Present: M. Chamberlain (Chair)
   Councillor M. Pearson (Vice-Chair and Ex-Officio)
   Councillor T. Jackson
   M. Frankovich, S. Hamber, A. Irani, R. Maclsaac, T. MacLeod,
   C. McMaster, C. Milne, and D. Tsafaridis

Absent with Regrets:
   Mayor F. Eisenberger, Ex-officio, City Business
   T. Dobbie, M. Elbestawi, J. Freiburger, R. Koroscil,

Also Present:
   T. McCabe, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development
   N. Everson, Director, Economic Development and Real Estate Division
   J. Hickey-Evans, Manager, Policy Planning
   D. Omazic, Mayor’s Office
   I. Bedioui, City Clerk’s Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chamberlain referred to the City’s Vision Statement and the Mandate of the Economic Development Advisory Committee which are printed on the agenda.

He also briefly addressed Committee about the Welcome Inn Community Centre indicating that it offers free advice to new entrepreneurs and is a very helpful resource especially for small entrepreneurs.
1. Introductions – Maria Pearson and Rob MacIsaac

Mark Chamberlain welcomed Councillor Maria Pearson who is the new Chair of the Economic Development and Planning Committee for 2009 and is replacing Councillor Terry Whitehead as Vice Chair and Ex-Officio member of the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Mark Chamberlain also welcomed new member Rob MacIsaac, President of Mohawk College, replacing Mary Lynn West-Moynes.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

The Clerk advised there were no changes to the agenda.

(MacLeod/Tsafaridis)
That the agenda be approved as presented.  

CARRIED

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(Milne/McMaster)
(a) That the Minutes of the December 4, 2008 Meeting be amended by indicating that Tyler MacLeod was in attendance;

(b) That the Minutes be approved as amended.  

CARRIED

5. Official Plan & CZB Update - Joanne Hickey-Evans

Joanne Hickey-Evans addressed Committee and provided two hand-outs; a copy of the Notice of the Statutory Open House for the City’s new draft Urban Official Plan, and the web site address for information concerning the draft Urban Official Plan. She noted the aggressive timelines for obtaining public input and briefly explained the process.

Joanne Hickey-Evans explained that the City’s goal with the new Urban Official Plan is to be more flexible.

The Committee discussed the following:
• Will the urban boundaries be expanded? No.
• Is there a process to manage the appeals?
• Is there an opportunity to view the plan and respond to it on-line?
• The airport lands will be shovel-ready in 2011.
• Approval of the planning is the first hurdle;
• What have been the biggest challenges and disagreements? – The Province of Ontario is restricting the City’s growth.
• The community response: - very positive feedback; the community has been supportive although polarized views of urban expansion do exist; - disagreement will occur when it gets down to the neighbourhood level – i.e. duplexing – the reduced set backs will mean less space between neighbours;
• Is there an effort to hit the intensification goal as fast as possible?
• 40% goal for intensification is very conservative, but the OP is flexible and will allow more – it’s a balance of supply and demand
• staff reviewed every single piece of industrial land to consider whether to change its zoning or not;
• Does everything relate back to the competitive issues – i.e. sustainability? - The new neighbourhood zoning “where people, learn, play and live” is more flexible than the current residential zoning— it also allows more uses than the industrial zoning;
• Goods movement – new section – Richard Koroscil helped with that;
• Quality of life issues have been the focus – theme and picture of the OP;
• How will the City educate the public? Does it educate on the benefits of higher density? – The City has produced two brochures to educate people.
• Are the brochures available? – not on line because it does not print well but it’s available in hard copy – Syd Hamber and Councillor Pearson asked for copies.
• Corporate implementation – it will take many different members of staff to implement this.

Joanne Hickey-Evans advised the Committee that there will be a meeting respecting the Urban Official Plan on April 8, 2009 at the Sheraton Hotel.

6. Strategies to Retain Hamilton Graduate Students in Hamilton’s Workforce

Neil Everson advised that this issue was introduced by Councillor McHattie. The strategy will be led by Joe-Anne Priel, General Manager of Community Services, and her team. A graduate student from McMaster University will conduct a survey of Mohawk and McMaster students to find out what the students are looking for when selecting a place to live. He indicated that he will report back to the Advisory Committee in June with respect to this issue.
Mario Frankovich suggested that a number of Human Resources firms have details and statistics of what grad students are looking for and is a free resource that can be utilized.


Neil Everson indicated that development charges cover the capital cost of new development and municipalities are required to review them every five years. He provided a hand-out of a PowerPoint presentation and referred to slide #3 which provides a comparison of development charges in other municipalities.

He noted that the proposed development charges haven’t been adopted as yet and that these hand outs are for information only.

