

KINGSTON

— Economic Development —

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Date:	Monday, November 24, 2025		Time: 5:30 pm
Location:	Lakeview Room - Delta Hotels by Marriott Kingston Waterfront, 1 Johnson Street		
Attended:	Cathy Campbell-Wilson Patrick Egbunonu Shan Jhamandas	Sanjay Jain Councillor Cinanni Councillor Oosterhof	Anne Vivian-Scott Eric Davies
Staff:	Donna Gillespie Ben McIlquham	Abby Fitzhugh	Rob Tamblyn
Guests:	Steve Duff		
Regrets:	Councillor Ridge Jeffrey Downey Lanie Hurdle	Peng-Sang Cau Mayor Paterson	Sanjay Jain Megan Knott

1. 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.

2. Chair's Message

- Cathy provided a pre-introduction to guest presenter Steve Duff, Chief Economist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agri-business, with more than 20 years of experience in agricultural economics, policy, and business risk management. Steve Duff would present to the Board insights on agri-business in Frontenac County and its broader impact on Kingston's economy.
- She noted the importance of the region's unique characteristics in rural areas.

3. Call to Order

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Chair Cathy Campbell-Wilson at 5:42pm.

4. Approval of Agenda

- The Board of Directors agreed to rearrange the agenda to prioritize time sensitive motions for the OVIN RTDS project, the 2026 Budget and the IEDSP 1.5 acceptance to ensure quorum.

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Motion to “Approve Agenda”; Moved by Councillor Cinanni. Seconded by Anne Vivian-Scott. Carried.

5. Board of Directors Resolution to approve Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) Project.

Motion to “Approve Kingston Economic Development enter into a multi-year Transfer Payment Agreement with Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network to deliver Regional Technology Demonstration Site services to March 31, 2029.” Moved by Councillor Cinanni. Seconded by Councillor Oosterhof. Carried.

6. Ongoing Business

I. Budget 2026 & Core Operating Activities

- Donna provided an overview of the proposed 2026 Operating Budget to the Board of Directors.
- The 2026 Budget reflects a 15% increase over the prior year, bringing the budget to \$4,203,218.
- The 2026 Budget includes a 4% increase in municipal funding.
- New provincial programs include SuccessionOntario.ca and the OVIN RTDSP,
- The Corporation will place greater focus on Business Retention and Expansion and Startup activities in 2026, resulting in a reduction to the Attraction and Aftercare budget.
- The Corporation will focus on enhanced marketing and communications efforts in 2026 to promote local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Donna noted the Strategic Planning budget will not be required into 2026 with the completion of the IEDSP 1.5.
- The Corporation remains committed to supporting the City’s Workforce Immigration initiative and will continue to focus on regional program delivery, Business Retention and Expansion activities, and supporting business transition.

Motion to “Approve the Proposed 2026 Operating Budget”. Moved by Shan Jhamandas. Seconded by Councillor Oosterhof. Carried.

II. Special Purpose Committee IEDSP 1.5

- Donna presented the refreshed Integrated Economic Development Strategic Plan (IEDSP) 1.5 to the Board of Directors for final approval.
- The IEDSP 1.5 will maintain the four main pillars of the original plan while refining its focus on subsectors with competitive advantages.
- The IEDSP 1.5 will be in place for the next 18 months until the new City Council determines their priorities and an IEDSP refresh is triggered with City partners.

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Motion to “Approve the Integrated Economic Development Strategic Plan 1.5” Moved by Patrick Egbunonu. Seconded by Councillor Cinanni. Carried.

7. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest.

- None.

8. Consent Agenda

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 October 27, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- II. Tourism Kingston November Report

Motion to “Accept Consent Agenda”; Moved by Councillor Cinanni. Seconded by Jeffrey Downey. Carried.

9. Presentation

- I. Steve Duff, Chief Economist, OMAFA

- Steve Duff presented to the Board on the economic impact of the agri-food sector in Frontenac County on Kingston’s local economy.
- He emphasized the importance of small and medium sized businesses in the agri-food industry and their potential for growth in the region.
- He reported that the number of farms in the region is decreasing, but the remaining farms are becoming more productive and profitable, with an increasing focus on selling directly to consumers. In Frontenac County, 70% of farms sell directly to consumers, generating 50% of their sales. This shift reflects growing interest in local food and reducing reliance on intermediaries.
- Steve highlighted the role of municipalities in agriculture development, including infrastructure support and support for direct to consumer sales.
- He noted that while urban expansion is inevitable, there is a need to support business transition for farm owners, as limited succession planning often leads to agricultural operations closing when farmers retire.
- He explained that succession planning is complex and that selling a farm can be challenging due to perceptions of physical labour and limited opportunities. Farmers also experience difficulty accessing professional services that provide business management support for agricultural operations, further hindering successful transitions.

