

Report

City of Merritt
REGULAR Council Meeting
June 16, 2020

File Number: 0570

To: Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
From: Will George, Economic Development & Tourism Manager
Date: June 11, 2020
Subject: City of Merritt BC PNP Committee 2020 First Quarterly Report

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council accept for information the B.C. PNP Entrepreneur Immigration Pilot 2020 First Quarterly Report.

Background:

In January 2019, the Province launched the two-year BC Provincial Nominee Program Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot (BC PNP), to assist in attracting foreign entrepreneurs to establish new businesses in BC.

At the April 9, 2019 Regular Council Meeting, Council approved the creation of a City of Merritt B.C. PNP Entrepreneur Immigration Pilot Committee. The purpose of the BC PNP Committee is to review and make referrals to the Province regarding the applications of entrepreneurs seeking to immigrate to Canada and establish businesses in Merritt as part of the BC PNP Entrepreneur Immigration Pilot. This committee consists of: one member of Council, one member from Nicola Valley Community Futures, and one member from the Merritt and District Chamber of Commerce.

The BC PNP Committee Terms of Reference state “The Committee shall report the following information to Council, once quarterly:

- The number of applications received.
- The number of applications for which referrals were provided.
- A summary of the businesses proposed by applicants for which referrals were provided.”

As of June 11, 2020, the City of Merritt has received 274 inquiries from foreign entrepreneurs/immigration consulting companies looking to open a business in Merritt since the program opened on March 14th, 2019. The City of Merritt, along with community partners, have hosted 20 community exploratory visits. Furthermore, there are 18 foreign entrepreneurs who have submitted the required documents and have their exploratory trips to Merritt planned once COVID-19 allows for international travel.

The City of Merritt has advocated following the initial pilot, that BC PNP applications are reviewed by provincial staff representatives to ensure basis immigration and business requirements are met prior to them being presented to the community. During monthly conference calls with the Province of BC, other communities have expressed similar recommendations. This additional provincial support would assist the City of Merritt to have a better understanding on the eligibility of foreign entrepreneurs prior to the community exploratory visit.

To-date the City of Merritt, via the BC PNP Committee, has provided 12 letters of referral to foreign entrepreneurs as outlined below:

- Miscellaneous Retail (7)
- Truck Transportation (5)
- Warehousing and Storage – (0)

Options / discussion

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

Will George
Economic Development, Communication and Tourism Manager