The Committee members made the following comments:

• There is a great deal of polarity with this issue and a balanced approach is required; A low development charge will not increase development as there are many factors that influence development growth; The municipalities with the highest development charges enjoy the most growth
• Hamilton’s location makes it attractive for development as long as the basic infrastructure is in place;
• Development charges do not deter development because development charges can be financed but the tax rate cannot be financed; Property taxes, maintenance and insurance are higher in Hamilton; Property taxes will chase a business away;
• Development charges are necessary in order to pay for infrastructure; Calculating the amount is not difficult - where to give exemptions and deductions is the political decision;
• The rural area is different from the urban area with respect to development charges
• The reason for locating in a municipality is by far the most important issue – It is a cost and revenue issue – why locate in Hamilton rather than Toronto?
• What is the cost of developing a green field vs a brown field
• The development charges include the whole shopping list (green space, infrastructure, etc.) which makes it complicated and hard to compare with other municipalities.
• Green field development vs brown field development – do we actually know the cost and how visible and transparent is that cost so that people can support the cost
• It is difficult to determine. New infrastructure may be required in the green field and existing infrastructure in the brownfield may need to be replaced;
• Labour costs, trucking costs and development costs all need to be considered in any development;
• Hamilton is competitive and reasonable;
• the combined GST and PST on houses proposed by the provincial budget will impact:
• the City should consider a freeze on development charges (like Toronto did) as development will decrease due to the economy
• this would be unfair as the burden will be on the existing tax payer and on future home builders and buyers.


Neil Everson distributed three hand-outs outlining the economic development and marketing proposed strategy format and who will be taking the lead on what component.

The Committee noted that this is a very complex issue and needs more input. A discussion followed on what industries are growing (bioscience and agriculture, food and beverage, small to medium manufacturing, etc.) and whether laid off employees are being retrained for these types of jobs.

The Committee also discussed how to let the public know about any new companies that are hiring. It was suggested that a job website where willing employers could post vacancies for key employees. The Chair suggested discussing this further off line.

The Committee also agreed that advising the public of those companies that are growing despite the economic down turn would be a positive message.

9. Budget and Municipal Taxes – Tim McCabe

Tim McCabe indicated that there will be a Special Committee of the Whole budget meeting next Wednesday (April 1, 2009). The budget is corporately at a 4.8% increase which will be reduced to 1.9% if the City receives Provincial funding. The Economic Development budget is at a 1% increase. He explained that Council allowed the Division to keep the surplus of the development revitalization reserve and last year was the first year staff had to draw from it. Additional staff were paid out of reserve. Due to the slow economy, the Building Division is experiencing a 30% reduction in building permits volume. Staff are taking the opportunity of this slow time to get caught up on the work back log and staff are being seconded to other City jobs. There are currently 35 vacancies in the department. There is currently a surplus of $750,000 in the economic development fund which will be transferred into the reserve. The Jobs Prosperity Collaborative is scheduled to present its financial statement to Council.

Councillor Jackson announced that if the Province comes through with the funding, the 1.9% increase will be applied across the entire community.
Councillor Pearson thanked Tim McCabe and his staff for keeping their budget low and keeping up with the work.

The Committee acknowledged that no one likes paying taxes but many services are provided in return. The City provides 241 services – not just garbage pick up and snow removal.

10. **Pan Am Games Update – Tim McCabe**

Tim McCabe advised that the City has an excellent chance of winning the Pan Am Games bid. Staff have worked very diligently in a very short time on this issue and are pursuing private/public partnership funding opportunities. Since the private sector & McMaster University have pledged $100 million, the cost to the City has been reduced to $60 million.

11. **Brownfield Strategy Update – Neil Everson**

Neil Everson advised that three brownfields were development last year. When all of the developed brownfields are added up over the past 7 years, the total is greater than in any other city. Staff have mapped every single brownfield by ward and will try to assemble a prioritization list as part of the brown field strategy. Most brownfields are in Ward 5.

A discussion followed on the definition of brownfields, how to find them and what information is available. Part of the strategy is to identify opportunity. Data will be available to identify “redevelopment sites.” Once the OP is approved that will be a catalyst for development.

The Committee acknowledged that there also exists an in-between category – the grey fields such as underutilized strip plazas.

12. **Other Business - Mark Chamberlain**

The Chair noted that Mohawk College will be receiving funds from the Federal Government and the Province may match the funds.

13. **Next Meeting & Meeting Dates - Mark Chamberlain**

Tim McCabe advised that there will be one more meeting scheduled prior to June and then the Advisory Committee will not meet during the summer but will resume meeting again in the fall every other month. The Legislative Assistant will see if the last Thursday of the month will work for everyone.
It was suggested that the physician recruitment issue be put on a future agenda and that Jane Walker, the Physician Recruiter Specialist be invited to attend.

14. Adjournment

(Irani/Hamber
There being no further business, that the meeting be adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Chamberlain, Chair
Economic Development Advisory Committee

Ida Bedioui
Legislative Assistant
Economic Development Advisory Committee
March 26, 2009