



ARTS, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Thursday, October 10, 2024, 9:30 a.m.
Open to public attendance in Committee Room G
Lower Level, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT

Councillor Ruby Campbell	Chair
Councillor Paul Minhas	Council Representative
Angie Whitfield	Alternate Chair/New Westminster Chamber of Commerce Representative
Gerardo Corro Amador	Tourism New West Representative
Jorden Foss	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Andy Gomez Zamora	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Laura Grady	Arts New West Representative
Vera Kobalia	Sectoral Representative from Commercial Area
Tamsen McDonough	Home-based Business Representative
Angelene Prakash	Downtown BIA Representative
Catherine Williams*	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

REGRETS

Paige Strand	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Saurabh Sood	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community
Jessica Schneider	Massey Theatre Representative
Ailed Duarte Martinez	Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community

GUESTS

Gwendolyn Maddock
Peter Jorgensen

New Westminster Chamber of Commerce
Downtown BIA

STAFF PRESENT

Carolyn Armanini
Todd Ayotte*
Vali Marling
Jen Arbo
Carilyn Cook

Acting Director, Economic Development
Manager, Community Arts and Theatre
General Manager, Anvil Centre
Lead Economic Development Coordinator
Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor Campbell opened the meeting at 9:33 a.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions took place.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the agenda for the October 10, 2024, meeting of the Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Film Office - Overview and Update of Activities

Jen Arbo, Supervisory Community Partnership and Trevor Cave, Film Coordinator, City of New Westminster Film Office, shared a presentation summarizing the growth of the Film Office and the significant revenue generated.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- The Film Office originally started as an engineering department, and by 2021, had two full-time staffed positions;
- In 2024, the Film Office transitioned to Community Services in the Community Partnerships function of the Economic Development division, incorporating grants, volunteers, and events;
- The key role of the Film Office is to ensure adherence to established processes and bylaws for film crews;
- A priority of the Film Office is to ensure impact on public spaces is balanced with revenue and is sustainable;
- The Film Office generates approximately \$1 million annual revenue;
- Filming activity and revenue have experienced highs and lows due to the pandemic and the writers' strike;
- The Film Office is aiming for \$700,000 revenue for 2024;
- Film projects include commercials, feature films, independent films, student films, and television series; and
- The largest expense of filming in the City of New Westminster is policing.

Challenges and Opportunities for the film industry in the City include:

- A separate set of rules in each municipality; an annual regional meeting has been established to exchange best practices and trends;
- Parking and density are a challenge with limited space for the film circus, further being reduced through development and the loss of several parking locations;
- Production expectations include tight timelines, permit turnaround, and internal staffing; the film production cycle moves much faster than municipal government tends to;
- Staff capacity is limited in this specialized and complex industry, and the need to adhere to bylaws and rules, balancing with the needs of the public with revenue generation; and
- There is a positive economic impact on local businesses through revenue from site rentals and in one case, props, food, clothing, and furniture were donated following a shoot; recent productions have hired some teenage players and utilized local volunteers to act as film liaisons.

In response to questions from the committee, Ms. Arbo and Mr. Cave provided the following comments:

- The Film Office will continue to determine how to position the City of New Westminster with regards to a strategic plan from the Film Office;
- As the City's economic development plan evolves, it is important to recognize the importance of the film industry and consider what actions can be taken to improve opportunities and, in particular, parking and planning space for film circuses;
- The City is investing in the Film Office and is supportive of the film industry, and there needs to be balance due to the small geographical area of the City;
- There needs to be a formal strategy to resolve the conflict of how much space a film crew and parking can take up;
- Mr. Cave can work with the Film Commission and Creative BC to organize a screening in the City of New Westminster of locally made productions; there are strict guidelines around this, but a conversation can be initiated;
- The City of New Westminster Film Festival is aiming to screen local productions, and the Landmark and Massey Theatres could be involved;

ACTION: Trevor Cave, Film Coordinator, will initiate a conversation with the Film Commission and Creative BC about screening productions that were locally made in the City of New Westminster.

- At the end of every production shoot, a wrap sheet is sent to the production manager requesting information on local spending;
- Parking is a big concern in the downtown core; a production currently filming downtown has rented parking from a local restaurant, and access to public parking is limited for the crew to mitigate the impact on local businesses;
- Businesses can become more involved through Creative BC by registering properties in the location database through Creative BC that is used by location scouts; and
- This information will be included in the next City of New Westminster newsletter.

