



**CITY OF KINGSTON
MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON DEVELOPMENT
MEETING NO. 02-2012
MINUTES
Monday, February 6th, 2012
3:00 P.M. Councillors' Lounge, City Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor George, Chair
Councillor Paterson, Vice Chair
Ms. Helen Finley
Ms. Megan Knott
Mr. Neal Ritchie
Ms. Margo Watson
Mr. Derek Winton

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Kevin Arjoon, Deputy City Clerk
Mr. Grant Bain, Director of Planning
Ms. Cynthia Beach, Commissioner,
Sustainability and Growth
Mr. Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities
Kingston
Ms. Marnie Venditti, Manager, Development
Approvals

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Councillor Downes
Councillor Schell

OTHERS PRESENT

Approximately five members of the public

THIS IS NOT A VERBATIM REPORT

1. MEETING TO ORDER

Councillor George, Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Paterson
Seconded by Ms. Megan Knott

THAT the agenda be confirmed.

CARRIED

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved by Ms. Finley
Seconded by Mr. Winton

THAT the minutes of the Mayor's Task Force on Development Meeting No. 01-2012, held on January 11, 2012 be approved.

CARRIED

4. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None was declared.

5. DELEGATIONS

6. BRIEFINGS

- a) **Jeff Garrah, Chief Executive Officer, and John Paul Shearer, Director of Business Development, Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO) made a presentation on the KEDCO perspective on challenges and pressure points with respect to the planning process.** A copy of the presentation is attached to the record in the Clerk's Department.

Mr. Garrah noted KEDCO's involvement in the development process, as being from the signing of an initial deal, to the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new business. He explained that KEDCO's goal is to make Kingston market ready and noted that it is a competitive market. Mr. Garrah presented a slide entitled Development Pressure Points and noted some of KEDCO's major points of concern. He indicated the difficulties associated with the City of Kingston not having a consolidated Official Plan or Zoning By-law.

Mr. Garrah advised that there have been improvements made to the customer service provided by the Planning Department. He commented that the pre consultation meetings with staff are positive and that they help to expedite the development process. Mr. Garrah expressed concern about staff not interpreting by-laws consistently. He suggested that some of the lags in process may stem from the wait times associated with the technical circulations portion of the development process. He commented that for technical circulations, most agencies are given a generous amount of time, and that their comments should be received within the specified time.

Mr. Garrah suggested that there may be customer service challenges with respect to the building aspect of the development process. He opined that there may be a disconnect between the function of building inspections and fire inspections.

Mr. Garrah offered several ideas on how the City of Kingston could improve its' development process. He suggested that the City should develop a Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) tool that would allow developers to log into a website to view pending applications, and track their progress. He noted that implementing a CRMS tool could help improve relations between the City and the development community. Mr. Garrah suggested that the City of Kingston should investigate limiting proponents' presentations at the Planning Committee, as some presentations have been lengthy.

Mr. Garrah also noted that the City of Kingston should make it a practice to benchmark with other municipalities. Mr. Garrah provided two tiers of municipalities to use as comparators. He noted that tier one would include, London, Oshawa, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Guelph, and tier two would include municipalities in Eastern Ontario. He suggested that staff should benchmark these municipalities, and cited processing times for development applications as an example.

Councillor George thanked Mr. Garrah for his presentation and asked if he could identify some of the challenges that the City of Kingston faces in relation to the comparator municipalities. Mr. Garrah noted that KEDCO could provide a SWOT analysis on the different municipalities to highlight some of the differences and similarities in relation to the City of Kingston.

In response to a question from Mr. Winton regarding City business parks, Ms. Venditti, noted that Cataraqui Business Park has adopted design guidelines, this has given developers a clear understanding of the parameters and what they could expect.

In response to a question from Ms. Finley regarding by-laws, Mr. Garrah noted that once the City's Zoning By-law and Official plan have been consolidated, many of the issues that developers face may be alleviated.

