

**WATERLOO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WEDAC)
MEETING**

**Tuesday, March 18, 2025
8:15-10:00 am
In Person**

MINUTES

Blaine Gray	X	Cathy Snyder	X	David Werezak	X
Glenn R. Sutton	X	Jacob Lumgair	R	Jeyas Balaskanthan	X
Marilla McCargar (UW)	X	Mark Baboolal	X	Matthew Grills (WLU)	R
Michelle Chretien (CC)	X	Mike Puopolo	R	Olivia Reed	X
Ricky Zhao	R				
Gabriel Lockstone, student Resource	R	Jerry Liu, Student Resource	R	Keshav Verma, Student Resource	R
Mayor Dorothy McCabe	X	Councillor Sandra Hanmer	R		
Tim Anderson	X	Justin McFadden	X	Erin Miles (Minute Taker)	X

Quorum reached: Mark Baboolal in Chair

Guests: Joel Cotter – Director Planning, Kristin Sainsbury - Manager Business Development, Ruth Casselman - CEO,

1. Land Acknowledgement

- Read

2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

- None

3. Approval of Agenda

- David Werezak- moved, Glenn Sutton – seconded, Approved

4. Approval of Minutes February 18, 2025

- Cathy Snyder – moved, Jeyas Balaskanthan - seconded, Approved

5. Nomination for vice-chair –

- None

6. Economic Development Update – Justin McFadden, Tim Anderson, Mayor McCabe (Handout)

- Justin McFadden
 - City bought St. Columba Church
 - Short term – Arts & culture space (3 years) then transform into affordable housing

- Community Improvement Plan will be opening soon
- Attended local & regional meetings on tariffs, some interesting info (e.g.: approx. \$2000 increase per car)
- Government collects tariff and hand back to sector – information on our city website
- Area to look into is via lobby provincial & federal governments re money coming in and helping local businesses diversify supply chains
- ACI – successful intake for arts grant program \$550 worth of applications with _____ to allocate
- Wing 404 – working with Arts Build Meanwhile Spaces to create space for artists here
- Parking pilot project to digital platform approved
- Tim Anderson:
 - Hospital project is moving ahead quickly into design mode (engineering & planning) and marching forward as if funding were fully in progress, so they can advocate better with design
 - The city holds several properties which we are working to leverage
- Mayor McCabe:
 - No update today – speak on tariffs

7. Presentation:

- a) Joel Cotter (Director of Planning) – Planning Changes for City Staff
 - Changes include Bill 23 – anchor legislation (Ontario introduced Oct 2022), Bill 109 (tighter timelines), changes to heritage, governance
 - Some of these are in respond to the housing crisis – 1.5 million homes by 2031
 - Streamlining processes around approvals for development include increasing staff, using simple applications handled in office, consultation times have been adjusted / eliminated, appeals have been limited
 - 16000 homes in City of Waterloo – committed and support this, but needs to meet good land use planning and cost effective to community & our challenge will be around land growth
 - Parkland – municipalities must have parkland plan in place & ON capped the amount of parkland charged for and exemptions for non-profit and other reasons
 - Requirement to remove Heritage properties (150 on our registry) and now must complete a full eval of all these properties & engaged consultants to help
 - Region deemed to be upper tier municipalities and took effect Jan 1 which means all items that were downloaded to the City – no supports/ no documents / provided to help with this transition but staff are working collaboratively with others in municipality
 - GRCA authority was modified, has 1 regulation for all conservation authorities; now weakened around development and now responsibility of City of Waterloo. GRCA is focused on flooding /erosion
 - Ministry of Municipal Affairs – authority for some official plan reports approval / amendment (massive jurisdiction and small staff team of 8). Protracted approvals & less flexibility; min turnaround is 4 months (realistically 6-8 months)
- b) Kristin Sainsbury –Waterloo Region EcDev Strategy overview
 - Preview on this report – will be going to council on March 24

- Collaborative project – to look at updating the regional ECDEV strategy
- Partnership agreement entered between the community, City of Waterloo & Region
- Looked at who is responsible for what priorities (area municipalities vs region)
- Over 1800 Community members engaged (2022-2024) by various consultants (surveys, in person focus groups)
- Summary: wrap around services for workforce important: affordable housing, childcare, activities required, challenges for diverse ethnocultural & misalignment between job seekers & employers
- Huge need for housing (attainable), growing local supply chains, shortage of serviced employment lands, climate change & need for improved access to transit
- Top innovation hub (keep working to build) – access to capital, mentorship, support & growth is limited
- Next steps work on our City of Waterloo EcDev strat plan
- Team has been going through existing strat plan to see what falls within the pillars and what needs to be prioritized, pulled forward

Motion: That WEDAC receives the 2025 Region of Waterloo Economic Development Strategy for Information and recommends Waterloo City Council endorse the strategy.

Blaine Gray - moved, Glenn Sutton – seconded, approved

c) Ruth Casselman – Accelerator Centre

- Bring together resources that founders need to build next generation of Can tech companies
- In Waterloo 20 years as of 2026
- AC starts ups (5 yr) – 85% (average is 48%)
- Over 1000 startups & \$1.8 B investment raised, 6000 jobs created
- 4 phase incubator streams
- Incubate plus just launched for women founders in stem
- Accelerator stream (start & end date w specific goal in mind)
- Just completed aerospace tech program - access to bigger companies
- Studio program 3 yr, 100k funding for startup, started w 100 companies then down to 25. Showcase next week for the 25 companies (approx. 700 jobs created via this program)
- Launching 2nd cohort – funding approved (from FedDev) - Focused on diverse representation within our startups (women indigenous, newcomers, youth)
- Refocusing on local folks for phase 2
- BASIC – lots of start of up tech co.'s need investment money & hands on support, industry connections that open doors
- optimized operations internally – using AI a lot to increase/improve productivity

d) Astero Kalogeropoulos & Lakyn Barton – ACI Updates – defer to April

8. Round Table

- No discussion

9. Other Business:

a) Tariffs

- City is working on outlining key companies that have US linkages & going through process to meet with them to better understand what impacts are / could be
 - Mayor to Mayor contact (Waterloo to US community) and have the discussion about we are linked and this will impact both our communities in these ways – can you reach out to your senator, congresspeople etc.
 - Support provincial / federal initiatives
- b) Motion passed in February about supporting team ON & CAN and Staff looking at the Cities procurement processes
- c) Talks about interprovincial barriers are occurring at accelerated pace. Some professional associations need to also look at their barriers and prov barriers to some things like trade
- d) We have trade agreements with 50 other countries... what is possible
- e) Some pricing has increased by 450% but also swamped with orders (1 manufacturing business)
Main components from US which as subject to tariffs

10. Motion to Adjourn

Blaine Gray – moved, Olivia Reed – seconded, approved

Next Meetings: Tuesday, April 15
 8 am – 10 am
 Via teams

 Tuesday, May 20
 8:15 am – 10 am
 In person