

# KINGSTON

— Economic Development —

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

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<b>Date:</b>	Monday, January 27, 2025	<b>Time:</b> 5:30 pm	
<b>Location:</b>	Lakeview Room - Delta Hotels by Marriott Kingston Waterfront, 1 Johnson Street		
<b>Attended:</b>	Cathy Campbell-Wilson Anne Vivian-Scott Eric Davies Councillor Ridge	Peng-Sang Cau Patrick Egbunonu Councillor Cinanni	Shan Jhamandas Jeffrey Downey Councillor Oosterhof
<b>Staff:</b>	Donna Gillespie	Abby Fitzhugh	
<b>Guests:</b>	Shai Dubey	Craig Desjardins	
<b>Regrets:</b>	Sanjay Jain Megan Knott	Mayor Paterson	Lanie Hurdle

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### 1. Call to Order

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Chair, Cathy Campbell-Wilson at 5:39 pm.

### 2. Land Acknowledgment Statement

*Kingston Economic Development Corporation acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional homeland of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat and thank these nations for their care and stewardship over this shared land. Kingston Economic Development Corporation is committed to improving and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples and all residents to pursue a united path of reconciliation and economic prosperity.*

### 3. Chair's Message

- Cathy began the meeting thanking Anne for her service as Chair of the Board, and welcomed new members: Jeffrey Downey, Eric Davies, and Councillor Gregory Ridge.
- She directed the Board's attention to a newly added agenda item, "Issues of the Day," which will give Board members the opportunity to discuss and provide direction on current issues impacting economic development.
- Cathy informed the Board that Kingston Economic Development's 2025 Budget, presented to City Council on Monday, January 20, had been approved.

### 4. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest.

- None.

### 5. Approval of Agenda

- Donna requested item 8 and 9 be switched in order to accommodate guest timing.

**Motion to "Approve Agenda"; Moved by Peng-Sang Cau. Seconded by Shan Jhamandas. Carried.**

### 6. Consent Agenda

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*All items listed on the Consent Agenda shall be the subject of one motion. Any member may ask for an item(s) to be separated from that motion to be dealt with separately.*

- I. Approval of the December 16, 2024, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- II. Tourism Kingston December Report

**Motion to “Accept Consent Agenda”;** Moved by Peng-Sang Cau. Seconded by Anne Vivian-Scott. Carried.

### 7. Business Arising in the Consent Agenda

- Peng asked for clarification regarding the Victory Grounds soccer stadium proposal. It was noted that the proposal had received mixed reactions from the community. Councillor Ridge explained that there was a Council directive for City staff to review the proposal, enter into lease negotiations and begin community consultation about the proposal and potential impact with the stadium proponent, Victory Grounds Ventures.

### 8. Presentation

- I. Shai Dubey, Assistant Professor, Smith School of Business
  - *Perspectives on Board Governance*
- Shai delivered a presentation to the Board of Directors on Governance, outlining the key duties and responsibilities of Board members. He specifically highlighted fiduciary duty, which requires acting in the best interest of the organization, and duty of care, which involves making decisions as a reasonably prudent person would. He emphasized the importance of avoiding personal biases, keeping an open mind to differing opinions, and recognizing that what is best for the Corporation may differ from personal viewpoints in other settings (e.g., City Council).
- Shai also discussed Generative Governance, a model he felt Kingston Economic Development’s Board of Directors upheld. He highlighted the addition of the "Issues of the Day" agenda item as an example of this approach. Unlike "rubber-stamping" Boards, which pass decisions with minimal discussion, Generative Governance holds continuous and open conversations, addresses challenges proactively, and encourages active problem-solving.
- Shai noted the importance of having a strategic planning committee to provide long-term direction.

### 9. Integrated Economic Development Strategy Refresh

- I. IESDP Overview – Donna Gillespie
  - Donna touched briefly on IEDSP milestones, from 2021 to present. She introduced Craig Desjardins who would be providing an overview and updates on the complimentary Workforce and Rural Economy strategies.
- II. Rural Economy & Workforce Strategy Update
  - Craig Desjardins, Director, Office of Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships, City of Kingston

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### Workforce Strategy

- Craig began his presentation with a review of the City's Workforce Strategy. Updates to the City's Workforce Strategy during the pandemic served as an asset as the City was able to explore the significant changes in workforce trends post pandemic. He identified three key areas of economic barriers in workforce trends:
  - Housing and accommodations
  - Childcare
  - Remote work and AI
- Evaluation frameworks have been put in place to assess Workforce Development efforts and to test data and metrics of the success of the programs and strategies being implemented.
- A noteworthy success in the past 2 years was the recruitment of 23 family physicians to the region.

