



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee
MINUTES

Date:	October 21, 2024
Time:	4:00 P.M.
Location:	Council Chamber, City Hall
Ad-Hoc Committee Present:	Mayor Martin Ritsma – Chair Presiding, Barb Cottle, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Ron Dodson, Stephen Mitchell, Trudy Jonkman
Regrets:	Dan Mathieson, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Paul Parlee, Andy Bicanic
Staff Present:	Emily Robson, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Taylor Crinklaw – Director of Infrastructure Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk, Victoria Trotter – Recording Secretary, Kevin Bonnell – Manager of Inclusion, Equity & Indigenous Initiatives, Oonagh Vancrosson, Coordinator of Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion
Working Group Members Present:	Herb Klassen, Andrew Hilton, Steve Cooper, Ray Harsant, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgement.

Moment of Silent Reflection.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

None declared at the October 21, 2024 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes:

Motion by Mark Vandenburg

Seconded by Trudy Jonkman

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated September 16, 2024 be adopted as printed.

Carried

4. Delegation Requests

None were scheduled.

5. New Business

5.1 United Housing: Uniting our Community to Address the Housing Crisis

Ryan Erb, Executive Director, United Way Perth-Huron stated the mission of United Housing is to build better communities by developing, creating, constructing, and managing mixed income housing in Perth and Huron. Mr. Erb noted the vision includes United Housing becoming an established and sustainable non-profit housing developer in Perth-Huron by 2030 and by 2050 to have everyone in housing suitable and affordable to their needs.

Kathy Vassilakos, Director, United Housing presented on United Housing. Highlights of the presentation included:

- principles includes non-profit, viability, collaboration, rentals affordability, mixed use, community building, green and homelessness reduction;
- activities include developing and operating housing and property management and acquisition;
- 14% of renter households live in core housing need;
- launched in November 2023
- not for profit registration commencing fall 2024;
- funding from municipal support, United Housing bonds, capital campaign, grants, fundraising events and community donors;
- two (2) properties acquired and two (2) in process of acquisition;
- focus on small retrofit and long-term legacy;
- currently working on retrofit in downtown Listowel retrofit of Music Hall apartments;
- North Perth library sold to United Way to work collaboratively to redevelop.

In response to questions Mr. Erb noted at this time all units are rentals as per the strategic plan. Ms. Vassilakos stated the strategic plan allows for land banking and ownership could be looked at in the future. She also noted the workforce rental rate sits at 90% of the average market rent currently.

Ms. Vassilakos stated not for profit agencies can issue asset backed community bonds to persons who would like to invest in a community project rather a GIC or similar. The funds are held as a bond for five (5) or seven (7) years and the interest is 2.5% to 3.5%. At the end of the term the investor can determine if they wish to reinvest.

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1 Indigenous Engagement & Consultation Strategy

Kevin Bonnell, Manager of Inclusion, Equity & Indigenous Initiatives and Oonagh Vaucrosson, Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator provided an overview of the draft strategy. Highlights of the presentation included:

- framed with understanding the strategy is subject to change;
- honour the lives and knowledge of indigenous people
- serves as a flexible framework that prioritizes relationship building and mutual understanding;
- embodies a commitment of the process of the work to be done;
- being open to feedback and willing to make changes in response to new insights.

Mark Vandembosch questioned who is the target for engagement and if the committee is at the correct stage of the process for the strategy.

Mr. Bonnell stated the strategy addresses how are we bringing Indigenous peoples in all phases of the project and ensuring we are consulting them often and as frequency builds transparency and equitable processes.

Mr. Vandembosch questioned how the committee can ensure the strategy stays with this project as it moves from the committee to staff and Council.

Mr. Bonnell responded the Inclusion, Equity and Indigenous Initiatives division will continue to be involved in the project as it continues to different phases.

Ron Dodson questioned what staff sees as the component going forward where the community is educated and brought into the process.

Mr. Bonnell stated how we currently think about education and training could look very different, for example, sessions where we share perspectives can be training. He noted we also need to allow for flexibility in learning from Indigenous communities such as what information can be shared and how.

Emily Robson noted the draft plan allows room for the findings of consultation and conversations to inform how the project progresses and creating a network to provide specific direction and insight on the kinds of questions being discussed is important. Ms. Robson noted consultation is really important work for municipalities and will have an impact on the municipality as a whole.

Mayor Ritsma noted as the Committee moves forward Indigenous engagement is a flexible framework and it is important to consult Indigenous individuals both in our community and beyond.

Motion by Ron Dodson

Seconded by Barb Cottle

THAT the draft Indigenous Engagement and Consultation Strategy be received.

Franklin Famme questioned if receiving the draft strategy would prevent changes from being made.

Mayor Ritsma confirmed the draft strategy can continue to be updated as required.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

6.2 Grand Trunk Environmental Remediation: Status and Considerations

Taylor Crinklaw, Director of Infrastructure Services presented on the Grand Trunk Environmental Remediation: Status and Considerations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- 2018 Master Plan included a significant amount of public consultation and engagement;
- plan helps guide staff;
- proceeding with 70% municipal servicing design to identify potential pitfalls and how they can be avoided;
- conceptual Master Plan until there is a legal road and specified parcels;
- road was designed as a wider collector road to allow for sidewalks, multi-use trails, landscaping, etc.;
- not a lot of flexibility with the street layout;
- three (3) fixed points and physical barriers that limit the roads location;
- part of road layout is dictated by bus turning movements;

- there is sufficient capacity in water, sanitary and storm for a substantial increase in density;
- obstacles to overcome with stormwater management and new provincial regulations;
- prior to parcels being firmly established a legal roadway must be established;
- significant number of borehole samples have been taken;
- a new environmental assessment will be required;
- three (3) options for course of action;
- dealing with impacted soils there are three courses of action and an overview was provided
- all parcels require a record of site condition for sensitive uses such as residential or commercial;
- entire site contains fill which is generally is not suitable for building structures on;
- consultant cost for each parcel are expected in the range of \$200,000 to \$400,000;
- if City were to dispose of land fair market value would be requested;
- draft 2025 budget includes a funding request for additional remediation and servicing work;
- legal roadway establishment will take six (6) to twelve (12) months;
- environmental process will take two (2) to three (3) years to complete.

Mr. Crinklaw confirmed the commentary will be provided in written form to the Committee.

In response to questions Mr. Crinklaw stated there is room for discussion on the road entry points to the site noting for safe travel and use ideally there would be three (3) exit points from the site. He noted the road

width was increased to allow for desired design elements such as cycling and pedestrian movements and vegetation.

Ron Dodson expressed concerns regarding the 2018 Master Plan and the amount of land to be paved which leads to a reduction in space for environmental details and active transportation. He noted the current plan look like a subdivision for cars, not a space for people.

Mr. Crinklaw stated the process will include design technicians to develop the plan and public engagement noting 70% of the process is design.

Mr. Dodson questioned if there had been any thought to the historical value of the turntable and if it should be preserved.

Emily Robson stated part of the work the Committee is doing will include what are the parcels, what are the considerations for development and how does that fit into the rest of the site.

Mr. Crinklaw stated the intent is not to have a wider asphalt paving width, but rather to have more space for features which are desired for the site.

Mark Vandebosch stated the committee is basically modifying the 2018 Master Plan. He questioned if at some point the Committee could be provided with the requirements for the site so they can proceed to make decisions on the modifications.

Mr. Crinklaw stated no formal decisions have been made for the site. Staff are working to move work along to ensure Council has information to make decisions with.

Mayor Ritsma confirmed Council has not decided on a specific layout for the site.

Ms. Robson stated the workplan includes a number of pieces of work to provide answers to the questions to narrow down what is possible on the site.

Andrew Hilton noted Council approved the Vision and Guiding Principles and expressed concern that the information provided by Mr. Crinklaw does not align with the Vision and Guiding Principles which was meant to assist in design. He questions at what point questions related to green spaces, egress points, activities, infrastructure, etc.

Mr. Crinklaw noted the intent of bringing this information to committee is to provide transparency that work has been undertaken which does not affect decision making at this point but allows us to identify roadblocks early. Staff is attempting to expedite the process and provide assistance to Council and the public to have informed decisions. Mr. Crinklaw noted projects this size go through a 90% design process, followed by public engagement where the plan is can be amended quite significantly.

In response to questions Mr. Crinklaw noted there is no existing infrastructure on the site and the current design would be sufficient to accommodate future dense development.

Barb Cottle questioned why Parcel 2A is small.

Mr. Crinklaw stated the parcels are flexible, however the 2018 Master Plan includes ensuring there is sufficient parking on site.

Franklin Famme questioned the framework that needs to be in place when applying for funding opportunities.

Adam Betteridge stated each funding opportunity is different and has varying requirements.

Ms. Robson noted Community Services is currently applying for provincial funding and they are required to include cost estimates, official quotes and designs as the generally the funding is only available for one year.

Tim Wolfe, Director of Community Services stated most grants are for shovel ready projects and it would be beneficial for this project to be at least 70% completed when submitting applications.

Mayor Ritsma stated he spoke with Shadow Minister Scott Aitchison and he encouraged the City to be shovel ready for infrastructure.

6.3 Proposal for Tours of the Grand Trunk Site

Andrew Hilton spoke to the request for the Committee to endorse the proposal to develop and execute small-scale tours of the Grand Trunk Building. Tours would be run by Committee members and would provide an opportunity to explain the history of the site. Mr. Hilton noted the benefits of the tours would include growing public awareness of the history and significance of the site, possibilities for future development, the Vision and Guiding Principles and set expectations for the timeline of future development.

Mayor Ritsma noted he participated in a tour with Community Services and staff is interested in being involved with site activations. He noted they are reviewing what people are needed at the table to ensure future activations can be undertaken in a safe manner.

Motion by Ron Dodson

Seconded by Mark Vandenbosch

THAT the request from the Communications, Public Engagement and Advocacy Working Group to develop and execute small-scale tours of the Grand Trunk Building be referred to staff for review.

Carried

7. Reports of the Working Groups & Staff Update

7.1 Partnership

Herb Klassen spoke to the Working Group Report stating they have been meeting with community groups and John Kastner has been providing a historical presentation as part of the meeting.

7.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture

Emily Robson spoke to the Working Group Report noting a visual representation of the Vision and Guiding Principles will be presented at the November meeting.

7.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance

Franklin Famme spoke to the Working Group Report noting the October meeting was cancelled as work is currently being completed by consultants.

7.4 Communications, Advocacy, Civic Engagement

Andrew Hilton spoke to the Working Group Report noting they are working to create an updated presentation that can be used when speaking to the public.

7.5 Infrastructure & Environment

Steve Cooper thanked the Director of Infrastructure Services for the presentation on environmental remediation and stated it is important staff and the committee be aligned in the direction the project is going.

7.6 Working Group Coordinators

Ray Harsant stated he has completed a brief survey for committee members and staff intended to answer the question - how are we doing? The survey will be sent out soon with a requested return date of November 4.

7.7 Staff Update

Emily Robson noted staff is working on health and safety recommendations for activation of the site.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is November 18, 2024 in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

THAT the October 21, 2024 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:44 P.M.