4.2 Anvil Centre Local Business Promotion (switched order – this was done before 4.1)

Councillor Ruby Campbell provided background information and initiated a discussion about Anvil Centre business promotion, highlighting:

- Some restaurants and other local businesses are unaware of how to leverage business from conferences and other events taking place at the Anvil Centre;
- There will be opportunities to explore catering opportunities to diversify the current offerings at the Anvil Centre;
- Some conferences do not want local promotion of their event, but it would be beneficial to be able to access general information such as conference size and attendee demographics; and
- Councillor Campbell is seeking ideas beyond the Anvil Centre website to offer the information that local businesses are looking for.

Discussion ensued, and Committee members offered the following comments:

- Publish a monthly list of Anvil Centre events;
- Prepare a one-page list of local restaurants to be distributed to attendees of the upcoming BC Craft Brewers Conference;
- Create an email list of local businesses and an Excel ledger of dates and expected attendance for events to send to that list; and
- It would be beneficial to local restaurants to have some information on whether event attendees are receiving catering at the event.

Vali Marling, General Manager, Anvil Centre, confirmed that there is a list of local restaurants that can be accessed at the theatre's information kiosk. Further, there is a calendar of events with attendances that is sent via email to a subscriber list. Ms. Marling noted that most conferences are private and do not want outside promotion. Based on the Anvil Centre's mandate for generating economic impact in the downtown core, there should be a strategy for utilizing outside catering. There are challenges in collecting data on whether attendees source local restaurants once they leave the Centre.

Ms. Marling offered the following additional comments:

- Most clients want attendees to remain inside the venue as a group, and the Anvil Centre has focused on 50 people or less to promote

local restaurants and provide options based on a few questions to the organizer;

- In terms of tracking data, this is a lot of work for staff, and it does not fulfill the mandate of engagement and information to local restaurants and businesses about upcoming events;
- There is a request in the upcoming budget for additional communications support at the Anvil Centre; there is an opportunity for more engagement by working with the tourism office and the Business Improvement Association (BIA) to develop communications and manage a list for distribution;
- Businesses should be coached to be proactive and provide information that can be distributed through the Anvil Centre; and
- The most time-consuming task for the Anvil Centre staff is keeping a list of 50-75 restaurants updated; due to staff restraints, some outreach has been scaled back and, further, there has been feedback following bulk mailouts from the Anvil Centre that businesses do not want to receive them.

Councillor Campbell offered to pass on a list of restaurants that have provided feedback to the Anvil Centre for direct follow-up.

In response to a question about audience engagement and attraction, it was noted that this topic should be under New Business as it requires a more fulsome discussion.

5. STAFF UPDATES (No Report)

5.1 Arts Council Strategy Plan Update

Laura Grady, Arts New West Representative, provided an update on the Arts Council Strategy Plan, highlighting that there are no major changes, and the focus is to continue to nurture local arts and artists. The Arts Council is currently at capacity with current resources and is looking for additional generation of revenue to grow.

The Arts Strategic Plan was distributed to Committee members.

5.2 New West Chamber Forum - November 20, 2024

Gwendolyn Maddock, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, and Angelene Prakash, Downtown Business Improvement Association Representative, provided an update on the New West Chamber Forum scheduled for November 20, 2024.

The importance of ensuring that the BIA and the Chamber of Commerce are part of regional development conversations to represent the local community and goals alongside the City was noted.

Ms. Prakash informed the Committee that the initiative is not being discussed publicly yet. The local business community will participate in hosting an Economic Forum in February 2025. The Forum will be announced in November 2024, and tickets will go on sale in December 2024. Planning is in preliminary stages, with the considered format being a half day, starting with lunch, then a panel discussion, breakout sessions, and a maker's market. Breakout rooms will be themed around retail and local businesses and showcase the strength of the local business community.

This presents an opportunity to create excitement and positive buzz from outside the City and confirm its direction. It will also facilitate knowledge transfer from attendees who have expertise in retail, hospitality, tourism, and health sciences.

5.3 Art Services Update

Todd Ayotte expressed gratitude to the Culture Crawl Committee on the success of the public art tour, workshops, and showcasing the city hall exhibition space for the first time. The following updates were offered:

- Art Services is preparing for a busy fall with the Anvil Theatre presentation series and programs there;
- The new mural on the back of the Scotiabank building is almost complete by Elinore Atkins, a young Indigenous Coast Salish artist who did the mural completely by hand; Ms. Atkins is part of a preapproved list of artists who can be engaged for projects in the City of New Westminster;
- The mural is being promoted through the website, a media release, and social media; the official unveiling is not scheduled, but community members are engaged in the progress; and
- The aim is to complete one major mural per year.

