

Community Economic Development Committee meeting May 27, 2022  
9-11:15 Council Chambers

*Present: Dana LaJeunese, DoS council rep; Chandra Frobel, DoS Corporate Services Assistant; Maia Carolsfield, DoS Climate Action Coordinator; Don Schaffer, DoS interim CAO, Christine Bossi, CEDC chairperson, CEDC members Jeff Frank, Doni Eve, Sam Purdy, Mike Menard and Elizabeth Lange (CAC representative) and yours truly, Jo Phillips, taking notes for Transition Sooke's Local Economy working group. Any errors in these notes are my own.*

1. Report by Jeff Frank on T'sou-ke First Nations planned new building near the gas station/Tim Hortons east of EMCS. It will be a 12,000 square foot multi-use facility with a health centre, cultural and language learning centre, community hall that seats 200 with a commercial kitchen, administrative offices, a medicinal garden and a back-up generator. It will incorporate an energy efficient HVAC system, stormwater management, rooftop photovoltaic system, bioswale, rain barrels, natural landscape. It is fully funded (ICP, First Nation Health Authority, government funding, construction partnership with a big company in Prince George and more).

“This project is not just creating jobs; it is looking to further careers for local First Nations.”

Currently construction is slated to start in July (2022) with a September (not sure what year) finish and opening in November. In case there are delays, they have until March 2025 to finish.

There is going to be an intersection (stop lights) built at Idlemore that will provide access to the complex.

The next step, once this completed is commercial development across the highway. They are waiting for a decision on the proposed sewer in the area. All will be solar.

E.L. great state of the art plan. What about the old buildings? J.F. they will be repurposed.

2. Report on proposed “deconstruction bylaw” by Maia Carolsfield. It is a City of Victoria staff report on their proposed deconstruction (demolition) bylaw which she is presenting to the DoS staff ahead of presenting it to DoS council for consideration. Sooke has approx. 10 deconstruction permits issued each year.

D.E.: Concerned re: how it will be implemented; need a real community engagement process since there is always a negative perception if something might add to housing costs.

C.B.: in places like Europe one can see reclaiming building materials, but what quality of building materials are there here to be reclaimed?

D.L.: lots of buildings here have old growth timber, cedar and fir hidden behind walls. It can be repurposed for finishing. Can't have bylaws that pertain to all buildings since some have nothing worth saving.

M.M.: is it self-sustaining/

S.P.: Habitat for Humanity currently will come in to take old sinks and other building materials for its Restore. It is viable because it is done by volunteers.

E.L.: There is a new company “Rebuild” that does this. Also Unbuilders. They bring some stuff to Habitat for Humanity for which owners get a tax receipt and the stuff they can sell is taken off costs.

M.M.: applications for demolition need these options listed on them.

3. Plans for CEDC. Should there be another meeting in June? Otherwise, this committee is dissolved and a new one MAY be started in the Fall, depending upon what the new council wants to do. So, what can they do now for some future plans?

D.L.: What about a non-profit career fair?

C.B. SRCHN is actually planning one for June 22, from 1-4 in the Community Hall. Invitations will be going out soon.

J.F. Is the not passing of the OCP holding up the CEDC proposals?

D.L.: Christina Moog of the DoS has put out a video designed to entice businesses to Sooke.

D.L.: According to South Island Prosperity Partnership there is a shortage of industrial land in Victoria. We have space in Sooke (Employment Lands Strategy).

S.P.: If there is no affordable land and no affordable housing and no health care, who will come?

D.S. (in response to a question if DoS will be hiring another CED Officer): it is up on the priority list.

4. Roundtable:

M.M. (Chamber of Commerce): many members just completed a governance course; Newcomers Club has a good presence; they are big partners with CHEK news; as to the list of commercial kitchens available in Sooke provided by SRCHN a few months ago, he contacted them all and none were willing to rent out their kitchens. The Chamber has located a kitchen and are looking into whether it can be retrofitted. Just at preliminary stages.

E.L. CAC is finalizing their CAC Plan and are meeting regularly with staff to make sure it is all implementable.