



# Committee Minutes

## Joint Economic Development and Planning Advisory and Tourism Advisory Committees

December 15, 2020 – 8:30 AM

The Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee and the Tourism Advisory Committee held a joint meeting on the above date through electronic means with the following members in attendance:

Present: Brian Davenport, Steacy Den Haan, Sharif Rahman, Ashley Chapman, Lisa Taylor, Andrew Siegwart, Joel Dawson, Andrea O'Reilly and Jim Halliday; Councillors Ian Boddy, John Woodbury, Sue Carleton, Tom Hutchinson, Aakash Desai, Shirley Keaveney, Rob Potter and Warden Selwyn Hicks

Regrets: Andrea Riley, Jim Diebel and Maureen Solecki

### Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Scott Taylor, Senior Planner; Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager; Alison Theodore, Tourism Partner and Media Relations Specialist; Heather Aljoe, Tourism Marketing and Communications Specialist; Courtney Miller, Business Enterprise Manager; Steve Furness, Manager of Economic Development; Jacinda Rudolph, Economic Development Officer; Kim Trombley, Administrative Assistant; Heather Morrison, Clerk; Rob Hatten, Communications Manager and Tara Warder, Deputy Clerk / Legislative Coordinator

## Call to Order

Joint Chair Brian Davenport called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM.

## Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## Reports

### Grey Transit Route Update – Verbal

Stephanie Stewart updated the Committees on the Grey Transit Route (GTR). The transit route is working well and the feedback that has been received has been positive.

It was noted that additional connections have been added in since the launch and there have been changes in the schedule as well. It is anticipated that ridership numbers will increase because of these recent changes.

Staff are also working on additional promotions for the GTR.

She spoke to advancements to the system anticipated for 2021. There is a need for a cash payment option, so she has been working on a coupon code system to address that need.

Further, individuals needing an accessible ride can book online as well.

Andrew Siegart then assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

### Draft Living on Main Street Student Report

Scott Taylor addressed the Committee on the draft Living on Main Street student report. The goal of the report was to look at the downtowns across Grey County and to look at the shape of the main streets in the downtowns and examine further opportunities for housing. The report has been done in partnership with University of Toronto students.

Mr. Taylor noted that downtowns need to contain a mix of both commercial and residential spaces. There is still a desire to maintain the commercial basis of the County's downtowns but still provide opportunity for residential space as well.

Recommendations from the Living on Main Street report encourage that Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) be living documents and staff need to consider formal reviews of the documents. It was further recommended that staff conduct impact analysis on the documents and that municipalities work with organizations such as the Business Improvement Areas and Business Enterprise Centres to actively promote the CIPs.

It was also noted that municipalities could offer wraparound supports and offer small loans to cover some types of projects. CIPs should include funding for attainable housing as well.

Considerations could be given to promoting dormitory style housing to house the labour force and to look at parking standards in zoning bylaws as well.

Councillor Desai left the meeting at this time.

## EDTC-ED-02-21 Workplan Priorities and Staffing

Savanna Myers presented the above report.

It was noted that there are a lot of themes that have been re-emerging since the pandemic began and they will likely be even stronger going into the new year. The workplan that has been developed by staff stems from these themes.

Staff have been readjusting and paying close attention to what's working. Staffing adjustments have been made based on expertise and it is being recommended that this realignment become a permanent structure. Staff were divided into communications, business consultations and training, and economic development at the beginning of the pandemic and this arrangement has worked well.

Ms. Myers spoke to foreign direct investment, noting that investment opportunities are of great importance. Grey County's popularity has increased during the pandemic and it is expected that its popularity will continue. Staff have been working with member municipalities to undertake foreign direct investment training.

It was noted that CIPs have been a focus as well and staff are working with member municipalities to implement these Plans. Most communities have passed their CIPs and all of them should be complete by 2021.

Ms. Myers recognized the work that the businesses have done in maintaining protocols during the pandemic. They have done an excellent job and should be recognized.