In response to a question, Mr. Ayotte confirmed that the Public Art Policy is in process, and work with a consultant is ongoing to finalize a public engagement survey for early 2025 with an aim to have results and recommendations to Council in Q2 of 2025.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

Updates from Committee members included:

- The Massey Theatre has a busy season planned with three performances:
 - Stage capacities are 200, 70, and 1,260; all three are active, plus there is ongoing artistic creation in the facility;
 - All studios are open for community free use every Tuesday for two hours;
 - There is an artist access program that offers a 40% discount on rental of small spaces;
 - There are preparations to open an Indigenous Garden, gathering circle, space for artist installations, and a large screen for Indigenous programming; the screen will be used for music and other content which is displayed outside the building. and once ready, the Massey Theatre will promote these Indigenous spaces and programs through the website and social media;
 - It was recommended that Committee members sign up for the newsletter;
- The Anvil Theatre is going into gala and wedding season with back-to-back events;
- Gwendolyn Maddock, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, announced that the events team was actively engaging in the community and organizing events:
 - There is a newsletter that goes out every few weeks;
 - There is an upcoming AI Lunch and Learn featuring a panel discussion, and on October 25, 2024, Pacific Breeze returns;
 - The Chamber is seeking more Lunch and Learn ideas;
- The recent Culture Crawl was the largest event to date, and planning for 2025 is underway:
 - Several exhibitions are planned throughout the city, and most are community-generated and diversified;
 - There is a musician's event and a winter solstice event being planned;
 - There is an upcoming free art workshop in partnership with the City, and all information is promoted through social media channels;
- Catherine Williams, Sectorial Representative from Local Business Community, shared information about a Douglas College student co-op program which offers internships for four months:

- These are unpaid internships, and local businesses can leverage unpaid 10.5 hours per week for marketing or IT students;
 - A crisis response team is working with Douglas College students to conduct an analysis of whether the crisis management program is working;
- Carolyn Armanini announced that they are now under Legislative Services taking on multiple responsibilities and no longer the Committee Clerk; a new clerk should be introduced at the next meeting on December 12, 2024:
 - The Business License Bylaw will be considered for second and third readings on October 21, 2024, and the next milestone will be building an online licensing portal;
 - The IM Business Licensing Program is expanding through work with five other municipalities to include home care services and will be presented for adoption on November 4, 2024; information will be distributed via awareness campaigns through the BIA and Chamber to advise business communities and a detailed report has been submitted to Mayor and Council;
- Jordan Foss, Sectoral Representative from Local Business Community, announced that the BC Brewers Conference was being held for the third year at the Anvil Centre:
 - Following this and a subsequent conference, it will be a quiet season during which people do not consume much alcohol, and the goal is to add fun programming without completely taking over venues;
 - Seeking ways to open spaces for community hubs that are not focused on consuming alcohol;
- Gerardo Corro Amador, Tourism New West Representative, announced a new program being promoted called "New West Monster" (details available online), including Reels filmed around the City in a clown costume for promotion and co-production of the New Westminster Orchestra Halloween Concert on October 27, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., with tickets available online by donation (starting at \$20):
 - This pilot event will become an annual feature based on its success;
 - A newsletter has been distributed to local contacts to help organize and share information;
- Councillor Paul Minhas reported attending events at Massey Theatre and stressed the importance of bringing visitors to New Westminster;
- Angelene Prakash, Downtown Business Improvement Association Representative, provided information on upcoming events, including

Scavenger Hunt at River Market, planned by local businesses, with the BIA providing support; this Halloween theme scavenger hunt is free for families:

- Preparations are underway for Shine Bright, holiday light décor throughout the downtown from December through January. This event has grown beyond expectations since COVID-19; and
- The format for Shop Nights is not confirmed and will likely be different than it was pre-COVID; there is an opportunity to collaborate with Arts New West and other organizations to amplify efforts on this.

Possible items for the next meeting agenda include:

- Lower 12th Street and the planning work for the open space; and
- Motion about shipping containers based on what the City of Langford is doing; the Economic Development team will provide a presentation to the Committee via Zoom.

7. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 11:17 a.m.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

December 12, 2024

Certified correct,

Councillor Ruby Campbell

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk