



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

Date: June 16, 2025
Time: 4:00 P.M.
Location: City Hall Auditorium

Ad-Hoc Committee Present: Melanie Hare - Chair Presiding, Barb Cottle, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Nic Flanagan, Paul Parlee, Ron Dodson, Stephen Mitchell, Trudy Jonkman, Zachary Schultz

Regrets: Dan Mathieson, Ryen Ropp-Robinson

Staff Present: Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe – City Clerk

Also Present: Working Group Co-Chair, members of Ad-Hoc Committee Working Groups, Joani Gerber - CEO of investStratford, Melanie Reasbeck – investStratford, Krista Robinson - CEO of the Stratford Public Library, Mike Ennis – CEO of the YMCA of Three Rivers, members of the public and media, Joe Svec – Svec Group, Rock Wang – UrbanEdge Advisors

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgement.

Moment of Silent Reflection.

Regrets were provided by Dan Mathieson.

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 were declared at the June 26, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes:

Motion by: Mayor Martin Ritsma

Seconded by: Stephen Mitchell

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated May 20, 2025 be adopted as printed.

Carried

4. Delegation Requests

4.1 Delegation by Robert Ritz

Motion by: Franklin Famme

Seconded by: Paul Parlee

THAT the delegation by Robert Ritz regarding costing scenarios and methods of financing be heard.

Carried

Robert Ritz, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided information on the costing scenarios and methods of financing. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the lands having been obtained through expropriation;
- there being 18 acres of land;
- there being approximately 1 acre of land left for development following commitment with the University, the transit hub, etc.;

- for a project of this magnitude, architects considering the site and adjacent neighbourhoods in the buildings design, so it becomes part of the fabric of the community;
- discussions around a new YMCA and Library having occurred over the past 10 year;
- the building being historically significant and there being an obligation to retain it;
- questioning whether solar panels can be added to support the structure;
- it being less expensive to add an addition to an existing building then to build new; and
- options and their associated costs being presented.

A member sought clarification on two numbers identified for demolition.

4.2 ADDED - Delegation by Lesley Walker Fitzpatrick

Motion by: Mayor Martin Ritsma

Seconded by: Franklin Famme

THAT the delegation by Lesley Walker Fitzpatrick regarding options for the re-use of the Grand Trunk building be heard.

Carried

Lesley Walker Fitzpatrick provided information on the options for the re-use of the Grant Trunk building. Highlights included:

- the re-use of buildings being a new precedent to protect heritage;
- it being a green building since it already exists;
- citizens voicing their wish for affordable housing, a library, and a community gathering space; and
- it being important to preserve the grand trunk superstructure.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1 Svec Group

The Chair provided the following information to the Ad-Hoc Committee:

- the Ad-Hoc Committee having learned a lot including that the Grand Trunk is of great cultural and heritage significance;
- a community hub being core and critical component but the scale and amount of City investment being decided by Council with the Ad-Hoc Committee providing advice;
- the vision and guiding principles developed by the Ad-Hoc Committee having been endorsed by Council, among which are fiscal responsibility, and the principles providing a key touchpoint in the advice given to Council;
- it being important to think of the transformative vision for the whole site long term but to also consider the initial phases;
- the revitalization of the site taking time;
- interim activation of the site being an important opportunity to signal change and generate interest;
- adaptive re-use of the facility for a community hub being a significant challenge with environmental, structural and cost implications; and
- the Ad-Hoc Committee being asked to provide comments and a general direction on the option to be recommended to Council who will then review and provide direction to the consultants.

A member expressed concern that information has not been provided on the structural integrity of the building and the current capacity of the structure.

