

MINUTES OF A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Monday, September 8, 2025
Council Chambers, District of Hope Municipal Office
325 Wallace Street, Hope, British Columbia

Council Members Present: Mayor Victor Smith
Councillor Bonny Graham
Councillor Scott Medlock
Councillor Pauline Newbigging
Councillor Angela Skoglund
Councillor Heather Stewin

Council Members Absent: Councillor Dusty Smith

Staff Present: John Fortoloczky, Chief Administrative Officer
Kevin Dicken, Director of Operations/Deputy CAO
Donna Bellingham, Director of Corporate Services
Robin Beukens, Director of Community Development
Mike Olson, Director of Finance
Branden Morgan, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Others Present: 3 members of the Public and 1 Media

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 7:48 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved / Seconded

THAT the September 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda be adopted, as presented. **CARRIED.**

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

(a) Committee of the Whole

Moved / Seconded

THAT the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held June 23, 2025, be adopted, as presented. **CARRIED.**

4. OTHER PERTINENT BUSINESS

(a) Official Community Plan Update – Council Workshop

Chris Silcott and Sylvia Summers, Seniors Planners from Stantec Consulting, were in attendance to present to Council and seek input regarding the Official Community Plan (OCP) Update Project. An overview of feedback received from both Council and the public during the first round of engagement was presented, including:

- Council Feedback:
 - The current vision remains accurate; Council would like to see the community work towards this vision more actively

- Council values the welcoming nature of Hope, volunteerism, and access to nature
- Priorities include instilling community pride, improving aesthetics and visual identity, celebrating cultural diversity, supporting housing affordability, and promoting economic development (including light industrial)
- Revitalization of the downtown core is a key goal, with integration of murals, public art, and crosswalk art
- Council supports greater housing affordability and infrastructure to meet community needs
- Minimal OCP amendments are preferred, with a short and usable document that is understandable to the public
- Public Feedback:
 - Themes: preserving and enhancing community character, supporting community well-being, attracting new residents and businesses, creating downtown vibrancy, promoting compact land use, and reinforcing multi-modal connectivity
 - Word clouds and survey results highlight priorities such as nature, safety, tourism, affordability, and community
 - Concerns include homelessness, crime, affordability, infrastructure, and employment
- Priority Topics for the OCP:
 - High Priority: community health and well-being, parks and recreation, environmental protection, housing, infrastructure and public utilities, transportation and mobility
 - Lower Priority: culture and heritage, climate change, extreme weather

Council noted that Culture and Heritage ranked lower than other priority topics in the engagement results. Mr. Wilcott advised that the engagement results are a snapshot in time and that many factors contribute to the results. He added that there will be further engagement opportunities to collect feedback from the community.

- Objectives of OCP and Zoning Bylaw Updates
 - Reduce the frequency of amendments
 - Create a short, usable document with visual and map integration
 - Align land use and zoning for a simpler framework
 - Provide practical and implementable design guidelines
 - Clear growth management statement linked to goals and objectives
- What We Heard and What We're Doing
 - Employment: diversify the economy, address downtown business vacancy, grow tourism, and attract new businesses
 - Housing: increase housing diversity and affordability to provide options across the entire housing spectrum

- Downtown Vibrancy: support tourism, economic development, mixed uses, consistent building aesthetics, encourage businesses to locate downtown and create a walkable core
- Community Well-Being: integrate First Nations history and culture, address the impacts of climate change, and improve healthcare access
- Multi-Modal Connectivity: improve accessibility and safety, and encourage increasing active transportation and cycling infrastructure
- Community Character: strengthen environmental protections, enhance viewscales, and prioritize trail connectivity and parks
- Compact Land Use: promote more efficient use and land and optimization of infrastructure, and encourage infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lots

Council inquired as to how the OCP will be made easier for the average person to read and understand. Ms. Summers advised that the OCP has been divided into sections so that policies relevant to specific areas or types of development can be found together. Mr. Wilcott added that where possible, the OCP has been written in plain language, and a preamble is included in each section that explains the topic, goals, and objectives.