10. Business Arising in the Consent Agenda

- I. First Draft of New City of Kingston Official Plan Discussion & Questions
 - The Board of Directors shared their thoughts on the questions Paige Agnew prepared with an economic development lens for them to consider while reviewing the Draft of the New City of Kingston Official Plan:

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1. The First Draft introduces broader, more flexible commercial, business and industrial use designations, and in many locations, identifies dual use designations for added flexibility. Are there new business models or emerging sectors that may not fit clearly into current designations that should be specifically identified in the Second Draft?
 - Discussion centred on the challenges of defining and accommodating new business models and emerging sectors within existing commercial, industrial, and business use designations. Donna noted that circular economy companies, like LiCycle, should be identified as industrial in the new official plan.
 - Anne expressed concern that lenient multipurpose designations could place incompatible companies in close proximity, leading to conflicts and safety hazards. Vince assured her that incompatible uses will not be placed together, and that the intention of the Plan is to remove unnecessary planning barriers.
 - The need for flexibility was emphasized by the Board, while ensuring that potential planning risks are adequately addressed.
2. How can the new Official Plan support the development of the Western Core as a new urban centre around a new regional hospital, as a complementary economic centre, rather than a competitor, to Downtown Kingston? Are there policy considerations we need to include to ensure that Downtown Kingston remains healthy and vibrant while supporting the transformation of the Western Core?
 - The Board discussed the importance of supporting the development of the west end around the new hospital while ensuring the continued health of downtown Kingston.
 - The importance of student housing in downtown Kingston was highlighted, as students are key drivers of the local economy.
 - It was noted that use of the term “Core” positions it as competition for downtown. The Board agreed a better term could be used.
3. What kinds of flexibility or permissions would make it easier for businesses to locate in Strategic Growth Areas near transit and housing, and in mixed use buildings? Are there design considerations/needs that we can support in policy to ensure these areas support economic development?
 - Cathy shared her thoughts on public engagement versus business engagement, noting that stakeholder engagement

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should be balanced based on who is most impacted (the business or the public).

- The importance of identifying student housing areas was raised so the City can better understand demographic patterns and behaviours, including areas that experience the most traffic during different times of the year.
- Cathy shared her experience with businesses being located adjacent to transit, noting the benefit of increased traffic for businesses situated near high traffic transit areas.

4& 5. Are there rural businesses or industries, like on-farm processing or tourism-based enterprises, that should have clearer policy support?

Are there specific locations/areas of opportunity in the rural area where we should support Rural Industrial or Rural Business development?

- The Board discussed the potential for rural industrial development near major highways, as well as the need to preserve farmland while supporting economic growth.
 - Donna noted that while rural land is typically associated with agriculture, it can also support industrial uses, citing Anchor Concrete as an example.
 - The Board highlighted the importance of considering multiple uses of rural land to maximize opportunities for industrial development.
- The Board agreed to provide more input in the Second Draft of the New Official Plan.

11. New Business

- I. Presentation – Succession Planning Hub: SuccessionOntario.ca
 - *Rob Tamblyn, Business Development Manager, SMEs*
- Rob introduced an overview of Kingston Economic Developments new 3-year initiative, SuccessionOntario.ca, held in partnership with and funded by the provincial government.
- The initiative responds to what has been identified as a succession tsunami, referring to the 80% quiet closing rate of small and micro businesses that are unable to develop a succession plan due to limited support and resources.
- The program offers small and micro businesses across Ontario a centralized site of resources and support to navigate the business transition process through an online Hub of downloadable materials and eLearning modules, as well as support from SBEC business transition advisors who receive eLearning training through the platform.

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- The Corporation has partnered with Smith School of Business at Queen's University and BDC to deliver the initiative. The potential for a micro-credential for SBEC Advisors is being discussed with Smith School of Business.
- Eric inquired about involving brokers in the initiative to engage buyers. Rob noted that while the initiative is not currently targeting buyers, Kingston Economic Development is supportive of buyers as well.
- SuccessionOntario.ca will soft launch on November 27, with an announcement by Small Business Minister Tangri at Tara Foods, a successful intergenerational transitioned business, and during the 38th Annual Business Forecast Lunch. The official launch will take place in January.

