



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, July 15, 2024

Time: 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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

Committee Members: Dan Mathieson – Chair Presiding, Mayor Ritsma, Mark Vandebosch, Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Franklin Famme, Stephen Mitchell, Paul Parlee

Absent: Trudy Jonkman, Ron Dodson, Andy Bicanic, Emily Robson – Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joan Thomson – Chief Administrative Officer

Staff: Adam Betteridge – Director of Building & Planning, Joani Gerber – CEO of investStratford, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

Also Present: Working Group Coordinators and Members, Kendra Fry, Media, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm

Land Acknowledgment

Respect in the Workplace Statement

Moment of Silent Reflection

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None were declared.

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Paul Parlee

Seconded by Franklin Famme

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated June 17, 2024, be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Delegation Requests

None were scheduled.

5. New Business

5.1. Lessons from the Trinity Centres Foundation: Repurposing underutilized churches into community hubs and affordable housing

Dan Mathieson, Chair Presiding introduced Kendra Fry noting she works with communities to encourage creative energy and collaborations. Through her engagements with Trinity Centres Foundation and her company, Creative Collisions, she shares her knowledge of how to create community hubs in historic spaces Canada wide. Ms. Fry has also worked with investStratford on the critical issue of attainable and affordable housing stock.

Ms. Fry presented to the Committee. Highlights of the presentation included:

- St. Paul's Cathedral in the Downtown Entertainment District of London is being redeveloped into a Creative Sector Incubation Hub;
- Two adjacent office towers are to be transformed into public facing gathering, studio and creation spaces while developing housing;
- Creating an embedded, walkable community, rich in diversity and community interchange;
- Project will take a phased approach with partnerships and scaled appropriately with the assistance of grants and time to plan;
- Two day workshop with pilot projects to engage the community;
- Cathedral to be repurposed into an event space;
- Require connection and collaboration with the City of London;
- The church will retain ownership of the site and have a seat on the not for profit board.

Paul Parlee questioned the primary source of funding for the project.

Ms. Fry responded the funding is provided through the dioceses with payback through projects such as housing.

Franklin Famme asked if the affordable housing portion of the project is social services operated.

Ms. Fry stated the housing on the site will be ran by Homes Unlimited, a not for profit housing developer and will all be rental units.

Mr. Famme questioned the potential for future use and potential mixed uses.

Ms. Frey confirmed future uses have not been determined. It is easier if the project is broken into pieces and they move from piece to piece.

Melanie Hare questioned if the business plan is sustainable for each piece or the entirety of the project.

Ms. Frey noted each piece of the project is intended to be sustainable and to provide enough to continue with the mission. When projects are stabilized funds are also stabilized.

Mark Vandebosch noted the various pieces of the project make sense individually and questioned how each of them make sense together, for example, the creative hub does not seem to fit with the location and affordable housing piece.

Ms. Frey responded the Bishop of the church wanted the project to be an entire neighbourhood which connects people to each other. Activations have been chosen specifically to involve all ages and create an atmosphere of safety.

Mr. Parlee questioned how the capital infrastructure upgrades were financed.

Ms. Frey stated there are currently no plans for new builds requiring infrastructure. This item would need to be reviewed should the need arise.

Karen Haslam inquired about the monthly rent for affordable housing at this location.

Ms. Frey confirmed Home Unlimited uses the base of 70% of market rate.

Ms. Frey presented on a second development, a church in the Weston Community in Toronto which is working towards a similar project to create a holistic community hub and performance space centered around a thriving church program by creating a space for other tenants, drawing people to worship and enhancing the Weston Community.

*Adam Betteridge – Director of Building and Planning is now present

In response to questions Ms. Frey stated there are no Section 37 funds for this project as the municipal council did not require a fee to paid.

