



# **CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT**

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## **MAYOR'S AND COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Report from: Councillor Susan Low

Subject: South Island Prosperity Project – 2017 Annual General Meeting

Council Agenda: July 17, 2017

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### Recommendation

That Council receive Councillor Susan Low's Report on South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) 2017 Annual General Meeting for information, and consider supporting the Consent Resolutions of the Members relating to proposed replacement of the Bylaws of SIPP, as summarized in the attachments to this Report.

### Background

I attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) on June 29, 2017. Below are my notes of the meeting for Council's information. I will be attending a meeting on July 12, 2017 with some other local government officials from the region to discuss the Smart Cities Initiative.

### Notes of AGM:

SIPP has completed the first full year of operations and reported on some of its key accomplishments and goals for the year ahead.

The organization has confirmed a federal grant of \$258,000 from Western Economic Development which will support its programs in the coming two years, in addition to the membership dues revenue. Esquimalt contributed \$15,365 in year 1 and will contribute \$34,621 in year 2. Overall membership revenue in year 1 was \$464,671 and in year 2, it is projected to be \$793,316.

In the past year, 11 companies have completed the Business Connector program. This is a cohort-based, mentorship program attracting companies from any sector. Companies have \$1million+ in revenue, have been in business 3+ years, and have 7+ employees. Some of the participants include Sea Cider, Titan Boats, Prototype Equipment Design, and JSF Technologies. None of these companies are located in Esquimalt.

Another accomplishment of note to Esquimalt is the establishment of an incubator/co-working space for First Nations-owned companies, which is located at the Songhees Wellness Centre just outside our borders. This economic development opportunity will support the start-up and growth of companies from all 10 of the local South Island First Nations.

SIPP has hosted a number of round tables and events to bring people together. One such roundtable brought "industry cluster" expert Ifor Ffowcs-Williams, from New Zealand, to speak and facilitate discussions about sector/industry clusters in the South Island. Another roundtable has begun discussions among municipal partners about the federal government's Innovation Agenda, which includes a competition to fund three cities that develop Smart Cities Proposals - \$300M to be awarded. \$10M would be awarded to a proposal in the mid-sized category (where the South Island would fall). Large-sized category awards are for \$50M.

During the lunch break, the municipal representatives held a small meeting-within-meeting to discuss the Smart Cities competition. A Smart City is defined as a developed urban area that creates sustainable economic development and high quality of life by excelling in multiple key areas: economy, mobility, environment, etc. The purpose of the competition is to support cities to use technology and data to make communities more livable, and improve the quality of life for urban residents through better city planning and implementation of clean technology. The outcomes desired by the federal government are: innovation, partnerships, sustainability of the project, and scalability (can be replicated in Canada). SIPP is going to be the organizing point for the region to prepare a proposal/bid for this competition. There are teams meeting through the summer to prepare ideas, develop a concept, and put together a proposal for submission in the fall. I volunteered to be part of the team meeting to discuss partnerships as part of this endeavour.

The keynote speaker at the meeting was Merge Gupta-Sunderji. Her presentation was about celebrating one year of operation for SIPP, and how to capitalize on the forward momentum of energy. She shared three ideas for how to continue to build a strong, successful organization:

- 1) Continually push for change. Merge shared the metaphor of a lobster, which casts off its shell up to seven times in its lifetime; during the process of growing a new one, the lobster is vulnerable to injury or harm. However, the lobster has to take the risk and step outside the comfort zone in order to grow. This takes courage.
- 2) Thoughtfully create your organization's culture. Leaders need to set the standards for what is considered acceptable standards... and that includes what is the orientation towards risk-taking and being entrepreneurial. This comes to repeating the vision, mission, and purpose over and over until we are all clear about where we are going.
- 3) Success comes from active involvement, not passive investment. We have to go beyond being a spectator. The only way to create transformational growth is to shake things up, to the point where there is simply no chance of returning back to the status quo. Merge compared the traditional approach to change, which is to take measured, carefully-considered steps and go slowly, and what an aircraft needs to stay aloft: after taking off at 180m/h, a plane needs to maintain speeds of about 600m/h to stay in the air. She compared this to SIPP and said that if we are going to make our Year 2 goals happen, then we have to be prepared to go further and be more active and involved than we were in Year 1. I note that this may mean that in order to see benefits to Esquimalt, we need to be prepared to increase our involvement in their operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Low, Councillor