The Consultants, Joe Svec of Svec Group and Rock Wang of UrbanEdge Advisors, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided an overview of the options identified and their corresponding opportunities and challenges. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the consultants being experts in developing feasible projects;
- it being more expensive to build within a building then outside of one;
- the consultants having been engaged to evaluate options within the stated objectives and to not evaluate the cultural significance;

- this being a four phase process: Development Concept, Test and Finalize Concept, Market Sounding, and Market EOI;
- the main question being how to deliver a complete community with housing, community uses and parking in the blocks on the site;
- option 1 being to place the community uses inside the Grand Trunk building and being the most expensive and risk option to deliver;
- option 2A being to place the community uses within the YMCA parcel and option 2B being to place the community uses outside the YMCA parcel;
- option 2 being a generally standard program;
- option 3 being to demolish the entire structure with the replacement uses to be determined and being the least costly;
- constraints creating financial premiums and increase risk of execution; and
- the roof requiring remediation.

Steve Cooper noted clauses were included in the 2012 report that the roof structure would require reinforcement and that the amount required depends on uses. There being support for keeping the building and figuring out an adaptive re-use.

Mike Ennis, CEO of the YMCA of Three Rivers stated the YMCA is a charity and a partner willing to look at options. It was noted partnerships are key.

Members of the Ad-Hoc Committee and Working Group members discussed the information presented. Support was given for pursuing Options 2A and 2B.

Joe Svec, Consultant, noted a developer who builds YMCA's has noted the cost is \$700/ft.

Potential uses in the building if options 2A and 2B are explored are: skating rink, BMX biking, farmer's markets, plays, a public square, etc.

It being clarified that option 2A contains a roof where water would not come in and option 2B would create shade but not be a watertight structure.

Zachary Schultz no longer present at the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Members discussed what building a building inside a structure would mean and entail.

The Interim Chief Administrative Officer left the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting at 5:24 p.m.

Members discussed the remediation required should the structure contain open trusses.

The Interim Chief Administrative Officer returned to the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting at 5:26 p.m.

It being estimated that a parking garage would contain 400-500 spaces.

Motion by: Ron Dodson

Seconded by: Barb Hacking

THAT the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee recommend to Stratford City Council that the Grand Trunk building not be demolished as outlined in Option 3.

A recorded vote was requested. Members discussed the motion. The motion was withdrawn.

A member expressed support for recommending Council consider Options 2A and 2B and that the majority of the building be retained as financially feasible.

Members discussed whether to include "financially" within the motion.

Motion by: Franklin Famme

Seconded by: Trudy Jonkman

THAT the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee recommend Council support Options 2A Place Community Uses Within the YMCA Parcel and 2B Place Community Uses Outside the YMCA Parcel, and to preserve the majority of the building as feasible.

A recorded vote was requested and undertaken on the motion.

In Support (9): Melanie Hare, Barb Hacking, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Stephen Mitchell, Trudy Jonkman,

Opposed (1): Paul Parlee

Absent (2): Dan Mathieson and Zachary Schultz

Carried

5.2 Refreshing the Grand Trunk Master Plan

This item was deferred to the July 21, 2025, Ad-Hoc Committee meeting.

6. New Business

None scheduled.

7. Working Group and Staff Updates

7.1 Partnership

Herb Klassen & Karen Haslam, Co-Chairs

No report provided.

7.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture

Melanie Hare, Chair

Report included under Item 5.2 on the agenda.

7.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance

Franklin Famme, Chair

No report provided.

7.4 Communications, Advocacy, Civic Engagement

Andrew Hilton & John Kastner, Co-Chairs

John Kastner provided an update on the activation activities.

7.5 Infrastructure & Environment

Stephen Cooper, Chair

No report provided.

7.6 Working Group Coordinators

Alan Kasperski & Ray Harsant, Coordinators

Ray Harsant noted the Working Group Chairs and Coordinators met and had a good discussion. They will be working to put together options and suggestions for review going forward and aim to complete the recommendations by September 1, 2025.

7.7 Staff Update

Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford

No update provided.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is July 21, 2025 in the Auditorium, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by: Stephen Mitchell

Seconded by: Franklin Famme

THAT the June 16, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:01 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 6:26 P.M.