



**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**Monday, February 6, 2023**  
**1:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall Council Chambers**

Live Stream Recording: <https://kenora.civicweb.net/Portal/>

**Present:** Mayor A. Poirier (arrived at 1:15 p.m.)  
Councillor R. Bernie  
Councillor G. Chaze  
Councillor L. Koch  
Councillor B. Manson  
Councillor L. Moncrief  
Councillor K. Van Belleghem

**Staff:** Kyle Attanasio, CAO, Heather Pihulak, Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk, Stace Gander, Director of Economic Growth & Recovery, Josh Nelson, Tourism Development Officer, Megan Dokuchie, Economic Development Officer

**Call Meeting to Order**

Deputy Mayor Bernie called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Blessing & Land Acknowledgement**

***Delivered by Councillor Koch***

As we gather, we recognize that we are on Treaty Three Lands which are steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations and Metis people today. We continue to be thankful for the partnerships with Indigenous people.

We give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in the City of Kenora. We seek wisdom in our minds, clearness in our thinking, truth in our speaking and always love in our hearts, so that we may try always to unite the Citizens of Kenora. Let these principles guide us in our decision making.

**Public Notices**

Take Notice that as required under Notice By-law #144-2007, Council intends to adopt the following items at this Special Meeting of Council:

N/A

**Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & General Nature thereof**

- i) On Today's Agenda
- ii) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance  
There were none declared.

## Deputations

None.

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### 1. Municipal Accommodation Tax

Stace Gander, Director of Economic Growth & Recovery, opened the session by explaining what municipal accommodation tax is. This revenue is not tax based revenue, it is revenue gained by a tax that is charged for accommodations in the City. The accommodation businesses remit the tax to the City and the funds are used to fund the projects that will be presented today.

MAT started in 2018, and since that time, the City has received \$1.2M in MAT funding, this year we anticipate a budget of approximately \$700,000. This is exclusive of the KHA's portion of the funding. In previous years we had planning sessions and KHA had representation at these previous sessions.

Council went through a brain storming session on priorities for MAT tax projects and identified their ideas for the 2023 project year.

Recommendations included:

Support Indigenous participation – Tunnel Island development with a vision of a more natural signage, Indian artifacts, round house, which would be a multi-year undertaking and community partnerships.

Host city for special events – 2022 we started a contribution to attract these types of large events. Culture and heritage awareness, more Indigenous awareness. There is a lot of content, it is just to bring further awareness.

Holiday lighting should be increased, we spent \$38,000 in 2022 and there is \$20,000 budgeted for 2023. We should do more in this area.

Anicinabe Park brought up the idea of a lit up walkway, which is a big undertaking as we don't have power outlets along the Harbourfront.

Cross town corridor for snowmobiles which there is a big opportunity for tourism. The trails do not go through the City, it goes around the City.

The highway to heaven property would make an exceptional RV and campground park. If we were looking to bring services down our west highway it would provide an opportunity to have water and sewer services in the area as well as to this site. There is a market for additional spaces as Anicinabe Park is always at capacity for larger size vehicles.

Developing and investing infrastructure for a boatlift between the Lake of the Woods and Winnipeg River which connects the two bodies of water.

Indigenous Tourism Organization which City of Thunder Bay is part of.

An opportunity for further murals.

Mount Evergreen could be used for a year round destination with other activities such as mountain biking. An official dedicated sledding hill would be helpful for families.

Take over the boat launch on Black Sturgeon. The MNR own the property and would like to dispose of it. The launch itself is in great shape, but the road needs some work. It is the only public access point onto Black Sturgeon.

Paint our crosswalks

Arts and culture master plan.

Indigenous art pieces we need to do in partnerships. The pieces that were returned to us we still have and was part of a full consultation process prior to COVID. Still being considered.

Downtown Ambassador program, with clear identification of who they are and dress them professionally with specific training and roles it would have a big impact.

Open air street markets, very successful and was there was an appetite to do more often. It has lots of potential.

Hennepin Lane beautification project and expand the ownership of the area.

Snowmobile strategy in the downtown corridor would be very beneficial.

Would like to see targeted advertising for the Ambassador program beyond just general recruitment.

Mount Evergreen needs a lot of help – they get small amounts of little grants and it is a beautiful hill and a lot of work with trails. That is a gem in the City and we need to begin to look after what we have. We can play a role in that by using Municipal Accommodation tax dollars.

The Harbourfront project at McLeod Park we need to finish this off properly and continue the Harbourfront development. These are ones we have on the books and need to help with them.

The pocket park and outdoor washroom is on schedule to be completed this spring. We took the budget as far as we could in 2022 but were unable to obtain a contractor to complete the groundwork in the fall.

Black Sturgeon boat launch, Mount Evergreen, Snowmobile cross-town corridor, community mural, crosswalk, boatlift from Winnipeg River to Lake of the Woods.

We recognize how important this program is for economic development and lessen the burden on taxpayers. We have a huge need for more hotels in the community. We should be mindful to pursue more hotels being developed in this community. Feasibility study for more hotels in the City may be considered. The accommodations market is very underserved and is a barrier to our economic development.

Short term rental registrations is addressed once it becomes a problem. It is an opportunity there and staff are working on that opportunity.

There are a couple hotel developments that are quite active. Staff need to bring a regular report back to Council to update them on developments that are in the works.

Want to ensure we communicate clearly when something is funded by the MAT tax to ensure the public understands that it is not funded from tax dollars. Signage should be considered to be included on every MAT tax project that is completed to clearly identify where the funding is coming from for the project.

## **2. Adjourn Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.