

Renaissance Brandon

Report to Council September 10, 2007

Executive Summary

On May 14th Brandon City Council established a task force to address the need for an organization to guide development and create new opportunities for downtown Brandon. This task force was to review the recommendations of the spring 2007 downtown summit meeting and make recommendations to council on establishing a new organization modeled on Winnipeg's Centre Venture.

The task force, now Renaissance Brandon, is proposing council grant a mandate to this group to create a new development corporation for downtown Brandon, Renaissance Brandon Inc. This corporation will work, as other like organizations have across North America, to achieve meaningful and recognizable success for our downtown area.

Renaissance Brandon Inc. will be seeking authorities from the municipality to conduct activities related to downtown business development such as the ownership of property, granting of loans, establishment of incentive programs and retention of proceeds to create unique partnerships between the public and private sectors in bringing greater life to downtown.

The new corporation will be seeking resource commitments from both the City of Brandon and Province of Manitoba to begin work and conduct activities as directed by its board. Specific recommendations to be immediately undertaken include the collaboration with Brandon Economic Development to secure staff resources and proceed with implementation of initiatives related to downtown development as recommended by the Downtown Summit meeting.

Chairperson's message

I am proud to submit this report on the work of the Downtown Task Force to Brandon City Council for your review. This document represents the work of the dedicated members of the committee whom council selected from many community volunteers this past spring. This report and its recommendations represent an important step in moving downtown Brandon forward and I, along with the other committee members are eager to continue our work with council's endorsement.

My thanks to all the committee members and city administration for their efforts in our many summer meetings and collaboration in creating this report. It is my hope that council will find this report meets the terms of its mandate.

Sincerely,

Vince Barletta

Vince Barletta

Our mandate

On May 14, 2007 Brandon City Council established a task force with a mandate to develop and implement an organization similar in concept and purpose to Winnipeg's Centre Venture with a vision for downtown Brandon and to design and implement a communications plan to ensure that the community is aware of actions and progress.

The task force shall be comprised of Mayor Dave Burgess, Councillor Vince Barletta and Councillor Doug Paterson and seven (7) citizens-at-large members who shall be appointed by City Council following these positions being advertised and applied for;

The Task Force shall report on its activities to City Council every four months;

In 2007, organizational funds for the Task Force shall be provided through the Mayor's discretionary budget, Economic Development Brandon's projects budget line and additional revenue sources to be sought by the Task Force;
and

2008 funding for the Task Force shall be determined through the City's regular budget deliberation process.

The Committee

Dave Burgess
Vince Barletta
Doug Paterson
Lee Bass
Mark Fawcett
Marlow Kirton
Rod Lindenberg
Wayne McLeod
Jeanne Millis
John Zeke

These committee members worked during a number of sessions over the summer months to review the information gathered at the Downtown Summit meeting held April 4th, 2007, obtain information from other organizations such as Centre Venture in Winnipeg and give consideration to the unique needs of downtown Brandon. The report presented is a true collaboration of the efforts of all committee members in cooperation with City of Brandon administration.

Downtown Summit

More than 150 people attended the April 4th downtown summit meeting held at the Town Centre. A report from city administration on the outcomes of the summit has previously been provided to council. Renaissance Brandon has also reviewed the recommendations from the summit and will be working address the top priorities identified by that session including the creation of a destination entertainment venue in the downtown as an anchor for other types of development. The task force is recommending that Renaissance Brandon Inc. move quickly to develop a strategy for the implementation of the priorities of the summit meeting. The new organization should also work to develop other projects that boost consumer confidence and a feeling of safety in the downtown area. This will require the tools described in this report in order to better utilize unused and under developed properties and vacant lands in the Renaissance District.

Renaissance Brandon Inc.

The new organization will build on the recognition of the renaissance branding which has been used in Brandon's downtown through initiatives such as the Renaissance District By-law. The new not-for profit corporation shall operate under the direction of a board of directors to be composed of the current members of the Downtown Task Force through October 2009 with appointments thereafter to be made by City Council through a community nomination process conducted by Renaissance Brandon Inc.

These new appointments shall be conducted in a staggered fashion to ensure that continuity of membership and knowledge can be maintained while providing opportunities for new community members to participate. The board of directors is to maintain its current composition of three members from City Council in addition to seven citizens-at-large.

Renaissance Brandon Inc. is to be a true development corporation for Brandon's downtown. This organization will operate at arm's length from the city and have all the authorities of other incorporated bodies including the ability to buy and sell property and retain the proceeds of these transactions. Partnerships with the public and private sector will be a key component of the organization's mandate and to this end Renaissance Brandon will be seeking to take on the task of developing properties within the city's own real estate portfolio in the Renaissance District.

Resources

To achieve results for downtown, Renaissance Brandon Inc. will need cooperation from both the municipal and provincial government. In the case of Winnipeg's Centre Venture both levels of government are involved in funding for that city's development corporation. The City of Winnipeg has provided funding totaling \$10 million to Centre Venture for its activities in the past seven years in addition to support through the proceeds of city land sales in the downtown area.

The city will need to take a leadership role in providing resources to Renaissance Brandon and the task force is seeking a contribution of \$250,000 from the City of Brandon and will be making a similar request to the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada. Renaissance Brandon Inc. will work closely with Economic Development Brandon and will make use of staff resources from the city to assist in the conduct of its operations.