



# MEMO

To Council  
Jan. 25, 2016

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TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS  
FROM: COUNCILLOR ANN BAIRD  
DATE: JAN 21, 2016  
**SUBJECT: SVIEDA UPDATE**

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## BACKGROUND

**On Dec 21, 2015**, I updated council on the first funding members meeting of SVIEDA (South Vancouver Island Economic Development Association).

<http://www.highlands.bc.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/1997?fileID=2670>

Council discussed concerns regarding the proposed dilution of the municipal vote with regards to governance of the new society. Council passed the following motion:

*"That Council receive the Report from Councillor A. Baird dated December 17, 2015 regarding its South Vancouver Island Economic Development Association (SVIEDA) membership;*

*And that Council request the Interim SVIEDA Board consider the matters raised below at their Wednesday, January 6, 2016 Board meeting;*

*And that said Board advise all Capital Region Mayors and Councils about the proposed changes to the draft SVIEDA constitution and bylaws and their affect on the original governance structure, prior to considering said changes at the January 15, 2016 SVIEDA funding partners meeting;*

*And further that Highlands staff return the SVIEDA membership item to the Monday, January 11, 2016 Regular Council Meeting."*

**On Dec 22, 2015**, staff wrote a letter to the interim SVIEDA board and received a response on Jan 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Both letters appeared on the council agenda for Jan 11, 2016. <http://www.highlands.bc.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/2021?fileID=2673>

**At the Jan 11, 2016** council meeting, I informed council that I had attended the interim board meeting on Jan 4, 2016 but was asked by the interim board not to share fully the items discussed at that meeting. Council agreed to wait for a full report from myself until after the next meeting of SVIEDA funding partners on Jan 15, 2016.

**On Jan 15, 2016**, I attended the meeting for funding partners of SVIEDA. This meeting was to be the final approval of the changes to the constitution and bylaws of SVIEDA hence the final step in officially launching the new society.

Funding members did not have a detailed agenda prior to attending the meeting.

A new voting structure was proposed at the meeting. Instead of the majority vote method as written in the bylaws, consensus was proposed and voted upon. We were all given 3 cards; **Red (NO)**, **Amber (I can live with it)**, and **Green (YES)**. In order for a YES vote there may only be one red card in the room (there was some debate about this). This new voting method was then implemented.

### Important items voted upon were:

1. **The pace of the project. Proceed with current time lines - Yes** or slow down and wait for First Nations to come on board.
2. **The constitution** – specifically the inclusion of a statement on climate change and a low carbon economy (more below)
3. **Membership term for business and institutional members** – change to 2 year term. **YES** **Note:** the interim board used it's authority to set membership dues for business to \$10,000 and with an unlimited number of business members. No longer capped at 22 with a \$20,000 fee as was originally in the bylaws. (this move upset a few business members – they indicated that they were promised \$5,000 membership dues on Nov 20, 2015)
4. **Quorum for funding members** to return to original. Quorum of 12 where 6 must be government members - **YES**
5. **Eligibility for board.** Can employees of membership sit on the board? - **YES**
6. **Transparency & Accountability.**
  - a. Board meetings will not be open to funding member attendance - **YES**
  - b. Sharing and distributing of board minutes - **YES**
  - c. Two funding partner meetings per year with one public AGM where the Annual report is tabled. – **YES**

For the agenda item on the constitution – Myself, and councillor Fred Haynes, from Saanich, put forward a few suggestions for text and additions ahead of time for all the members to think about.

1. Promoting local economic resilience through the opportunities arising from mitigating and adapting to climate change
2. Build local economic resilience while mitigating and adapting to climate change.
3. Promoting the economic opportunities in the developing low-carbon economy

However when this item was up for discussion, the funding members were asked if they wished to discuss this change to the constitution...there were many red cards in the room (about a 50:50 split). Clearly many mayors and business did not wish to have this conversation...however a short conversation did arise even though by the consensus method it should not have. The item was only given a few minutes for discussion and finally the only change to the constitution was the addition of the word sustainable in the following phrase: **“To Promote and facilitate regional SUSTAINABLE economic development”**. A few Mayors (and business leaders) spoke up that they didn't wish to see anything in the constitution that would limit economic development.

**Thoughts from councilor Ann Baird immediately following the meeting:** I continue to be confused by the governance of SVIEDA with regards to meetings, voting, and sharing of information with SVIEDA. I would have appreciated to have the proposed

changes in voting structure and the full agenda shared with all the members prior to the meeting on Jan 15th so that all funding members could have considered this proposed voting change and then come to the meeting prepared. Changing from ordinary resolution (majority) to consensus is a significant change in governance and may have resulted in different outcomes and discussion points in the meeting specifically with regards to changes to the constitution.

It is my opinion that the use of consensus decision-making should only occur when adequate time is being allowed for debate and then to reach consensus.

The interim board may have moved to the consensus model for this one meeting to prevent the inclusion of this change to the constitution, which would have been problematic for some people in the room and would have created challenges for the organization.

The meeting was extremely well thought out and organized by the interim board, which leaves one feeling that the interim board had more meetings after the interim board meeting I had attended on Jan 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 which was said to have been the planning meeting for this latest meeting.

After the meeting, there were many congratulatory emails going around the group from a few mayors to the interim board members. Almost everyone seemed very pleased with the outcome of the meeting and the launch of SVIEDA.

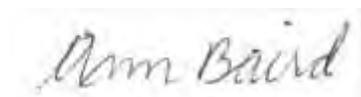
I have two concerns if Highlands withdraws:

1. It could negatively impact our social capital in the region.
2. Highlands would have no ability to help direct the economic development of our region towards an ecological and scientifically informed direction.

## **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

1. Council may wish to do nothing at this time and continue with membership in SVIEDA as was voted on at the Dec 7, 2015 council meeting. (Our next ability to opt out would be after 3 years.)
2. Council may wish to reverse the motions from Dec 7, 2015 to join SVIEDA.
3. Council may wish to consider another option

Respectfully Submitted.




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Councillor Ann Baird