

## **Community Economic Development Committee meeting September 24, 2021 9:00-11:40**

Notes by JP. Disclaimer: I heard and wrote notes as best I could but likely missed or misinterpreted a thing or two (there are no videos of these meetings). Comments in italics by TS observers

In attendance for all or part of the meeting: Christine Bossi (chairperson), Karen Mason, Sam Purdy, Elizabeth Lang (rep from CAC), Jeffrey Frank, Peter Doukakis, Ryan Chamberlain, Sue Welke (DoS CED Officer), Dana Lajeunesse (Council rep), Jeff Bateman (DoS Counsellor), Norm McInnis (DoS CAO), Chandra Frobel (DoS corporate services assistant), Dallas Gislason (SIPP rep), Susan Clarke (TS oberver), Jo Phillips (TS observer).

**1. Sue Welke update:** (note: Sue Welke will be leaving her position as DoS Community Economic Development Officer as of next month. In fact she joined this zoom from another province to where she has relocated.) She has been focusing on public engagement via the on-line survey and follow-up phone interviews. (*Transition Sooke filled out the on-line survey as a local non-profit and also participated in a brief follow-up phone interview - Jo*) The public engagement survey results are posted in Let's Talk Sooke <https://letstalk.sooke.ca/ced> She felt that they did not have a great response from home-based businesses and that would be something to concentrate on "next time".

**2. Presentation by Dallas Gislason from South island Prosperity Partnership,** an alliance of over 70 public and private sector partners in South Island to bolster regional economic and social prosperity (10 municipal governments, 38 businesses and NGOs, 5 Chambers, 7 financial institutions (! - Jo), 3 post-secondary institutions). The SIPP "Rising Economy Task Force" made 160 recommendations and actions and they have been prioritized down to 50. Some of the projects that SIPP is working on include: 1) micro-credentialling – this involves fast-tracking or "streamlining" the learning of new skills so that people can get into jobs with higher pay faster. They had pilot projects with Royal Roads and UVic and now the BC government has adopted it 2) First Nations-led economic development program (Indigenous Prosperity Centre) "Systemic capacity issues bar the FN from economic development". T'sou-ke Chief Gordon Planes has been working with them regularly 3) COAST – ocean exploration and applied technological innovations to harness the vast potential of the Pacific Ocean 4) rising unaffordability leading to young people leaving the south Island.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE:

- Are there any "angel investor groups" involved? (these are investors who are successful businesspersons who invest in up and coming businesses in exchange for equity in said business) Answer: nope; we don't focus on start ups.
- How can we influence proposed developments? Answer: The OCP sets the direction for the long term. Invite landowners and have a conversation about what the community would like to see. The lever that the Council has is the Community Amenity Agreement. You do this and we'll do that.

### **3. Sue Welke asked if anyone had any additions to the chapter on CED in the draft OCP (pps. 104 for 3 or 4 pages).**

- Bossi: there is no spirit of supporting the 1/5th of our population who are struggling to make ends meet
- Doukakis: need to expand partnerships; there is a lack in leadership from the District in community partnerships – need to formalize an action group.

### **4. CED Action Plans resulting from survey:**

**A. FOUR RECURRING THEMES** 1) need for infrastructure improvements 2) lack of commercial, performance, community and industrial space; affordability came up a lot as well 3) pay attention to the development of the town core and make use of and celebrate the waterfront 4) appreciate the quality of life in Sooke and the spirit of working together and community.

**B. THREE STRATEGIC GOALS:**

1) *To support existing businesses to grow and thrive in Sooke* by a) facilitating new commercial and office space; b) encouraging beautification; c) attracting more tourists; d) DoS has received a grant to streamline the approval processes (*I'm not sure which approval processes this is referring to - Jo*)

2) *Augment opportunities for all Sooke residents to participate in a resilient, healthy, low carbon community.* This could include: labour studies, training skills, social procurement initiatives (a B.C. government

initiative that purports to assist communities to get the most social value from its spending), finance programs that focus on circular economies and food, water and energy security. There needs to be staff analysis (cost and feasibility of initiatives) to determine what will be a priority.

COMMENTS:

- Doukakis: Community Employer Partnerships (CEP) is a job-creation partnership funded by the province. There are lots of dollars out there available to fund actions. The DoS already did research in 2019 which could be used in applications for funding.

- Lang: How can Sooke become more self-sufficient? Examples are rainwater harvesting, marine permaculture, holding a green business incubator conference, Edu-tourism (tourism where tourists come to learn something such as about seaweed or farming). Can we envision what we would like to see in Sooke?

- Welke: Priority is to bring in outside employment opportunities

- McInnis: We can make policy that will attract the types of businesses we want (low carbon, resilient) and that will discourage businesses that we don't want. There is a shift that we are going to be intentionally part of.

*(Perhaps the most important thing this committee could do! - Susan Clarke)*

**3) To attract new businesses and organizations that are carbon resilient and care about the community.**

Some possible plans put forward by Sue Welke and her timelines or comments about them:

- Feasibility for a new co-working facility. Timeline: This was apparently an idea that many survey respondents put forward so it is a "high priority" to be considered for 2022. Lang asked if there was a short term place to set up as a co-working facility for right now. This question seemed to be misunderstood and so was not addressed

- Develop a new community brand. Timeline: 2024.

- Business incubator in Sooke. Timeline: this will be part of the new Work Link building and programs in ? 2022.

- Explore options for new green businesses. Timeline: "later".

- Zero Waste Sooke recycling and upcycling/repurposing incubator yard. Timeline: maybe do it for a weekend. *(I am thinking this means that a weekend is set aside for people to put unwanted items at their curbside and folks can drive around and take what they might need?? - Jo)* Comment by Purdy: Sooke isn't big enough to support a recycle incubator. *(all this needs to be RE-addressed by Zero Waste Sooke as it appears that the idea needs some serious clarification as well as some reinforcement - Jo)*

- Inventory of lands available and businesses we would like to attract in Sooke

**C. NEXT STEPS: All this will be incorporated into a draft CED strategy. The public and the committee will be able to read the draft strategy and propose revisions to it from Sept. 28-Oct. 15. To read it and make comments everyone is encouraged to go to letstalk.sooke.ca/ced and click on the draft document and scroll down to the "guestbook" to comment. You will need to sign in to comment on:**

**- which proposed actions do you feel are a high priority?**

**- is there anything missing that you think should be included?**

**- do you feel that the proposed objectives are achievable?**

Comments will be presented at the Oct. 22 CED Committee meeting and if no further major revisions it will then go to Council in November.

**5. Reports from CED committee members:**

- Work link will be starting a new division in December: HR business; ground-breaking for their new building on Church Rd. will be in October.

- Chamber excited about Brownsey Blvd. Development; they did a survey of Chamber businesses and vaccine passports are not popular with businesses because they are losing customers and also are not comfortable with having to monitor the passports.

- CAC is working on the draft (not sure if it was their climate action plan or the OCP)

- SRCHN will be initiating a youth activities group