

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed December 20, 2016

Council announces establishment of a proposed Economic Development Commission

NEDC to wind down operations by January 31

Summary

Nanaimo City Council has taken steps to change the alignment of the City's economic development function with the forthcoming creation of an Economic Development Commission.

Slated to be struck in January following the creation of a Council approved terms of reference, the new commission will be chaired by the Mayor with membership invited from various sectors including: business, regional government, First Nations, port and airport authorities, post secondary education, construction, labour and business development. Additional members with knowledge and experience related to transportation, forestry, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, professional and technical services may also be added.

The announcement to align the City's economic development function with a new commission was made public during Council's regular meeting held Monday, December 19. The new commission and its associated governance structure will replace the work and mandate of the Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation (NEDC), of which the City is the sole shareholder. Regular operations of the NEDC will end January 31.

As a next step, administration will prepare a report for Council in January recommending a process to formalize the commission's make-up and terms of reference.

Strategic Link: Economic Health - creating a vibrant culture of innovation, stewardship and partnership to encourage a healthy economy, now and into the future.

Key Points

- Several factors led to this decision during an In Camera meeting held December 15. Of immediate concern was the current status of the NEDC's board and the role of the CEO, with the former being low on

membership and the latter being vacant. Efforts to replace the board's membership generated only minor interest, while the time needed to replace the CEO could take up to four months.

- Council's Updated Strategic Plan contains direct references to economic health as a key value. Supporting the City's Economic Development function by way of a commission chaired by the Mayor will ensure alignment between this strategic value and the work being undertaken to develop Nanaimo's economy.
- The transfer of two NEDC economic development positions back to the City will provide administration support for the new commission. A third manager position will be created later in 2017. Of the NEDC's remaining six board members, four have expressed their interest in joining the new commission.
- Two immediate outcomes of the new alignment include: direct access to decision makers at the City and costs reductions in duplicated administration.

Quotes

"I am motivated to chair this new commission. My enthusiasm will be drawn from spearheading a renewed commitment to Nanaimo that demonstrates Council's desire to promote and provide a positive business environment while successfully sparking the attention and imagination of the creative and diversified industries being established around the world.

We have been informed that four members of the NEDC board have expressed their interest in joining the new commission. On behalf of Council, I welcome the experience and dedication these volunteers bring as we begin the process of initiating this new delivery model. Likewise, I also wish to acknowledge past board members who, along with NEDC staff, committed their time and ideas to advancing our community's economic interests."

Bill McKay
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- The NEDC was established by the City in 2011 as an arm's-length organization focused on creating new and expanded opportunities through economic development. Governance was provided via a nominated Chair and up to 17 board members giving direction to a CEO and staff.

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