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1. Work Plan Implementation & Working Group Assignments

Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford reviewed the Work Plan noting the following:

- intention is to drive project forward aligned with the Vision & Guiding Principles;
- a lot of the items on the list are to be completed at the staff level;
- meeting with Working Group Chairs to discuss;
- aggressive timelines will be set with the understanding they may not always be met;
- finalize Vision & Guiding Principles, develop a comprehensive business plan, secure initial proposals, and prepare for detailed planning;
- site analysis & environmental assessment, recommendations on additional site assessment needs to prepare for development, recommendations for approaches to carbon neutrality, complete internal formal consultation on the site;
- develop key partnership model, establish a formal agreement for the construction and operation of a community recreations/amenity facility, including program of space and high-level design;
- communications and community engagement, activate the GTR site through placemaking interventions;
- procurement/RFP process and legal agreements structure, Council-endorsed strategy for land disposition and development partner selection;
- financial and real estate model, articulate development scenarios and seek endorsement from Council to pursue the preferred model;
- economic, environmental, and social impact analysis, provide impact analysis to inform development scenarios and recommendations on preferred models;
- government relations, determine best opportunities for collaboration and set government relations priorities.

Mayor Ritsma stated he met with the shadow Minister of Housing and Diversity, Scott Atchison at the site and discussed the history of the site, current parking, transit hub and the project moving forward. The Minister encouraged the City to proceed with infrastructure on the site.

Ms. Gerber noted the key to the work plan is to measure success and reporting back to the Committee on the goals and objectives. Additionally, the work plan will adapt with time.

Melanie Hare questioned if determining the infrastructure required is included in the plan and if not, should it be added to one of the working groups.

Ms. Gerber confirmed working through the formal consultation process will assist in determining the infrastructure required. Funding for infrastructure may be assisted by the Federal and Provincial governments.

Ms. Hare questioned how the Committee can confirm information from each of the working groups is shared to ensure the working groups do not remain siloed.

Dan Mathieson noted yield calculations will need to be completed and the Committee will need to agree on the public investment having some correlation to the amount of yield of private investment which generates taxation on the site so the Committee can marry up a business plan which is fulsome in all aspects.

Ms. Hare stated the Committee may want to think about key milestones as part of the work plan.

Paul Parlee questioned the method of sharing the work of the working groups prior to the meetings to be prepared for discussion rather than getting verbal updates at the meeting.

Ms. Gerber recommended discussing with the Clerk's Department how to proceed with information sharing.

Franklin Famme noted timelines would be beneficial as part of the work plan. He recommended making a motion to accept the work plan document.

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Melanie Hare

THAT the Work Plan as outline be accepted.

Nic Flannagan stated he would like to see the deadlines related to the work plan prior to accepting it.

Barb Cottle noted it is important to look at different ways of proceeding rather than a standard development and to be more innovative.

Mark Vandebosch stressed the importance of communication between the working groups and the Committee.

Mr. Mathieson asked Mr. Famme if he would consider tabling the motion to the August 29 meeting to allow further information to be brought forward.

Mr. Famme confirmed he has no problem tabling the motion and reminded members that accepting the work plan as it is currently written does not mean it cannot change and evolve over time. The motion was meant to show appreciation for effort put into creating the work plan.

Mr. Flannagan questioned the capacity of the working group to be able to complete the tasks properly and the divide of work between the working groups, the City and third party consultants.

Mr. Mathieson recommended a discussion take place between Mr. Flannagan, Steve Cooper, Joani Gerber and Taylor Crinklaw, Director of Infrastructure to delineate where responsibilities lie.

Mr. Parlee questioned how information from the working group chairs meeting is being communicated to the Committee.

Ms. Gerber noted the minutes from the Working Group Chairs meeting can be circulated to the Committee.

Mr. Mathieson stated the minutes could also be added to the Committee agenda for approval.

Steve Mitchell asked if the agenda to the Working Group Chairs meeting is made public.

Ms. Gerber noted the agenda is published to the website and the meeting is open to the public.

Vicky Trotter stated minutes are not taken at the Working Group Chairs meeting but rather notes are made. Staff can discuss how to share these notes with the Committee.