- OCP Update Overview
 - An updated vision statement has been created to reflect
 - Goals, objectives, and policies for each section of the OCP have been updated to reflect the new vision statement
 - All updates align with legislative requirements
 - The District has sufficient land to accommodate housing needs requirements
 - Economic development and diversification are emphasized, with a focus on tourism
- Downtown Hope
 - A specific Downtown Hope goal and policy section has been created
 - Moved to a height-based framework in the downtown area to address challenges in development
 - Updated the Form and Character Development Permit with practical and simple guidelines that are implementable
 - Focus on Wallace Street visual identity

Council inquired as to how the District can get businesses on board and accomplish the ideas set out in the vision statement. Mr. Wilcott advised that the OCP lays the groundwork to start the process, and that the District will have to work with the business community, Chamber of Commerce, and AdvantageHOPE to get buy-in. The Director of Community Development advised that the District will monitor implementation and commit resources where appropriate. He added that the Chamber of Commerce and AdvantageHOPE can also provide direction to developers to find projects that fit the vision.

Council requested clarification regarding height-based framework and how it will affect development in the downtown area. Mr. Wilcott advised that the Downtown Commercial (CBD) zone building density is regulated by floor area ratio and units per hectare calculations, which determine the maximum number of units and square footage. By removing those calculations and instead regulating properties by setbacks, height limits, and parking requirements, developers have more flexibility in the number of units they can achieve.

- Zoning Bylaw Update Overview
 - Waiting for the OCP update to be finalized as the Zoning Bylaw reflects the OCP
 - Alignment with new OCP policies
 - Modernization for readability and accessibility
 - Height-based framework applies to downtown only
 - Exploring limiting the heights of buildings in some areas of downtown, particularly on Wallace Street to align with the Downtown Action Plan
 - Integrated healthcare as permitted use in commercial zones
 - Housing zones updated to align with OCP
 - Parking minimums are reduced in several zones
 - Bicycle parking requirements improved

Council requested clarification regarding limitations on building heights on Wallace Street. The Director of Community Development advised that the current permitted height within the CBD zone is 15 meters, or approximately 4-5 stories, the direction in the Downtown Action Plan is to limit building height on Wallace Street to 2-3 stories to maintain the intimate pedestrian scale. He added that there is capacity to vary the height restriction where needed.

- Second Round of Engagement
 - Purpose is to share the draft OCP and Zoning Bylaw direction, gather feedback, and answer questions as the documents are finalized
 - Engagement activities include a Council workshop, administration workshop, targeted stakeholder meetings, open house, pop-up events, and online survey
- Next Steps
 - Once this round of engagement is complete, the OCP and Zoning Bylaw updates will be finalized
 - The OCP and Zoning Bylaw updates will be introduced to Council for first reading
 - After receiving first reading, the bylaws will be referred to the FVRD, School Board, Fraser Health, and other applicable provincial agencies
 - After feedback is received from those agencies, final revisions will be made, and the bylaws will return to Council for further readings, public hearing, and adoption

- Completion is planned for December, but that timeline is dependent on when responses are received from other agencies

Council inquired as to whether further consultation will take place with First Nations communities. The Director of Community Development advised that meetings have been scheduled with two First Nations for September 9th, and that other communities will be contacted to provide their feedback. Council inquired as to when they will receive a summary of the feedback that has been received in the second round of engagement. Ms. Summers advised that Stantec Consulting will provide a “What We Heard” report containing the feedback received from the community at the conclusion of the engagement process.

5. QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions from the public.

6. CLOSE

Moved / Seconded

THAT the September 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting adjourn at 8:17 p.m.

CARRIED.

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on September 8, 2025 in Council Chambers of the District of Hope, British Columbia

Original Signed by Victor Smith

Mayor

Original Signed by Donna Bellingham

Director of Corporate Services