



The Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee (BDAPAC) Meeting

Virtual Meeting – E-invite
Monday September 21, 2020- 1:00-3:00 pm

Present: Mayor Hewitt (Chair), Councillor Rob Shirton (Vice-Chair), Kellie Stephan, Mike Lessard, Phil Hauser, Tauri Caputo, John Edelman, Trudy Parsons, Art Bluhm and Chris Hibbs, Adam Peet

Staff: Mike Evers, General Manager of Community & Development Services, Lidy Romanuk, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism, and Breanna Beauchamp, Division Support.

Regrets: John Vanderzanden

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

Meeting is called to order by Manager of Economic Development and Tourism at 1:02 p.m.

2.0 Update from Council

Mayor Hewitt provided an update on council, key highlights included:

- BDAPAC Terms of Reference Update- The BDAPAC Terms of Reference Updates will be passed by council and a new Chair and Vice Chair will be elected at the next meeting to ensure the Business Development and Planning Committee is being utilized most effectively.
- COVID-19 Update- Haldimand County face mask by law, overview of general feedback from the public and local businesses with ongoing challenges, changes in services, and ongoing provincial safety guidelines and restrictions.

A discussion then ensued.

3.0 Business Recovery Priorities Update

L. Romanuk provided a high level update on the Business Recovery Priorities that were implemented from BDAPAC in May. Key highlights included the following:

- Extension of the patio program and establishment of the private patio program;
- Approximately \$167,000 in funding received from Fed Dev Ontario and TIAO (Tourism Industry Association of Ontario) to provide marketing support to the tourism sector;
- \$94,000 in funding received from Fed Dev Ontario, Province of Ontario and OBIAA (Ontario Business Improvement Association) to offer the Digital Main Street program in partnership with Grand Erie Business Centre; and

- An update on the Natural Gas Expansion Project and Lake Erie Industrial Park.

A discussion then ensued.

4.0 Group Discussion- Input on Outcomes of COVID-19 to date:

The Committee began a discussion on outcomes of COVID-19 to date. Key highlights included:

- T. Caputo provided an overview on the Grand Erie Business Centre, local business supports and potential additional funding opportunities.
- Increased communication on available grants for businesses- The Committee addressed that it would be helpful to have a simple list of grants available for businesses and increased communication of available opportunities to key stakeholders. L. Romanuk noted the need for increased communications and showcased the Business Covid-19 page that is updated daily and lists all pertinent information.
- Rural broadband project update- Mayor Hewitt provided an update on the rural broadband project. Construction is set to begin in the next few weeks, and the project is on schedule to be completed in 4-5 years. The committee expressed the need for quality internet in the more rural areas, and how essential it is for continued economic growth and progress in Haldimand County.
- Workforce challenges- The committee addressed the need for workforce attraction, and the struggle of finding employees during the pandemic. T. Parsons echoed that workforce challenges are being seen in municipalities across the province.

A discussion then ensued.

5.0 Group Discussion for Future Proofing

The committee began a discussion on future proofing, key highlights included:

- Second Wave Preparations- How can we prepare for the second wave and potential of increased province wide restrictions for businesses?

The Committee inquired if there could be some municipal funding allocated to the businesses in the event of a second wave. Mayor Hewitt responded that there is no current program in place and funding brought forward from the municipality would require public input that this is the best use of tax payers dollars before any changes of deployment of funds are determined.

- Workforce Attraction- How can we effectively attract workforce? The committee expressed the challenges of public transportation and affordable housing. The value of the development of a workforce attraction strategy was also discussed with the recent increase in the movement of people out of the GTA into more rural settings and those looking for new jobs and opportunities as a result of COVID-19.

P. Hauser suggested potential for expedited building permit process, and shifting focus of development to medium and high density residential.

- J. Edelman provided feedback on the committee's role and how we can utilize this committee to it's full potential.

A discussion then ensued.

6.0 Approval of Updated Terms Of Reference

Moved by J. Edelman and seconded by T. Caputo that the updates to the terms of reference for the Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee Meeting be approved as presented.

APPROVED.

7.0. Approval of Minutes

Moved by R. Shirton and seconded by M. Lessard that the minutes of Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee Meeting dated May 21, 2020 be approved as presented at 2:27 pm.

APPROVED

8.0 Adjourned at 2:30 pm