ms. Hare stated conversation has taken place around the term and the potential political context it holds.

Franklin Famme requested it be noted the starting point for the Guiding Principles was 2018. He noted it is important not to pigeon-hole the committee with a perception of what it could look like and need to ensure adaptive reuse of the superstructure. Mr. Famme also noted urban farming was discussed twice in the document, however, there is an abundance of land at the edge of the City.

Nic Flanagan stated the document should include less specific examples of what will actually be built, for example, urban farming.

Ron Dodson noted the bullet points under each of the seven groupings is a great summary. He questioned if it would be possible to create an additional document that would explain each of them in a more detailed way.

Ms. Cottle questioned if the Guiding Principles are for the public or for the committee as the current document is a lot for the community to read.

Ms. Robson responded that the Guiding Principles allow for a number of different users. She noted the top-line information needs to be understandable and then we need to start to think about partnerships and additional detail to provide a decision-making framework for Council and the Committee.

Ms. Hare noted the document will be revised next week and be prepared to take to Council.

Stephen Cooper questioned the meaning of placemaking as used in the document.

Ms. Hare stated placemaking refers to the opportunity to model this as a new destination and contribute to the experience of Stratford.

6. New Business

None

7. Reports of the Working Groups

7.1. Partnerships

Alan Kasperski provided an update on behalf of Karen Haslam & Herb Klassen. Mr. Kasperski noted Mr. Klassen is stepping back for three months from the working group due to work commitments.

7.2. Infrastructure & Environmental

Stephen Cooper noted he is working with Emily Robson and Joan Thomson to gain access to existing information and reports. He noted he has been in discussion with an engineering firm that would like to donate the development of a virtual tour of the Grand Trunk building. The plan is to have this complete in the next few weeks and available on Engage Stratford afterward.

7.3. Real Estate, Legal & Finance

Franklin Famme confirmed there is no update at this time. He noted there is an excellent slate of enthusiastic citizens who wish to be part of the working group.

7.4. Vision, Planning and Architecture

Melanie Hare confirmed is no additional update beyond the draft Guiding Principles discussed under item 5.2.

7.5. Communication, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

John Kastner provided an update noting the Frequently Asked Questions are on the City website and on Engage Stratford. There are 18 specific to the project and over 40 additional which include history of the site. Two engagement meetings are scheduled for March 26 and April 13. The first meeting is a presentation about the project and the second includes a panel of subject matter experts.

Mr. Kastner noted Melanie Hare interviewed with the Stratford radio station to promote the meetings and the pre-registration totals are encouraging. He also stated the original YMCA at the corner of St. Patrick and Downie Streets had a pool which was heated by steam from the CN shops.

Ron Dodson stated there continues to be a large amount of negative comment regarding the project. He questioned whose responsibility it is to address the misinformation in the community and if there is a responsibility to monitor some of the local social media pages.

Mr. Kastner responded the five agreed on speaking points should be used by members of the committee to dispel misinformation in the community. He noted the Corporate Communication Lead has noted it is important to be mindful when choosing which public comments to weigh-in on. Mr. Kastner stated the two engagement meetings should assist with factual information being share in the community.

In response to a question, Mr. Kastner noted members can assist by being present at the upcoming engagement meetings and speak to the merits of the project.

7.6. Working Group Coordinators

Ray Harsant stated the important of bringing clarification regarding protocols, roles and responsibilities.

Alan Kasperski stated the working groups need a means of sharing information regarding who the groups are speaking with and inviting others to share in the conversation. He also noted there are two eco groups at the local high schools which they are meeting with in the coming weeks to encourage them to provide input.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Andy Bicanic

THAT the March 18, 2024, Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn. Carried.

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 9:00 p.m.