

Advisory Committee on Industry, Economic Development and Tourism

Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2015

The 3rd meeting of the Advisory Committee on Industry, Economic Development and Tourism was called to order at 7:00 pm on September 21, 2015 in Council Chambers.

Present: Councillor Anne Barr, Councillor Dave Snowdon, Ian Donald, Yves Grandmaitre, Jane Graham (Chairperson), Nick Previsich (Secretary); **Guests:** Mayor - David Nash and CAO - Jill Armstrong

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the August 26, 2015 meeting of the Advisory Committee were approved.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Open Issues

1. The Chairperson noted that one of the Committee members – Ms. Bronwen McKnight – has provided notification of her resignation from the Committee due to competing time commitments. A replacement will be identified by Council from the list of volunteers initially identified as candidates for the Committee.
2. With respect to Committee members receiving training, the CAO and Mayor both made brief comments thanking the Committee members for their willingness to serve as volunteers on the Committee. They answered several questions on process/procedures and commented on the materials that were circulated to Committee members (Committee Guidelines, By-Law 1-98 Schedule A-Section R) with respect to the obligations of all Committees to produce and post minutes, provide meeting schedules, facilitate public accessibility and openness.

The Mayor and CAO also fielded questions on the Strategic Plan initiative, Vision 2020 and zoning for new businesses seeking to establish in the Municipality. The Mayor noted that the County of Leeds Grenville Economic Development Summit for 2015 will be taking place on November 20th at the North Grenville Municipal Centre. More information on the Summit is (will be) posted at:

<http://www.leedsgrenville.com/en/invest/aboutus/summit2015.asp>

3. The Chairperson identified a new funding opportunity for groups in the Municipality. Celebrate Ontario has communicated that the 2016 Program is open and is receiving applications (**deadline is November 4, 2015**) through the Grants Ontario system. Information can be found at:
<http://www.grants.gov.on.ca/GrantsPortal/en/OntarioGrants/GrantOpportunities/OSAPQA005140>

One of the Committee members requested that staff undertake some form of follow-up to determine which of the groups in the Municipality took advantage of this funding opportunity.

Business Arising

- a. A breakdown of the 2015 Industry-Tourism Budget to Actuals (as of August 17, 2015) was circulated by Councillor Barr previously by Dropbox. A discussion took place on the possibility of creating a part-time or full-time Economic Development Officer position. The Committee noted that there may be a possibility of cost sharing this position with the other stakeholders. **The Committee also recommended that a motion be made to Council recommending that a budgetary line item for this position be added to next year's budget.**
- b. The availability of government grants was discussed previously in item #3 in Open Business. Committee members felt that it would be useful to know which groups in the Municipality have already applied on-line through the Grants Ontario system. This information might be available through the CAO and will be requested. **The Committee members also wished to go "on-record" as being willing to help groups in the Municipality with filling out applications if they lack the human resources or experience to submit applications on their own.**
- c. Discussion took place on the Vision 2020 activity. This is an independent initiative of a number of groups, businesses, churches, etc. to look for areas of mutual interest and strategize on potential future collaborations. The Committee urged that lines of communication be kept open with the organizers of Vision 2020 and suggested that someone from the Vision 2020 group be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.
- d. Councillor Barr provided information on the formation of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). A draft report of the SPG is under development and will be circulated to Committee members when it has been approved by Council. Of special note was that the SPG is endorsing the use of existing planning documents (e.g. 2010 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan) rather than creating new reports. It is likely that some of the primary authors/key participants of these previous reports will be re-engaged to facilitate the path forward. An "operational committee" will be established by Council to measure progress and to monitor the implementation of recommendations.
- e. No update was provided on the operations of the Chamber of Commerce and it was suggested that a member of that group be invited to attend future meetings of the Committee.
- f. Nick Previsich provided a brief overview of four initiatives that could be considered as "low hanging fruit" to help stimulate economic development. Committee members provided a number of useful comments and noted the similarity of a number of these ideas with the 2010 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. Ian Donald noted the need to create a multi-stakeholder forum to help breakdown community silos that are impeding effective economic development. Dave Snowdon identified the Excelerator Business Incubator and CoWork Centre initiative (funded by Valley Heartland) as an excellent business development opportunity and recommended that staff distribute related information to the community. Additional details can be found at: <http://www.xcelerator.ca/>

- g. Council asked the Committee to determine the number of businesses operating in the Municipality. Committee members felt that this was a potentially complicated issue and required additional clarification (eg. types of businesses, sectors, etc) by Council. Previous studies may also need to be consulted (eg. Blais and June 2010 Reports) as well as current Stats Canada census data. The Chamber of Commerce may possibly have some of this information.

Future Actions

1. A document on other "low hanging fruit" initiatives produced by Yves Grandmaitre will be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.

Agenda and Date for the Next Meeting

The Committee Chairperson will develop and distribute an Agenda for the next meeting. To the extent possible, all meetings will be held on the third Monday of each month. If the Council Chambers is not available alternative locations will be identified. The next meeting will take place at 7:00 PM on Monday, October 19, 2015 at the Rideau Community Health Services building at 354 Read Street .

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm by the Chairperson.