

Advisory Committee on Industry, Economic Development and Tourism

Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2016

The 9th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Industry, Economic Development and Tourism was called to order at 7:00 pm on April 18, 2016 in the Community Room – RCHS, Read Street.

Present: Councillor Dave Snowdon, Councillor Anne Barr, Ian Donald, Yves Grandmaitre, Cheri Kemp-Long, Jane Graham (Chairperson), Nick Previsich (Secretary). Delegation from the Merrickville Chamber of Commerce: Karl Feige and Mike Zaversenuke

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 29, 2016 meeting of the Advisory Committee were previously approved by e-mail.

Declaration of pecuniary interest

None declared

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed with additional information items proposed by Councillor Dave Snowdon (process for economic development opportunities) and Yves Grandmaitre.

Delegation from the Merrickville Chamber of Commerce (CoC)

Mr. Karl Feige, President of the Merrickville Chamber of Commerce noted that the CoC has a new Board and Executive that were committed to doing things differently. Work has already begun on a new website and the promotion of tourist advertising. An office for the CoC has been set up at 110 Main Street. One of the CoC priorities is to improve the streetscape in Merrickville to make it more attractive to tourists and to encourage visitors to stay longer in the Village. In addition, CoC members have expressed interest in promoting the installation of old fashioned lighting on St. Lawrence Street and having this phased-in over several years.

Mr. Feige had requested advice from the Advisory Committee regarding the CoC interest in being more active in improving the streetscape by taking on responsibility for flower placements. He asked about the availability of funding. Councillor Barr noted that there is a line item in the Municipal Budget for streetscape improvement and urged Mr. Feige to put forth an application seeking funding. She also noted that there is a Sub Committee of business owners that will be providing input to Council on the issue of the streetscape.

Mr. Feige indicated that the CoC has requested that there be some form of acknowledgment honoring the contributions of Mr. Kevin Robert Grey - who passed away in July of 2012 – to the development

and well-being of the community. Councillor Barr offered to look into this request from the Bylaw perspective and will raise it at a future meeting of the Council.

Mr. Mike Zaversenuke, Secretary of the CoC spoke about a new map/brochure that the CoC has produced to inform tourists and visitors to the Village about businesses and events. A portion of the map/brochure will be in French and 25,000 copies are being printed and will be widely distributed in Eastern Ontario as well as in the Village and surrounding areas. The Advisory Committee congratulated the CoC on their initiative and acknowledged that this product could be linked to similar efforts undertaken by the Municipality. Mr. Zaversenuke requested assistance in the distribution of the new map/brochure.

Old Business:

a. Update on the status of the new Strategic Planning Committee

Councillor Barr reported that Council had decided that the Advisory Committee members all be appointed to the new Strategic Planning Committee and that there will be an additional 4–5 members identified by Council over the next two weeks. Once the new Committee is in place, a Chairperson will be elected by the members. She also noted that there will be Staff representation on the new Committee. Given that the Advisory Committee members will be fully occupied with the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, future meetings will be held on an “as needed” basis.

b. Business development day/info fair in Merrickville

Chairperson Graham reported that she had been in contact with an OMAFRA official and learned that there may be an opportunity to partner with them through the Ontario East Economic Development program to create a business development day in Merrickville (possibly Fall 2016). She will follow-up and report back to the Advisory Committee at a future meeting.

New Business:

a. Report on “Teeny Tiny Summit”

Yves Grandmaitre reported that about 120 persons attended the event on March 30th in Seeley’s Bay and both he and Chairperson Graham participated from Merrickville. There were a number of subjects discussed that could assist in the development and sustainability of small communities such as Merrickville-Wolford. Of note is the use of free Wifi connections to help promote businesses and events while people are using their smart phones and tablet computers in the Village. OMAFRA was again mentioned as a potential partner for small villages in helping to sustain communities.

Councillor Barr recommended that the Strategic Planning Committee invite OMAFRA officials to attend the first or second meeting

b. Report on Budget 2016 Meeting

Both Yves Grandmaitre and Nick Previsich commented on the Budget meetings they attended in Merrickville and at Easton’s Corners. Both noted that heavy reliance on the residential tax base to support infrastructure and other activities. The lack of an industrial business in Merrickville-Wolford has impacted the revenue generation opportunities for the Municipality. The Advisory

Committee noted that unlike previous years, the Budget 2016 information was clear, well presented and well attended at both venues.

c. Objectives for Economic Development position/person

Given lack of time this item was deferred to the next meeting. However, the Advisory Committee requested that Councillor Barr raise with Council the possible use of \$3000 from the resources allocated to the Strategic Planning process (app. \$15,000) to support the Economic Development position that is being created by Valley Heartland. The Municipality would therefore be able to use this person to assist with various high priority economic development activities in the community.

d. Trillium Grant – new soccer field

Given the lack of time this item was deferred to the next meeting.

e. Other items

Yves Grandmaitre reported on some recent meetings he attended that have a potential for improving economic development in the community. He noted that at one event he found an “Ontario Festivals” booklet that lists upcoming festivals for 2016 and Merrickville-Wolford had no listings. Similarly, at a Boating Ontario meeting, a booklet showing boaters where to stop and obtain fuel/supplies neglected to include Merrickville-Wolford. He also indicated that at these meetings, “experiential” tours - where people become directly involved (hands-on) with an activity - was reported to be a growing and popular form of tourism.

Yves mentioned that he learned that Parks Canada has hired two people (located in Smiths Falls) to promote the use of the Rideau Canal system. He suggested that the Advisory Committee invite them to a future meeting to learn more about what they have to offer our community.

Agenda and Date for the Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, May 16, 2016 at 7:00 pm in the Community Room, RCHS, Read Street, Merrickville.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm by the Chairperson.