II. Presentation – Tri-Colour Labs

▪ *Ben McIlquham, Investment Manager, Health Innovations*

- Ben provided an update to the Board on the Ontario Wet Lab application, noting that while the application was initially successful, Modern Niagara, the key partner providing space at 945 Princess Street, was no longer able to offer the location at the time of signing the TPA.
- The new application includes Queen's University as the supplier of a 10,000 sq. ft. wet lab space. The project would support startups and scaling life science and health science companies in Kingston by providing access to a state of the art BSL-2 Wet Lab and biomanufacturing facility.
- The project would leverage \$3.2M in provincial funding, \$3M in funding from the City of Kingston, and an additional contribution of \$3M from Queen's University.
- The Corporation has resubmitted the application for what has been renamed "Tri-Colour Labs" and expects to hear a decision from the province by January.
- Donna added that strong governance will be needed if the project moves forward to ensure compliance by partners with provincial timelines.

III. Presentation – OVIN RTDS Funding Program

▪ *Abdul Razak Jendi, Investment Manager, Sustainable Manufacturing*

- Abdul presented an update on the new Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network Regional Technology Development Site (OVIN RTDS), the Corporation's new chemistry focused project. The total project is valued at \$9.2M and will serve as the only Chemtech RTDS in Ontario.
- OVIN RTDS, led by a consortium including RXN Hub, KPM, Queen's University, Impact Chemistry, and Modern Niagara, aims to attract

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companies developing technologies for the automotive sector in Kingston. The RTDS will offer free access to facilities, a technology development program, commercialization supports, and innovation summits.

- The City's \$3M investment in RXN Hub will help build infrastructure for the site. Physical space at 945 Princess Street will be provided free of charge by Modern Niagara to participating companies, giving them access to RXN Hub, event space, and co-working space.
- The project will help companies overcome technical barriers to commercialization through the development of a validation network, similar to the structure of the Helix Funding program, providing support from local partners.
- RXN Hub will offer a pathway to commercialization for companies unfamiliar with bringing their project to market. Kingston Economic Development will provide business administration and marketing.
- RXN Hub will also host two summits allowing companies to showcase their technologies.
- The project is projected to help 60 SMEs develop their chemical technologies, attract foreign direct investment to the Kingston region, uplift sustainable clean technologies, and strengthen Kingston's workforce.
- Anne asked about the primary intake process given the number of partners involved. Abdul explained that the project will mirror the Helix Funding program, with applications flowing through Kingston Economic Development. He added that companies may know the collaborators they want to work with from the validation network, but they may also request a technical assessment from RXN Hub to be matched with local collaborators in the network.

12. CEO Report

- Donna shared November updates, highlighting the signed TPA for SuccessionOntario.ca, which will soft launch on November 27 by the Corporation and Minister Tangri during the 38th Annual Business Forecast Lunch.
- She shared that she and Peng will attend the Intelligent Communities Forum Top7 Intelligent Community conference in Vietnam at the beginning of December. During the visit, they will attend the announcement of the Intelligent Community of the Year and participate in the ICF Annual Global Summit.
- The final trade show events will be completed in November, with Shelley currently attending the Global Affairs Canada Investment Roadshow in London and Zurich, Switzerland.
- Ucore received conditional approval for up to \$36.3M in federal support to scale up a first-of-its-kind rare earth processing facility in Kingston.

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- Kingston Economic Development held the annual Tap into Funding event at the end of October for local industry leaders and entrepreneurs exploring programs to support business growth, innovation, and job creation.
- Qnity Electronics, formerly the electronics business arm of DuPont, officially launched in November and will establish itself as a global leader in advanced electronic materials for the semiconductor value chain.
- Donna shared she is participating in the Canadian Defence Procurement Readiness Program, a national initiative designed to equip Canadian companies with the knowledge, resources, and networks needed to succeed in the federal defence and procurement landscape.

13. In Camera (if needed)

- None

14. Issues of the Day (if needed)

- No new discussion topics raised.

15. Dates of Next Meeting

- I. Monday, December 15, 2025 – Board of Directors & All Members meeting – 4:00-5:00pm - The Belvedere Hotel (141 King St. E)
- II. Wednesday, December 17, 2025 – Finance & Audit Committee Meeting – 9:00 – 10:00 am

16. Adjournment

Motion to “Adjourn;” Moved by Anne Vivian-Scott. Seconded by Patrick Egbunonu. Carried. 8:30pm.

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