



The Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee (BDAPAC) Meeting

Virtual Meeting – E-invite
Monday January 10th, 2022

Present: Councillor Shirton, Phil Hauser (Chair), Mike Lessard (Vice-Chair) John Edelman, Kellie E. Stephan, Chris Hibbs, Tauri Caputo, Art Bluhm, John Vanderzanden, Adam Peet, Matt Reniers

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

Regrets: Trudy Parsons, Chris Hibbs

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

Meeting is called to order by Manager of Economic Development and Tourism at 9:02 a.m.

2.0 Chair and Vice Chair Report

M. Lessard welcomed the Committee, and provided an update including that the Chair and Vice-Chair would like to deliver another Council presentation. Feedback and suggestions for the presentation are welcomed.

R. Shirton recommended if there are any budget requests in the presentation, that this is brought to the next Council meeting, and to confirm attendance with the Clerks Department.

A discussion then ensued.

3.0 Council Update

Councillor Shirton provided a brief update on Council, key highlights included:

- COVID-19 business restrictions
- Council has returned to virtual meetings, and hope to see in person meetings begin again in February.
- Grandview Lodge made a presentation to Council and continue to see success in long term care.

A discussion then ensued.

4.0 Approval of Minutes

Moved by T. Caputo and seconded by A. Peet that the minutes of the Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee dated October 4th, 2021 be approved as presented at 9:14 a.m.

APPROVED

5.0 Official Plan Update

S. VanDalen addressed the Committee and provided a brief introduction to the Phase 2 Official Plan Update presentation, the policies drafted incorporate the discussion points gathered from the Committee from previous meetings, and welcomed feedback during this overview.

M. Reniers then delivered a presentation on the Official Plan Update and discussion on Draft Official Plan Policy Changes, key highlights included:

- BDAPAC feedback overview from the July 19th, 2021 meeting
- Commercial Land Use Designations- intent is to streamline existing designations .The proposed designations include two designations - Downtown areas, and Community Commercial.
- Proposed Industrial Designations include Urban Business Park, Rural Industrial, and Major Industrial, and Employment areas.
- Tourism policies expanded in the Official Plan to encourage the development of a wide range of tourism opportunities including agri-tourism and eco-tourism.
- Next Steps include the Public information session (virtual) on December 14th, 2021, additional details will be shared with the Committee. Phase 2 completion in early 2022, with draft amendments anticipated March 2022.

M. Reniers than addressed the Committee, and began a discussion on the presentation.

P. Hauser asked M. Reniers if there will be recommendations or suggestions for residential areas like Dunnville to have increased high density residential within the commercial core?

M. Reniers replied that removing a commercial designation from a property is difficult and would require additional requirements like commercial ground floors, which may be challenging to lease in the community. M. Reniers clarified that the residential designation in place has a flexible approach, and allows high density buildings if there is an opportunity and a property that fits the size requirement etc.

S. VanDalen added there is a balance of good commercial lands. Haldimand County has density targets that need to be met and we need to educate the public on the benefits of intensification, how we can make developments more attractive and create these kinds of opportunities. Within downtown core commercial areas residential development is only permitted on the upper levels of a building – the street-level storefront is to be maintained for commercial space. The density targets are implemented through the Provincial Growth Plan and reviewed on each development to ensure that the County as a whole is meeting the requirements.

P. Hauser inquired on the expectation of growth and development in the downtown areas, are we expecting growth in the downtown core or is there an expected decrease in these commercial areas?

M. Reniers replied that there is room for growth in the Official Plan, community commercial areas will have the most growth opportunities. The growth in the downtown cores will likely come through intensifying the downtown areas already established.

M. Lessard inquired about the impact the change in designations may have on Chambers and BIA's? Would it be beneficial to have a separate organization for these commercial areas that are not designated in the downtown core?

M. Reniers added that the Chamber and BIA's usually focus on the beautification of downtown areas, and added he doesn't see the need for an organization in these commercial landscapes as most of the activity would take place within the property itself. It may be beneficial to look at similar areas for guidance.

J. Edelman inquired if there is any flexibility within the timeline of the Official Plan? With the constantly changing landscape, it is hard to determine what the trajectory will look like 30 years from now, can this plan be altered depending on the landscape before the 30 year point?