The importance of having shovel ready projects on hand was noted. There will be a large number of infrastructure projects coming forward next year as well.

Grey County has full settlement services for the next 3-5 years through the Local Immigration Partnership and its respective funding.

Ms. Myers stated the importance of attracting and retaining the labour force in Grey County. There is a need to keep moving forward with attainable and affordable housing because these things have a tremendous effect on the labour force.

Staff addressed questions from the Committee.

Further discussion occurred on Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) and the opportunity to engage local citizens in advocacy efforts surrounding broadband and its economic importance.

ED01-21 Moved by: Councillor Woodbury

Seconded by: Councillor Potter

**That Report EDTC-ED-02-21 regarding 2021 Economic Development and Tourism Priorities and Staffing be received for information; and**

**That operational priorities of investment, attraction and retention and entrepreneurship, along with staffing changes be adopted as presented for consideration by Council through the 2021 budget process.**

Carried

## Planning Department Project Summary 2021

Councillors Boddy and Hutchinson and Sharif Rahman and Andrea O'Reilly left the meeting at this time.

Randy Scherzer presented the above noted summary document and spoke to current and upcoming projects that the Planning Department is involved in.

He provided an update on the status of the Climate Change Action Plan, and the Affordable Housing workplan implementation which is a joint project with Housing.

The Affordable Housing Task Force has developed an action plan which staff have begun implementing and will be discussing funding requirements with the Task Force. The goal is to help create both a mix of affordable and attainable housing with future builds.

He spoke to proposed amendments to the development charges by-laws which are going forward to Council in January. These amendments will provide further incentive for developing affordable and attainable housing.

Mr. Scherzer noted that the County has received correspondence from the Town of the Blue Mountains requesting the County consider delegating certain planning matters to the Town. Staff have been directed to bring forward a report to Committee of the Whole with further information on the request. Staff have distributed a survey and have had conversations on improvements that could be made to the process.

Other priorities include the exploration of options related to future growth and infrastructures needs as it relates to designated settlement areas where two or more municipal boundaries are involved. It is important for municipalities to ensure they have adequate lands to accommodate projected growth needs. It takes time to service and designate land. Staff will be bringing forward a report to discuss the research findings and next steps.

Mr. Scherzer then provided information on the housing feasibility study, noting that the County has 30 acres of land as part of the Rockwood Terrace redevelopment in Durham. A consultant has been hired to look at what other housing options could be considered on the lands and the report is scheduled to be completed in April 2021.

Staff are also working on updating the Growth Management Study and a housekeeping Official Plan Amendment. Further, the Regional Agricultural Lands Demonstration Site by-laws have been enacted. The goals of this project are to provide a location for residents to learn about where food comes from and serve as a location to hold other agricultural events. A Niagara Escarpment Plan Amendment has been prepared and will soon be submitted to the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

There are updates occurring on the Age Friendly Community Strategy, as well as the Forest Management Plan update. Work is also being done on Grey County's trails.

## Roundtable and Discussion Points to Consider

The Committees were asked to state their top 3 issues for 2021:

Members spoke to matters concerning

- Housing and labour force
- Rural broadband
- Targeting the right businesses to fill downtown commercial spaces
- Attracting new industries and sectors
- Access to primary health care
- Ensuring positive community experiences for newcomers and international students
- Transportation
- Broadband expansion to rural communities
- Labour attraction and retention
- Supporting social services and mental health care professionals
- Improving government practices surrounding new industry and development
- COVID adaptations
- Diversity and inclusion

The Committee suggested that a forum be organized so that people can provide feedback to municipal councillors and staff. CAO Wingrove noted that the idea of engaging with people and offering a forum to have discussion is something the County can work towards.

Brian Davenport left the meeting.

It was noted that quorum was lost at this time.

## Other Business

There was no other business.

## Next Meeting Dates

To be determined.

## Adjournment

On a motion by Councillors Potter and Woodbury, the meeting adjourned at 10:28 AM.

Andrew Siegwart and Brian Davenport, Chairs