

TOWN OF FORT FRANCES  
Economic Development Advisory Committee

MINUTES

December 2, 2019

The meeting of Economic Development Advisory Committee of the Town of Fort Frances was held in the Committee Room, Civic Centre on December 2, 2019 from 11:32 a.m. to 12:47 p.m.

PRESENT: J. Cumming, Chair, J. Caul, M. Caron, K. McCaig, J. Gillon, D. Eldridge, D. Kitcher, K. Firth and J. McTaggart

ALSO PRESENT: D. Brown, CAO, L. Mose, MNDM, T. Drysdale, Consultant, RRFDC, J. Forbes, HR Manager and K. Lawson, Deputy Clerk/Board Secretary

REGRETS: G. Gillon, RRFDC

1. **Call to Order - 11:32 a.m.**
2. **Disclosure of pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof - none identified**
3. **Approval of Previous Advisory Committee Minutes**

3.1 September 9, 2019.

Gillon-Eldridge: THAT the minutes from the September 9th, 2019 regular meeting be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

**4. New Business**

- 4.1 Strategic Planning Workbook - December 2, 2019. - work book materials received for members use.
- 4.2 Previous Initial Strategic Plan. - materials provided as resource material for members.
- 4.3 Strategic Planning Session - Introduction by Jordan Forbes, Moderator.  
- Mr. Forbes led the group in a meaningful discussion and the committee provided input to Mr. Forbes to be included in the Draft Strategic Plan. This document will be presented at a later date to all stakeholders and members of the public.  
The following notes collected from the meeting and as captured by J. Cumming, Chair are included for those who were not able to attend:  
EDAC MEETING NOTES – December 2, 2019

Answers to question posed

**Question 1** - From your perspective, what are the top 5 objectives from the last plan that remain an ongoing concern, and identify why it is important to you

1.1 - 5 Working with the private Sector to repurpose the mill

The mill paper making machinery is being dismantled and shipped away- (Debarkers to mill in Chile). The opportunity to restart the mill is being eliminated. The council must be prepared to work with investors and others to repurpose the buildings and or property.

1.2 -17 Future Health Care Services

Ontario Health is consolidating services of the 13 LHINS into a super Ontario agency, removing care from the region and isolating the Northwest. It will be important for the town to work with Riverside, Family Health Team, CMHA, EMS, Weechi-it-te-win, Tribal Health to create a regional health hub providing more diverse services not only for the people of Fort Frances, but the district and to expand the services offered at Riverside for primary, secondary and some tertiary health care.

1.3 – 1 Explore First Nations Business partnership opportunities

The town needs to continue engaging and support all area First Nations communities regarding all potential business partnership opportunities.

**Question 2** From your perspective, list the 5 priorities for the current term of council.

2.1 Continued upgrade and replacement of infrastructure throughout the community. A good strong sewer, water, Storm sewer system is integral to a healthy community.

2.2 Enhance our tourism marketing. Expand sports tourism by working with organizations to attract larger tournaments, hockey baseball, squash, swimming etc. Promoting the museum.

2.3.1 Work with Riverside and Family Health Team to add more space at Rainycrest, create a new hospital, replace aging equipment to expand care close to home.

2.4 Continue to develop and support communities and First Nations across the district finding ways of cooperation growth, job creation, maintaining jobs expanding assessment tax base.

2.5 Mill repurpose property

2.6 Wood yard development and planning

**Question 3** Since the last strategic plan was completed, there have been numerous changes in our community.

3.a What changes do you feel are the most significant

Permanent closure of the mill.

Continued aging of the community and decline of population

Method of accessing fibre

More infilling of residential properties – new subdivisions

Being aligned with both Federal and Provincial Govt. - \$7 million in grants

3.b What does the Town of Fort Frances, as an organization do well?

Gets tax bills out and remains in a positive cash balance.

Does good job of maintaining roads and sidewalks year round.

Town creates teams to do projects well.

Good feeling about community -

Town responsive to community's and people's needs.

Improved in transparency

Partnership with first nations improving

More technically savvy with projects and using assets.

3.c What does the Town of Fort Frances need to improve on as an organization?

IT security

3.d What opportunities are presented by the changes in the community that you have noted?

Many jobs go unfilled.

Scarcity of housing for newly employed persons arriving in the community.

Lack of senior assisted housing between leaving their home and moving into nursing care.

Mine development – younger workers, lot of new people in the district

Forest – Farm lifestyles

3.e Beyond new opportunities, what other opportunities exist that the Town of Fort Frances should take advantage of?

Greatly expanded cash cropping in the district with the movement of grain to Thunder Bay and US ports for transportation across the globe.

Hops processing. It has been proven that hops are a viable crop in the district and the pelletizing of the grain for use by brewers would be an opportunity.

Lots of funding opportunities – knowing funding opportunities

Acquisition of wood lot and other opportunities

Unexplored opportunities with local First Nation Communities

Seven Gens opening

Work with Rivers Edge to find opportunities for building outside of mill

3.f What new developments threaten the Town of Fort Frances as it relates to service delivery, staffing and ongoing sustainability?

Closure of the paper mill, loss of taxation revenue,

Downloading of cost of services

Closing of the mine

Labour source shortage

Continued urbanization

Continued regulations

3.g What new developments threaten the Town of Fort Frances as it relates to service delivery, staffing, and ongoing sustainability?

Drug abuse

Homelessness

Student retention

4.4 Brainstorming Session - Driving Economic Growth - reference material only.

**5. Adjourn 12:47 p.m. / Next Meeting Date - January 6, 2020**

5.1 **Please note:***The January meeting will be a workshop on branding led by Chris Fields, Rynic Consulting and a further announcement with location and times will be forthcoming.*