Councillor Downes enquired about the concern raised about fire inspections. Mr. Garrah commented that some municipalities, such as the City of Mississauga have excellent fire inspection programs. Ms. Watson commented that the City of Ottawa has an excellent CRMS tool and it is very helpful.

- b) **Cynthia Beach, Commissioner, Sustainability and Growth, and Kathryn Wood, Consultant, Natural Capital Resources – Customer Service Initiative – Development and Building Review Process.** A copy of the presentation is attached to the record in the Clerk's Department.

Ms. Beach provided introductory comments, and noted some of the recent customer services initiatives conducted by the Planning Department. She indicated that there are two reports regarding these initiatives and that they were presented to Council in December 2011. These reports have been included in the Task Force binder, Tab #12 and Tab #13.

Ms. Beach introduced the current customer service initiative, as it relates to the development and building review process. She provided a timeline for the project, noting that the project began in summer-fall 2011 and was completed in January 2012, the project focused on development firms and their customer experience, it also included input from various community stakeholders, and internal staff.

Ms. Beach noted that Ms. Kathryn Wood, Consultant, conducted her study, through a series of one-on-one and group interviews, which totaled about 48 individuals. Ms. Wood noted some of the information gathered, and shared some of the highlights of the findings. Based on her findings, Ms. Wood noted that the City of Kingston was rated in the top five municipalities that were ranked as doing a "great job" which includes; Loyalist, Greater Napanee, Belleville, and Cornwall.

Ms. Wood presented some highlights of the findings, which included areas such as, coordination, protection of the public interest, length of time to move proposals through the processes, and the John Counter Boulevard Building hub. She noted that when asked what was the most important thing that the City could do to further improve customer service, the following answers were provided:

- Make policies and processes more clear (documentation)
- Improve internal coordination – from pre-consultation through to pre-occupancy
- Address issues that lead to inconsistencies or keep staff from being proactive problem-solvers
- Organize educational programs to cross-pollinate internal and external groups' understanding of changing landscape

Ms. Wood outlined some of the next steps for the process; prepare a draft action plan to address report findings, organize a meeting with staff focused on its implementation, present the action plan to stakeholders for feedback and to implement the action plan.

Councillor Paterson enquired which municipality is doing a better job. In response, Ms. Wood noted that the City of Kingston is ranked in the top five cities, and that if the internal responses were removed, the City of Kingston would still be ranked in the top five.

Councillor Downes enquired about the feedback provided about the John Counter Boulevard offices and space accommodation. He noted that it is where the public meet the City and that it should be made more inviting; he suggested that the area could be enhanced to include more counter space, and private meeting rooms. Ms. Beach noted that the John Counter Boulevard building has an issue with a lack of space, and noted that there is one counter for all groups. She advised that currently there is no room in the building, and that an expansion of the John Counter Boulevard building could remedy the situation.

Ms. Finley suggested that there should be more information provided outlining the process and regarding the roles of staff. In addition, Ms. Finley enquired whether staff were given guidelines to follow when providing advice. Ms. Beach noted that staff attend regular meetings to discuss matters as a group and are provided with the necessary information they need. She noted that with changes in legislation, it is important to instruct staff on the application of new legislation so that all staff are working with the same interpretation.

Mr. Winton enquired about the timelines associated with various planning applications. In response, Ms. Venditti, noted some of the time constraints faced by staff such as public notices, public meetings, and preparing reports for the Planning Committee one month in advance. She noted that a lot of the reporting requirements have been changed to provide the public with sufficient time to review the information. Mr. Winton asked what the next steps were for this project. Ms. Beach noted that the next steps involve the building of an action plan.

c) David Trousdale, Manager Acquisitions and Development, Homestead Land Holdings Limited provided comments on the City of Kingston development process in relation to multi-residential development. A copy of the presentation is attached to the record in the Clerk's Department.

Mr. Trousdale provided an introduction to Homestead Holdings Limited, and noted that the company has been involved in development for over 50 years, and that they specialize in high rise residential developments to rent. He noted that Homestead is involved in the development process for four different cities.

