NEWS RELEASE

Distributed October 18, 2016

Council passes motion to focus NEDC exclusively on Economic Development

Alternative approach to delivering tourism to be explored

Summary

Acting on information contained in the City's Core Services Review, combined with a report prepared by consutling firm CBRE, Nanaimo City Council during their October 17 meeting released an October 3 In Camera motion announcing their decision to focus the mandate of the City-owned Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) exclusively on the advancement and growth of economic development.

Tourism and destination marketing, each previously administered by the NEDC, will now be combined with conference marketing services and delivered through one or more alternative service providers. As a next step, staff will undertake stakeholder engagement sessions to arrive at recommendations for an alternative approach to tourism and destination marketing delivery by November 30, 2016.

In addition, Council's motion also directs staff to work with the NEDC, the Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC) and the Downtown Nanaimo Business Improvement Association (DNBIA) to implement an Accountability Strategy that:

- leads to the adoption of a new Partnership Agreement with the NEDC (City has drafted and submitted a proposal);
- creates options for achieving administrative efficiencies among the NEDC, VICC and DNBIA (City has identified options);
- invites the NEDC, VICC and DNBIA to present annual operating budgets to Council by November 30, 2016, and;
- directs staff to propose new funding levels to the NEDC, VICC and DNBIA by November 30, 2016.

Finally, in a subsequent motion passed by Council during the same meeting, Council requested that the Board of the NEDC provide the City with a response to the new Partnering Agreement for the delivery of economic development, along with the proposed efficiencies, following the NEDC Board meeting on October 20, with report to Council by October 21.

For additional information, please see the "reports backgrounder" accompanied with the online version of this news release.

Strategic Link: Governance Renewal - this priority guides Council and staff in renewing the City's capacity to effectively and efficiently serve the residents of our community.

Key Points

- The City is committed to economic development and NEDC. In a phased approach, the City is ready to move forward with a more focused mandate for NEDC, supported by a new Partnering Agreement, an accountability framework that ensures clear roles, enhanced communication and responsive financial and operational oversight.
- The City acknowledges that the NEDC is led by a committed board whose membership and work has Nanaimo's best interests in mind with respect to the success of the City's economic development function

and its tourism potential. While the board's guidance of economic development is well suited, challenges surrounding the delivery of tourism and destination marketing require renewed attention.

- Operationally, the NEDC will continue to conduct business as is until December 31.
- Through the process taken to date, Council and staff have been in regular contact with members of the NEDC board, including a joint Council and NEDC Board meeting held October 5 during which current challenges and options were discussed. This process of regular communication and discussion will continue.

Quotes

"While the authors of the Core Services Review believe the City of Nanaimo has the right structure in place with respect to the delivery of Economic Development Services, more fine tuning is required as to tourism initiatives, visitor services, destination marketing and conference and meeting planning. It is hoped that efficiencies can be found and more collaboration between partners and stakeholders alike, in an effort to ensure the most efficient and effective delivery of services, can be achieved in our future endeavours"

Bill McKay
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"I believe the changes to NEDC will allow them an opportunity for even greater success as we all continue to work to make our community the best that it can be."

Wendy Pratt
Councillor
City of Nanaimo

"The NEDC is happy to continue to work on behalf of the City with local stakeholders on our mandate to grow the local economy. We are looking forward to assisting the City with its strategic priorities and ensuring local employers have what they need to stay and grow in our community. NEDC remains committed to achieving its mission to build a prosperous community through economic opportunity."

Andre Sullivan
Chair
Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation

"NEDC activities will continue to focus on business development through supporting the growth of local entrepreneurs and businesses, attracting new business and investment to the region and working with regional partners in the growth of key industry sectors. As part of the NEDC mandate to market the Nanaimo region as Vancouver Island's business and transportation gateway, emphasis will continue to be placed on proactively communicating the region's economic strengths and attributes."

John Hankins
Chief Executive Officer
Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation

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Contact:

Tracy Samra
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Nanaimo
250-755-4401

John Hankins
Chief Executive Officer
Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation
250-824-0152

View the online edition for more information - http://cnan.ca/2dp7Wpj