### Rural Economic Strategy

- Craig shared the achievements of the Rural Economic Strategy Framework which included a new structure for the rural advisory group, acquiring provincial funding, and activating community kitchens for agricultural businesses. He introduced the new Rural Kingston Community Fund, set to launch in Q1 of 2025. Craig added that an integrated food strategy was also in development. The strategy will engage all areas of the food supply chain, from growing to processing, distributing and consuming. Anticipated challenges include gaps in available infrastructure, policy barriers, and economic pressure (e.g., rising cost of land).
- Craig touched on emerging opportunities associated with the implementation of the new rural strategy, including Agri-Tech, integrating smart farming technology, and developing agricultural tourism experiences.
- Anne asked if this new strategy would align with Kinston Economic Development's refreshed Integrated Economic Development Strategic Plan, and if there is chance for duplication within the two strategies. Craig noted the City's focus is on connecting with local farmers and addressing infrastructure needs. Donna noted that Kingston Economic Development serves both urban and rural businesses and works closely with the City to ensure no overlap.

### 10. CEO Report

- I. 2025 Budget Update
  - Donna shared that the 2025 Budget, which requested a Municipal investment of \$52,318, had been presented at City Council on January 20. She thanked Cathy and Shan for their participation at the City Council meeting.
- II. 2025 Sales & Operating Plan
  - Board members received hard copies of the finalized 2025 Sales & Operating Plan which had been presented at the November 25 meeting.
- III. January 2025 Corporation Updates

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- Donna shared that the Corporation had been actively participating in webinars and briefings regarding the pending threat of U.S. tariffs. Staff were reaching out to manufacturers to assess potential impacts on operations and identify risks.
- In January, Kingston Economic Development attended international tradeshow including Advanced Therapies Week, OBIO Investment Summit, and EV Innovation & Technology Conference.
- Micah Imomotebegha, Digital Programs Coordinator, represented the Corporation at TEDxQueensU, promoting upcoming funding programs, Summer Company and QCA:K, and support services to students and young entrepreneurs.
- Donna expected to have the Contribution Agreement for the Kingston Life Sciences Initiative by the end of January. She noted that the prorogued federal government would not impact the agreement.
- Donna was pleased to announce that Kingston ranked as The Best Small City Worldwide in Energy and Environment by Startup Blink. Abdul Razak Jendi and Norman Musengimana will accept the award during Startup Blink's virtual awards ceremony on January 28.

#### IV. Q4 Report

- Donna reviewed the Q4 report, informing the Board that the report would not be submitted to Council until the Corporation had received the final year-end financial statements from the City Finance department.
- Kingston Economic Development had an active fourth quarter with notable highlights such as the re-launch of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Forecast Lunch in partnership with Smith School of Business; hosting the Opportunities in Europe for Eastern Ontario Seminar alongside Consulate Generals from Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Polish Investment and Trade Agency; and joining the French Ambassador to Canada and the Canadian Chapter of France International Trade Advisors during their economic retreat to Kingston.
- The Corporation attended four international tradeshow in Q4 including the Private Label Manufacturers Association Trade Show, Global Affairs Road Show, Bio-Europe 2024, and The Battery Show.
- Donna received North America's Top 50 Economic Developer Award from Consultant Connect at the ECONOMIX 2024 conference. Donna was one of two Canadians to receive the award.
- The Corporation supported the launch of the Kingston Business Journal alongside the Ottawa Business Journal, attending their awards ceremony for the Eastern Ontario's 2024 Fastest Growing Businesses.
- In partnership with The Community Foundation for Kingston & Area, the Corporation launched the Not-for-Profit Academy to deliver expert-led training sessions for not-for-profit organizations looking to address commonly faced business challenges.
- Ten 2024 Starter Company Plus Fall Cohort recipients were announced, each being awarded up to \$5,000 to support their small businesses ventures.

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### 11. New Business

#### I. 2024 Audit

- The 2024 Corporate Audit with KPMG will begin February 24. Drafts of the Audited Financial Statements are expected end of March.

### 12. In Camera (if needed)

- None.

### 13. Issues of the Day (if needed)

#### I. Canada – US Trade Relations

- Discussion regarding the pending U.S. tariffs took effect. Peng shared her perspective that U.S. tariffs could provide an opportunity to investigate and capitalize on free trade agreements with other countries. Peng and Councillor Oosterhof agreed that provincial Premiers should explore removing inter-provincial tariffs, supporting new market and trade opportunities outside of the U.S.

#### II. Federal and Provincial Elections

- A concern was noted about calls for early federal and provincial elections and the impact it may have on funding applications. Donna assured the Board that the application for the federal Life Sciences program will not be impacted but that provincial funding application decisions may be delayed until the fall.
- The Board saw the potential of the provincial election having a positive impact on funding support for the Skills Development Fund.

### 14. Dates of Next Meeting

- I. Monday, February 24, 2025 – Board of Directors Meeting – 5:30-8:00 pm
- II. Monday, March 31, 2025 – Site Visit, Providence Care - TBA

### 15. Adjournment

**Motion to “Adjourn;” Moved by Councillor Ridge. Seconded by Councillor Cinanni. Carried.**  
8:13 pm.

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