M. Reniers replied that the Official Plan can be changed, and is reviewed every five years to ensure the direction is current. S. VanDalen added that in the five year reviews, the 30 year plans are also reviewed in more depth and if there are any changes that need to be made based on trends are being observed, legislative amendments or general needs, those changes can be addressed during these updates.

S. VanDalen thanked the Committee for their feedback, and will circulate additional information and changes as we move closer to the Council meeting date.

6.0 Planning – Exemptions to Development Charges Review

M. Evers began an overview of the document that was circulated to the Committee highlighting exemptions to development charges that was discussed at the October 4th, 2021 BDAPAC Meeting. Although exemptions as outlined in the document are not considered bonusing, it still remains a challenge from a municipal perspective to provide exemptions due to significant loss of funds (collected via Development Charges), and ultimate cost to the taxpayers.

M. Evers explained that currently the County has the benefit of two Community Improvement Plans (CIPs), which contain an incentive for roofed accommodations as well as a tax increase-based equivalent rebate program (TIG). M. Evers added that although the CIP programs have restrictions, broadening these programs could be a viable option in the future.

J. Edelman inquired if these CIP Programs have a cap of funds available ?

L. Romanuk replied that the CIP currently has \$150,000 a year allocated to the program. Projects are approved by Council and programs tend to focus on façade and building renovation assistance for the downtown area. This program is a 50/50 cost share distribution with most grants ranging between \$10,000 to \$25,000 available per project

A. Bluhm inquired if Haldimand County could utilize the reserve fund and make a return on investment to attract large scale businesses and developments in the County. The amount of funds available through the CIP's would not cover the development charges or large scale developments. If the development charges remain at the current cost, it will continue to be a challenge to attract new development in the County.

A. Peet inquired if there was an opportunity to include micro loans for entrepreneurs and small businesses with this initiative as well. K. Stephan echoed the need for inclusion of small businesses and giving them the same opportunities as the larger developments.

J. Edelman echoed A. Bluhm's thoughts and added that the businesses eligible for these exemptions would have to hit a minimum development size to ensure the return on investment could be leveraged appropriately.

T. Caputo added that the Grand Erie Business Centre has loans for small businesses, and have found it challenging at this time to find small businesses that are in need of these monies. There are a number of available resources for small businesses, but Grand Erie Business Centre does not have the funds for distribution on the scale the committee is currently discussing.

P. Hauser inquired of the process and next steps for bringing these ideas to Council. A. Bluhm added that he will be able to run financials and would be happy to assist the presentation to Council and take the lead on this project.

M. Evers noted that the first step would be to ensure what is feasible from a legislative stand point, M. Evers added that finance plays a major role in this, and we would need to clarify information with the finance division before presenting a proposed program for Council's consideration.

Action Item: M. Evers to connect with finance and confirm details as discussed.

7.0 EDT Update

L. Romanuk then provided a brief EDT Update, key highlights included :

- My Main Street Program
- Emily Project Update
- 2021 Wish book feedback

L. Romanuk then suggested the next agenda item Business Excellence Awards Discussion be moved to the next meeting.

8.0 BDAPAC Homework

P. Hauser began the discussion on the homework question distributed to the Committee.

“Review the presentation on available data and identify items included in the presentation they would like more information on, or identify gaps the committee would like staff to research further to see if information can be collected.”

Key highlights from the committee discussion on the homework included business inquiry tracking, monitoring and semi annual updates of building permits to the Committee, downtown inventory of vacant commercial spaces, potential data collection from Chambers/ BIAs, and gaining access to KPI's on the consumer needs in our community.

L. Romanuk added that that the requested data on business inquiries, building permit metrics, and vacant commercial spaces could be easily shared with the Committee, but would recommend these updates align with the timeline on Council updates to ensure staff aren't duplicating their efforts. L. Romanuk also added that we can begin the discussion with the Chambers and BIA's on data collection, but noted that capacity on taking on any new projects/ workload will likely be a challenge for these organizations.

L. Romanuk suggested that EDT Staff will review and provide the Committee with 8-10 data points that are easy to manage and keep track given staff capacity.

P. Hauser noted that there will be no homework for the next upcoming meeting.

9.0 Adjournment at 11:17 am