

Economic Resiliency Task Force
Meeting Minutes
July 29 - 30, 2020

PRESENT:

Mayor Keith Bertrand
Ronke Solomon
Jerrilyn Schembri
John Powell
David Durrant
Helen Scott
Tim Croston
Mila Lansdowne

ABSENT:

Councillor Will Howe
Sherri-Lynn Hewitt
Councillor Joanne Kirby
Jessie Olsen

1. Call to Order: 9:02am
2. Approval of Agenda: Mila and John
3. Approval of June 24-25, 2020 minutes: John and Mila
4. Business arising from the minutes: None
5. Economic and Community Resiliency Projects

- **Fridge magnets** – John sent an email to all TR businesses to invite them to sponsor the fridge magnet project. The deadline for submissions was Thursday July 30th, 2020. No new sponsors (aside from Meikle Wind) have come forward. Administration will submit another report to Council for the August 17th meeting to get approval to proceed with printing and distribution. This report will also seek approval to use the Task Force budget to pay the balance of the initiative after Meikle's \$750 contribution.

Thursday pm meeting: the option of highlighting local businesses around the edges of the magnet was discussed but ultimately rejected due to the size of the magnet and other practicalities. Instead, Mr. Durrant has offered to continue funding the magnet but removing the Meikle Wind logo in favour of a positive small business quote.

The task force approved the amendments to the design that include:

- Either moving the TR logo to the bottom left so it balances with the Meikle Wind logo; or,
 - **Removing the Meikle logo altogether and providing three options with interesting/ inspirational small business support quotes**
 - Restore the original intent of the magnet which was to communicate contact information about physical and mental health services and other emergency details. Therefore, details for the visitor centre, golf course and swimming pool have been removed.
- **Local self-sufficiency – Community Forest & forestry/ timber enterprises for economic diversification:**
Mr. Duncan McKellar, Forest Operations Manager for the Tumbler Ridge Community Forest (TRCF) attended the Wednesday meeting to talk about the community forest and its programs to support economic diversification and community resilience.
- Economic diversification is an important part of their existing mission statement;

- Since their formation 8-9 years ago, diversification has always remained an objective;
- TRCF have been working to almost double their harvest area by the end of 2020 from the current 20,000 m³ to 35,500m³ (possibly up to 40,000)
- The expanded area may be large enough to attract certain secondary wood sector businesses/ industries:
 - A bio char facility (wood based fertilizer), in partnership with the mines to restore retired mine sites;
 - Supplying logs to build log cabins;
 - Aspen for chips, pulp and other revenue generating uses;
 - Small pellet facility in TR. The TRCF 2018 strategic plan identifies alternative fuels and wood pellets as a potential opportunity to research for TR. Possible partnerships with entities such as UNBC. Could be opportunities for a small-scale co-gen facility to power District buildings or the community centre. 40,000m³ is insufficient to supply a large-scale fibre mill or wood pellet plant.
- TRCF sometimes have small, short term contracts to complete specific tasks. Always aim to hire locally first but the required skills are often in short supply locally. A JCP may be an opportunity to train young local people who may be interested in starting a business in the sector and to train people in skills such as wildfire mitigation.
 - A JCP would pay for the purchase of specialized equipment such as chainsaws and protective equipment/ clothing. These assets could be repurposed after the end of the program to local groups or possibly to a local cooperative or business incubator.
 - TRCF may be open to funding a business incubator in Tumbler Ridge to support business start-ups both in the forestry sector and in other sectors;
- TRCF supports community growth and resiliency through grants that they provide to local not for profits and community groups:
 - They have a soft policy of distributing around 10% of their annual revenues to local grants although this is not set in stone;
 - Recent grants include funding for the TRMBA bike trails, our Interpretation trail and outdoor events area, all of which will support the diversification of our recreation and tourism sectors;
 - They can support business start-up costs/ seed money for certain businesses such as TR Lines newspaper.
- TRCF support community resiliency through extensive programs to better protect Tumbler Ridge from wildfires. Clearing excessive undergrowth, creating fire breaks in high risk areas and planting less combustible tree species are mitigation strategies that TRCF have employed. They also factor in fire suppression measures in their replanting schemes after they've harvested trees.
- TRCF partner with FLNRO and other government departments to carry out fire mitigation research and implement associated experimental planting programs etc. These partnerships also include planning processes to consider how the Community Forest and government would respond should a fire start.
- Supplying seniors and others in Tumbler Ridge with firewood would be desirable but difficult to implement on public land due to the extensive checks and measures imposed by the provincial government and others. The TRCF is legally required to fully account for, and declare every scrap of wood that is felled. It is not legal to remove any of the commercially harvested timber for private firewood on public land. It is possible to do this on private parcels of land although the government still wants to know what quantities of timber is being removed from these private areas. Duncan will look into firewood projects in other community forests that may have overcoming these obstacles and reconciled issues such as liability.

5. Round Table Updates: Mayor Bertrand would like to provide council with a summary of resiliency themes: **Communications** (newsletter and town hall meetings etc); **Financial Management** (Financial planning workshops in the fall); **Social** (buddy / show angels programs); **Food security** (worm composting etc. John to arrange a potential guest speaker from NLC); **LMP** (John); **Connectivity** (Fibre/ high speed internet); **Outdoor education centre**. **Job diversification** (Jerrilyn: Obair Society in DC for retraining people)

6. Next Meetings: We will take a meetings “holiday” in August and reconvene at the usual times on Wednesday and Thursday, 2-3 September, 2020.