Steve Cooper stated he was not aware minutes or notes were required to be completed by the working groups.

Mr. Mathieson confirmed minutes are not required at the working group level and the updates should be shared verbally at the Working Group Chairs meeting.

The Chair called the question on the motion. **Carried**

6.2. Community Consultation Insights and Vision & Guiding Principles

Melanie Hare presented findings from the community engagement. Highlights of the presentation included:

- 10 community pop-ups took place between May 31 and June 24;
- 200 people participated in the pop-ups and 140 comments were received;
- the virtual pop-up on Engage Stratford had 110 submissions and 86 comments were received;
- 32% of participants feel the GTR can best contribute to the community by creating new spaces for community use;
- 19% of participants feel the GTR can best contribute to the community by creating a dynamic and inclusive new place in our downtown core and building a range of new housing;
- 30% of participants would enjoy use recreational facilities at the site and 20% would like to learn, experience and celebrate
- the key themes from comments included green spaces and outdoor activities, recreational facilities, community and social spaces, affordable and sustainable housing, accessibility and walkability, library and educational spaces, cultural heritage and art, economic viability and sustainability initiatives;
- the Guiding Principles have been refreshed and refined based on the community feedback.

Franklin Famme applauded the Guiding Principles and the work that has been put into them. He noted they do not discuss the tie to the downtown core and feels it does not need to be explicit as the document makes it clear that the project is intended in encapsulated all the surrounding communities.

Ms. Hare noted the tie to the downtown core was more obvious before and is now embedded into the document.

Paul Parlee noted he believes the master plan calls for integration of the site with the neighbouring sites and therefore it does not need to be explicit.

Ms. Hare stated one of the next steps collectively is to determine what is the program, where does it land on the site and how does it land on the site and where are the connections in the neighbourhood.

Mayor Ristma stated surrounding neighbourhoods is noted in the work plan.

Alan Kasparski questioned if the how section is listed in priority order.

Ms. Hare noted the first item, Honour our Truth and Reconciliation responsibilities, and the last item, Recognize that Renewal will occur in phases over time, were intentionally placed, the remaining items have no significance to their order.

Dan Mathieson recommended a preamble in this section related to Truth and Reconciliation and phasing development overtime and the remainder of the items could be listed alphabetically.

Nic Flannigan asked for clarification on the bullet point "leverage the City's infrastructure investment" as it relates to Provincial and Federal grants.

Ms. Hare responded it was to acknowledge the current infrastructure and leverage that.

Motion by Melanie Hare

Seconded by Paul Parlee

THAT the updated Grand Trunk Renewal Guiding Principles dated July 7, 2024 be accepted with the recommended updates to the Truth and Reconciliation section. Carried

6.3 Update on Youth Representative

Alan Kasparski requested an update on the replacement of the youth representative on the Committee.

Joani Gerber noted the Clerk's Department is working on this item and they have been contacted for an update.

7. Reports of the Working Groups

7.1. Infrastructure & Environment

Steve Cooper stated three members of the public are interested in being a part of the working group and two additional members are interested in speaking to the working group on specific topics.

Mr. Cooper noted concern of utilizing staff resources as staff is already very busy and questioned the capacity of the departments to assist with the objectives.

Dan Mathieson stated working group chairs should connect with Joani Gerber if they identify staffing issues.

7.2. Real Estate, Legal & Finance

Franklin Famme confirmed the working group is meeting in August. The agenda will include discussion on the costs to date, accumulation of funds in the budget items for infrastructure and the Vision as it relates to the working plan items specific to the working group.

7.3. Communication & Civic Engagement

Andrew Hilton noted the working group has been focused on the Vision and Guiding Principles and will be moving towards the items in the work plan and looking for additional members to review potential activation at the site.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 29, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Barb Cottle

Seconded by Mark Vandembosch

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

Meeting Start Time: 4:01 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 5:41 p.m.