Mr. Trousdale noted areas of quality within the City of Kingston development process, he noted that staff are available for in-person meetings, there is an open door policy, they communicate in a timely manner and work with the developer.

He commented that the pre-consultation process is a great tool as it brings potential issues to light early in the process.

Mr. Trousdale identified areas of concern, in particular the increase in the amount of studies required, and the impact of requiring a peer review of the developers' studies. He made the following recommendations; continue to facilitate and encourage productive staff and developer working relations; look at ways to ease the burden of pre development costs; and to examine peer review policy and structure in order to remove redundancies, and make the development approval process more efficient.

Councillor Paterson noted that Homestead Holdings Limited works with numerous municipalities, and asked whether there are any issues that are unique to the City of Kingston. Mr. Trousdale noted that municipalities such as Toronto, and Ottawa, deal with high rise development more frequently and have numerous precedents to draw from and that this makes navigating through the process a lot easier. He noted that in the larger municipalities, the infill processes are routine and that the staff are more familiar with the associated policies and practices.

Councillor Schell asked about the issue regarding peer review matters. Mr. Trousdale noted that there are a lot of costs associated with peer review. He noted that Homestead is a large developer and can afford to spend on pre development costs; however, these costs can hinder development for smaller companies.

7. BUSINESS

a) Orientation – Overview of the Task Force Information Binder

Tab #16

The following documents were distributed to the Task Force as part of the agenda, and formed Tab # 16 of the Task Force Information Binder;

City of Kingston – Site Plan Control Process
Development Review Process
Land Development Approvals System and Process – Flow Chart
City of Kingston – Committee of Adjustment Minor Variance Process

Mr. Winton requested a detailed process map that would outline the timing associated with the process. Ms. Beach noted that staff will be able to facilitate this request.

b) Identification of Interests and Issues

Discussion on the following items:

- **Identify municipalities to use as a comparators**
The Task Force has postponed compiling a list of comparators, as there are more briefings to receive.
- **Identify areas of interest to examine**
The Task Force has postponed compiling a list of areas of interest to examine, as there are more briefings to receive.
- **The process to retain a consultant to provide support**
Mr. Kevin Arjoon, Deputy City Clerk pointed out that an RFP or an Expression of Interest may take time to issue and to gather responses. He suggested that engaging a consultant earlier may help the Task Force establish areas of interest to examine. Ms. Beach noted that the timelines depend on how the Task Force wishes to proceed, as they could select a consultant from a roster of consultants normally retained by the City, or they could issue an Expression of Interest. She noted that with an Expression of Interest, once it is issued, staff provides three weeks for responses. After the deadline has passed, the submissions are evaluated. She indicated that Planning Staff could provide a scope of work to be used to retain a consultant, and that it could be fine tuned by the Task Force to fit to their specific needs. Councillor George noted that the scope of work should be brought forward at the February 27th, 2012 meeting, and that the meeting could be used as a working meeting by the Task Force.
- **Frequency of meetings, meeting dates, and location**
Councillor George noted the addition of Monday, February 27, 2012 as a new meeting, to the Mayor's Task Force on Development meeting schedule. He noted that the month of March is coming up, and asked if Task Force members had any vacation, that they should let the Deputy City Clerk and the Chair know.
- **Reaching out to Stakeholders**
Ms. Knott suggested that the Task Force begin to engage stakeholders who have different perspectives, and that an information piece should be distributed with the request to attend. Councillor George noted that he had used an introductory email to engage groups, and that perhaps it could be used to form the basis of a form letter used to invite groups. He noted that he will work with the Communications Department, to review the Task Force's options. Ms. Finley suggested that the Task Force could place a notice in the paper inviting individuals and stakeholders to appear before the Task Force to make a

delegation or briefing. In addition, Ms. Finley noted that she has developed a list of questions that could be used by the Task Force to develop a questionnaire.

8. MOTIONS

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

10. OTHER BUSINESS

11. CORRESPONDENCE

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on February 13, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Paterson
Seconded by Mr. Winton

THAT the Mayor's Task Force on Development meeting now be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.