



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

Date: November 18, 2024
Time: 4:00 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Ad-Hoc Committee Present: Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Stephen Mitchell, Trudy Jonkman, Dan Mathieson - Chair Presiding, Mayor Martin Ritsma

Regrets: Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Paul Parlee, Andy Bicanic

Staff Present: Emily Robson - Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joani Gerber - CEO of investStratford; Taylor Crinklaw – Director of Infrastructure Services, Miranda Franken – Council Clerk Secretary;

Staff Absent: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services

Also Present: Ray Harsant, Working Group Members, Members of the Public, Media

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 November 18, 2024, Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes:

Motion by: Steven Mitchell

Seconded by: Barb Cottle

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated October 21, 2024, be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Delegation Requests

Motion by: Mayor Ritsma

Seconded by: Ron Dodson

THAT the delegation by Robert Ritz be heard. Carried

Robert Ritz presented to the Committee. Highlights of the presentation included:

- in 1995 International Fabricated Building Corporation was introduced to the building with purpose of use of building prefabricated homes;
- late in the 1990's an arena, hotel and convention centre was imagined;
- the Grand Trunk Site is the same size at the Rotary Complex and Agriplex site;
- 2015 a debate took place whether to tear the building down or redevelop;
- Montreal and Ottawa both have railway sites which are being redeveloped;
- the date wall of the building should be retained;
- suggested pedestrian and vehicle access;
- potential uses including a passive museum;

- inclusion of the library and Stratford Police Services;
- parking beneath the building rather than fill.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1 Grand Trunk Renewal Project: Brownfield Considerations

David Kusturin, Chief Project Officer, Waterfront Toronto presented on Brownfield Considerations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- in 2001 the governments of Canada, Ontario and the City of Toronto created Waterfront Toronto;
- created to provide fiscally, environmentally, and socially sustainable revitalization of 810 hectares of waterfront;
- legislated mandate includes:
 - enhance the economic, social, and cultural value of the waterfront;
 - create an accessible and active waterfront for living, working and recreation;
 - be fiscally and environmentally responsible;
 - ensure that development can continue in a financially self-sustaining manner;
 - involve the private sector in revitalization;
 - listen to public input;
- Environmental Protection Act Requirements brownfield approval process includes:
 - Phase One Environmental Assessment;
 - Phase Two Environmental Site Assessment;
 - Risk Assessment;
 - Risk Management Plan;
 - Certificate of Property Use;
 - Record of Site Condition;

- historical records such as aerial photographs, fire insurance plans and City directories provide useful information regarding previous conditions;
- reviewed the Port Lands Flood Protection case study New Don River Mouth Alignment.

Melanie Hare questioned if the Grand Trunk site is insurmountable.

Mr. Kusturin stated this site is no larger than some other areas he has been involved with and revitalized. They have gone in, done assessments, and built in new roads and parks to service affordable housing, market housing, public spaces and it all happened under the same idea and scale as the GTR. Mr. Kusturin stated this has been done this multiple times and is not difficult. The environmental work can happen without knowing what is being done on the site, however, he noted do not remediate before you build, remediation happens as you complete the build.

Ms. Hare confirmed prework is completed to unlock the site and work is done at the time of development.

Ms. Hare asked Mr. Kusturin to comment on risk assessment versus risk management.

Mr. Kusturin replied it is important to complete both. The risk assessment determines what you need to do and what you should do in terms of providing protection. Risk management is developing solutions to solve what you have identified in risk assessment.

Mayor Ritsma questioned what most transferable piece of knowledge for the development of would be the 810-hectare project which would benefit the City for the 7.3-hectare Grand Trunk site.

Mr. Kusturin stated Stratford does need a community-based risk assessment, as the legislation provides road map to follow that will allow us to determine needs to be completed. He noted the process takes two to three years to complete.

Nic Flanagan asked Mr. Kusturin to comment on the decision of how to split the land into parcels, for example, is it based on similar levels of contamination and would there be merit in splitting the parcels or dealing with the site as whole.

