

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF COUNCIL  
HELD MONDAY, JULY 15, 2019, AT 4:00 PM  
IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Minions; Councillors Corbeil, Haggard, Paulson, Poon, Solda and Washington

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*It was moved and seconded.*

***That the agenda be approved as circulated.***

CARRIED

**B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

*It was moved and seconded.*

***That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held at 3:00 pm on May 21, 2019 be adopted.***

CARRIED

**D. DELEGATIONS**

**Revitalizing Uptown: The Future of the Port Alberni Train Station**

The CAO introduced Will King, Architect, Waymark Architecture and provided an overview of his report dated July 9, 2019 regarding the City's retention of Waymark Architecture to provide insight into what it might take to update the train station and make it suitable for potential new occupancies.

Mr. King advised they considered the things that would have to happen to the building that need to be addressed regardless of development as well as what the possibilities might be for development potential, not just on the site itself but beyond.

Following some history and background regarding the buildings on the site and acknowledging the cultural and historical importance, Mr. King identified some of the more immediate problems, including:

Train Station:

- roof leaks
- marginal insulation; no air or vapour barrier

- current interior layouts not functional
- building heating and ventilation systems not very effective
- serious work required to make building safe for public

Truck Garage:

- built in a different way by different people for different purpose
- likely built to National Building Code from 1940s
- simple steel and concrete structure with uninsulated walls and roof
- seismic upgrades required

Water Tower:

- currently serves no function
- timber post and beam
- eye catching element that should be included in a future development – requires structural upgrades to be safe

Mr. King presented a review of other successful industrial waterfront developments throughout BC including:

- Granville Island
- Duncan Garage (rehabilitated industrial building incorporating several different commercial and social uses)
- Duncan Farmers Market (one of the largest in BC operating year round)
- Pike Place, Seattle (City developed process to refurbish an entire neighbourhood)
- East Village, Calgary
- Meat Packing District, NY
- Camden Market, London

Mr. King commented on the various components for success which in Port Alberni would include a celebration of its industry. He also noted the significance of the federal Port Authority. He suggested a multi-faceted approach must be considered noting there are a variety of ways that the property could be developed. Suggestions provided were not exhaustive and included:

- Residential building providing condo/rental units and live-work spaces
- Street level retail space/opportunities for education and office spaces
- Historic train station building well suited to become an anchor tenant such as pub or restaurant, or library/daycare/community space; potentially a small grocery store
- Truck Garage could house separate tenant such as covered area for farmers markets, arts and community space (best suited to outdoor oriented tenants)
- Water Tower focal point (play space/water park)
- Pedestrian only area from Kingsway to Harbour Road; boulevard planting, sidewalks and bike lanes integrated into public areas

He suggested the key questions for consideration as the City moves forward:

Does the City wish to maintain ownership (retain control)? Can the property be subdivided? Rezoned? Can the green space become a dedicated park?

**E. PUBLIC INPUT/COMMENTS**

Council each provided comment and thanked Mr. King for his approach to illustrating the potential of the site.

Peter Rueschmann, 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, suggested development of any kind should involve the public.

Nancy Blair, representing Community Arts Council advised that the Arts Council is working on an idea for a community arts hub and that they are also keen to acquire additional gallery space. She urged Council to consider their interests in a public process.

Wayne Oliver, Morton Street, stated Port Alberni is the only sea port in North America without rail access – asked Council to keep that in mind and to consider the potential for rail development in future.

Hugh Grist, WVIIHS, advised the building has been rebuilt and while it could use upgrades he would want to see it maintained as a train station.

Sam Brownlee, Burde Street, commented on First Nations and their vested interest in the property.

Chris Washington, business owner, expressed her excitement in the concept and that scale is dependent on the City.

Jim del Rio, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, stated there is lots of work ahead – the idea of Argyle being closed off should have been done a long time ago. He suggested that the Arts wouldn't pay enough to make it viable.

Aaron Colyn, Twin City Brewing owner said he has been keeping an eye on opportunities to expand in Port Alberni. He attends many beer festivals and is an ambassador for the community. He is interested in creating a Tap House/Pub style restaurant also integrating the steam train experience into the business.

Gordon Blake, Argyle Street, said the train station is a train station and while there is room for some small businesses, the City should bring the station up to the level it should be.

Carol Ann Phillips, 14<sup>th</sup> Ave, stated she loved the ideas presented and would hate to see the property sold to a developer.

Stephen Novik, Virginia Road, said he is a train enthusiast and commented regarding street cars.

Penny Cote, Carmoor block building owner said she has owned the building which houses 6 apartments and 5 businesses for 33+ years. She likes the idea of a pedestrian community but indicated parking is still required. She also felt the scope was too narrow and that more projection to include Alberni Harbour Quay was required.

Jean McIntosh, Desmond Road, stated the presentation was inspiring but that it was important to maintain in some way its function as a train station. The steam train is an important aspect.

Bill walker, Nanoose Campground and former volunteer conductor said it was important to bring people in and make ourselves known if we want a portion of the traffic. He said he never has to tell people about Goats on the Roof or Tofino.

Pam Craig, Smith Road, said she has a strong connection to heritage. She urged Council to retain the designation of the heritage building and to maintain control of the building as well as hopefully one day return the steam train.

Sheena Falconer, McLean Mill Society President, also urged Council to retain the heritage designation and control as MMS develops plans for the future. She stated the Mill is an attraction in our community and that hopefully trains will be part of the operation.

Bert Simpson, urged Council to put a new roof on the train station building asap.

Pamela Welgin, Pineo Road, advised she and her husband retired to the Alberni Valley recently and it has exceeded their expectations for the most part. She stated the historical aspects mean a great deal to them. She expressed excitement at the ideas around redeveloping and repurposing the area.

Sheri Stevens, Sarenga Road, expressed support for the train, the Industrial Heritage Society and the Mill.

Richard Spencer, Brown Road, advised he grew up on the railway and loves heritage. He sees lots of ideas and opportunities and would like to see use as a train station primarily.

Sheena Falconer enquired about process and next steps.

The City's Communications Manager advised that input from the public can be taken via email and through the City's social media sites.

*It was moved and seconded.*

***That the presentation from Will King, Waymark Architecture be provided to the next regular meeting of Council for consideration.***

CARRIED

**F. ADJOURNMENT**

*It was moved and seconded:*

***That the meeting adjourn at 5:55 pm.***

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