Mr. Kusturin responded it is easier to deal with the whole site as to not limit the potential uses. The Waterfront Project was not completed as a whole site; however, the Stratford site is sized to be manageable and feasible to complete as a whole.

Andrew Hilton questioned how the financials of the remediation of land was handled.

Mr. Kusturin stated it when bids are taken to market, the developers include the cost of the remediation in the cost of the development.

In response to a question from Ray Harsant, Mr. Kusturin stated the roads are completed at the same time studies are being completed.

Mr. Kusturin stated Indigenous artifacts were not located during development of the various sites.

5.2 Follow Up Grand Trunk Environmental Remediation & Parking Considerations

Mayor Ritsma provided comments from Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officers as follows:

- the CAO at the Budget Open House;
- Council has identified the Grand Trunk Renewal Project as a top priority and this is reflected in the Strategic Priorities;
- a staff report is going to Council for the November 25 meeting in response to the proposal to develop underground parking and a commercial/residential development on the Erie Street property;
- it is noted in the staff report that the Grand Trunk is the priority project identified by Council and staff are recommending to Council to focus resources on the Grand Trunk project;
- once parking needs for the Grand Trunk site are known, along with the developments and stages, then Council could look at the Erie Street parking lot and revisit parking needs in the downtown;

Emily Robson noted a document was provided to the members at the start of the meeting. Ms. Robson noted she also received correspondence from Paul Parlee asking questions regarding roadways and phasing. The item will be scheduled to be brought back to the Committee with responses from Director Crinklaw.

Melanie Hare noted it would be helpful to take the lessons learned and consider them when we are talking about environmental condition and study and understanding the next steps for the site. Ms. Hare noted she is hearing roads and environmental work going together and is interested in hearing staff opinions.

Director Crinklaw stated what was said during the presentation largely aligns with what staff has been speaking to. He noted a large portion of the presentation was focused on the risk mitigation measures which from experience will take approximately three to four years. Director Crinklaw stated when the project was looked at in 2018 and record of site condition (RSC) for a much larger parcel but recognizing the complexity it was decided to focus on the community hub and obtaining an RSC for that specific parcel.

Ms. Hare noted it would be helpful for staff to provide two scenarios to Committee, one for the site as a whole and one with the site parceled.

Director Crinklaw stated he can work with WSP to provide the requested information. He noted the December meeting would be a tight timeline, and it may take into the new year to compile the information.

6. New Business

6.1 Stratford Arts and Culture Collective

Ron Dodson and Chris Leberg presented on behalf of Stratford Arts and Culture Collective (SACC). Highlights of the presentation included:

- letter was sent to the Committee outlining desire to partner with the YMCA of Three Rivers and the Stratford Public Library to create performance/flex space;
- currently using spaces which were not designed for the arts;
- need for accessible and affordable location;
- SACC reformed including 25 amateur arts and culture groups for all arts disciplines;
- new facility which will be attractive for future audiences and artists;
- GTR is the preferred site;

- have produced seven major fund-raising events understanding the need for funding for a new space;
- over 4,000 citizens involved in local arts and culture outside of the Festival and with over 72,000 attending;
- new arts builds are often completed in partnership with local community partners;
- strategic priorities align with the GTR;
- once in a century opportunity to create a space in partnership with these attributes with community alignment.

7. Reports of the Working Groups & Staff Updates

7.1 Partnership

Herb Klassen noted the working group has visited five service clubs and the presentations have been well received. He noted the Kiwanis Club stated they are interested in being a part of the project and would require a kitchen space and a small storage area. Mr. Klassen noted other service clubs are requiring the same spaces.

Mr. Klassen noted upcoming meetings with Shelterlink and the Symphonic director.

Ray Harsant questioned if Stratford Pride was contacted. Mr. Klassen noted they can be added to the list of groups to speak with.

7.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture

Melanie Hare noted a visual was created to support the draft vision and guiding principles, building on input from the community consultation and Committee discussions to date.

Ms. Hare stated the graphic is intended to express the types of uses, experiences and activities that could potentially be delivered on the site. The graphic intersects what could happen and what we are trying to achieve.

Mr. Hare noted the graphic is clusters of circles which are broadly positioned around learning, gathering, playing, working, and inspiring. The graphic is being presented to the Committee and recommended to be

used as part of the package to the community and as articulation of the vision and guiding principles.

The working group will be meeting next month to discuss planning timelines and working with John Kastner and Andrew Hilton regarding communication.

7.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance

There was no update to be provided.

7.4 Communications, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

John Kastner noted the community presentations have been updated for speaking to two different audiences. The Frequently Asked Questions on the website will be updated by Andrew Hilton based on recent findings.

Mr. Kastner noted he was contacted by the Stratford Perth Museum as they are hosting an event at the site including a curated tour of the rail exhibit followed by a GTR presentation. He noted the event will be free and the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee members are invited to attend.

Mr. Kastner stated the City through the Stratford Perth Museum has the opportunity to obtain steam engine 6218 from the museum in Fort Erie. Discussions are ongoing as the museum would be in the owner of the artifact and the GTR site would be the best place for the steam engine to be housed.

7.5 Infrastructure & Environment

Stephen Cooper was not present to provide an update.

7.6 Working Group Coordinators

Ray Harsant presented to the Committee regarding the survey provided to members. Highlights of the presentation included:

- survey was approved in August 2024;
- provided to 24 people including voting and non-voting members and staff;
- 13 responses received;
- no common responses to any of the questions or statements;

- valuable comments and suggestions were received;
- need to decide on next steps with the results.

Dan Mathieson noted the information should be considered at the next meeting due to the number of members absent.

Barb Cottle noted she is concerned with how long this is taking and questioned how the process could move along faster.

Mr. Mathieson questioned if the four (4) members interested in this work would like to meet prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Harsant stated Melanie Hare, Barb Cottle, Ron Dodson, and Paul Parlee have expressed interest.

John Kastner noted at the most dangerous thing is a survey of small sample size. Additionally, this is supposed to be a public process, and some questions should involve the public. Mr. Kastner stated with the small number responses, two more individuals completing the survey could greatly skew the current results, there was not enough response to draw a true conclusion.

Mr. Harsant responded this is the reason the questions should go back to the individuals interested in reviewing the results.

Karen Haslam noted only twelve people out of the 24 answered the survey which we feel we are working and should let continue to do what we can. Ms. Haslam stated she does not understand why we are going through this process, if individuals or groups have concerns, they can speak with Dan Mathieson or Emily Robson.

Mr. Harsant noted this was by direction of the Chair and he appreciates the comments.

Ron Dodson questioned if it is possible to reopen the survey to those who have not responded.

Mr. Harsant stated the reopening of the survey can be reviewed.

7.7 Staff Update

Emily Robson noted the status report was included in the agenda package for members to review.

Nic Flanagan stated there is currently a parcel of land that has a record of site condition, and he would like to see a narrow focus on that parcel and what is the process for the Committee to decide what should be done with this parcel.

Barb Cottle noted the Committee has had a lot of inspirational presentations, and throughout the message has been about the big idea, what are we trying to do as a whole rather than the little pieces. Ms. Cottle stated the Committee has not had these conversations as a whole and they need to start thinking about this or we are going to end up with chunks unrelated to each other.

Ray Harsant stated he believes it would be beneficial to have the minutes and reports from presentations provided to members faster. He also encouraged Council look at allowing individuals from the Committee to attend the meeting by phone.

Dan Mathieson stated the policy regarding virtual meetings applies to call Committees.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is December 16, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Tim Taylor Lounge at the Rotary Complex, 353 McCarthy Road. The meeting will not be livestreamed but will be open to the public.

9. Adjournment

Motion by: Nic Flannagan

Seconded by: Mayor Ritsma

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:04 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 6:15 p.m.