

Tourism Advisory Committee November 1, 2018 – 9:00 AM

The Tourism Advisory Committee met on the above date at the County Administration Building with the following members in attendance:

Present: Chair Gary Gingras; Andrew Siegart; Phillip Allanson; Jim Halliday; Andrea O'Reilly; and Councillor Selwyn Hicks

Regrets: Jim Diebel and Councillor Gail Ardiel

Staff

Present: Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager; Heather Aljoe, Tourism Marketing and Communications Specialist; Alison Theodore, Tourism Partner and Media Relations Specialist; and Jacquelyn Morrison, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator

Call to Order

Chair Gingras called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Reports

CAOR-TAC-23-18 Tourism Destination Development Action Plan Priorities for 2019

Alison Theodore discussed Pillar 1, stakeholder engagement. Heather Aljoe discussed Pillar 2, Destination Development. Discussion occurred on marketing arts/culture and sporting activities. Bryan Plumstead spoke about Pillar 3, Market Research and Tracking. He advised that there is a meeting scheduled for November 20th with Destination Marketing Organizations and businesses where he will canvas what metrics would be helpful to them. Discussions occurred regarding metrics and collaboration. Mr. Plumstead spoke about Pillar 4, Resource Allocation.

The Committee discussed presenting to the councils of the nine member municipalities regarding the importance of tourism and the Tourism Advisory Committee.

TAC10-18 Moved by: Philip Allanson Seconded by: Andrew Siegwart

That Report CAOR-TAC-23-18 be received and that the Priorities for 2019 under the Tourism Destination Development Action Plan be supported.

Carried

CAOR-TAC-24-18 Tourism Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Bryan Plumstead advised that the Committee's Terms of Reference required an update. He highlighted the changes and emphasized enhancing the sustainability of Grey County as a tourism destination. Gary Gingras encouraged action on enhancing sustainability.

Mr. Plumstead noted that membership application for the Tourism Advisory Committee will be sent out shortly. He encouraged those interested to apply.

TAC11-18 Moved by: Philip Allanson Seconded by: Gary Gingras

That Report CAOR-TAC-24-18 regarding revised Terms of Reference for the Tourism Advisory Committee be received; and

That the revised Terms of Reference for the Tourism Advisory Committee as attached to Report CAOR-TAC-24-18 be endorsed.

Carried

Destination Development Action Plan – 2018 Quarter 3 Scorecard

Alison Theodore spoke about Pillar 1, Stakeholder Engagement. She advised that the listings in databases and newsletter subscriptions are growing. She advised that the database will be renewed in 2019. The pageviews on visitgrey.ca are down. She noted the website will be refreshed next year. Ms. Theodore advised that there are two more Tourism Talks events planned this year.

Heather Aljoe spoke about Pillar 2, Destination Management. Social media and website metrics are on track. Newsletter subscriptions are growing. Ms. Theodore spoke about media relations and highlighted the three media influencers that Grey County hosted this summer.

Bryan Plumstead highlighted Pillar 3, Market Research and Tracking and Pillar 4, Resource Allocation.

Grey County Tourism Updates

Partner Criteria

Alison Theodore discussed the proposed Market Ready Criteria. The criteria focus on the best practices for tourism partners and businesses to increase consumer confidence. Bryan Plumstead noted that businesses are to use the criteria as way to self-evaluate their practices.

Ms. Theodore spoke about the different categories of criteria, specifically visitor ready and market ready. Market ready businesses could qualify for an enhanced listing on visitgrey.ca and other potential benefits. She noted two additional criteria categories: experience ready and export ready.

Mr. Plumstead noted that the target date for the criteria to be introduced is late fall/ early December with implementation in 2019.

Discussions occurred regarding event listings and event criteria. Ms. Aljoe advised that events are listed on the event calendar online and have separate criteria.

2018 Colour It My Way Campaign

Heather Aljoe spoke about the ColourItMyWay campaign. The last campaign story will be posted soon and will run for approximately one week. The campaign featured ten stories from Grey County ambassadors. This was the second year for the campaign. The campaign had more pageviews this year and received positive comments and likes on social media.

Ms. Aljoe advised that there has been an increase in the request for the regional maps. Almost 1,000 maps have been sent out this year to date. Of those who requested maps, 74% also opted into receiving the newsletter.

Ms. Aljoe spoke about two local insiders that contributed to the campaign. The local insiders will continue to help create stories and content.

Updated Metrics Backgrounder

Bryan Plumstead spoke about the metrics backgrounder. He highlighted that the total jobs in Grey County has increased. He noted that over 14% of Grey County jobs are in the tourism industry.

Mr. Plumstead highlighted the number of visitors to Grey County and the amount spent by visitors. He noted that the number does not include US or overseas residents. The

data helps to determine who is coming to what area and what they are interested in. Using Environics segmentation, common clusters can be identified, such as “kids & careers”, which will allow for targeted campaigning. Mr. Plumstead hopes to continue to analyze the data in the future with a research and data analyst project in 2019.

The Committee recessed briefly, then reconvened.

Cycling and Trails Master Plan

Bryan Plumstead advised that the cycling and trails master plan was a requirement for the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling funding received for paved shoulders. WSP was hired to complete the master plan. The first meeting between Grey County and WSP was held on Monday. The goals of the cycling master plan include confirming key routes, erecting signage, and identifying gaps in the paved shoulder. Goals for the trails master plan include identifying key trails and publishing the trails. Options for publishing trail information were discussed.

Mr. Plumstead advised that he anticipates a draft master plan to be ready by March/April 2019 and signage to be erected next summer. There will a website available shortly.

Mr. Plumstead intends to reach out to municipalities shortly regarding the master plan for their input.

Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) Verbal Update

Bryan Plumstead spoke about the MAT. He advised that this is a very fluid topic and many players are looking at this issue. Single and lower tier municipalities have the authority to implement the MAT. County and regional governments do not. The MAT funds must flow to an independent not-for-profit entity. Currently larger cities with over 500 hotel units are implementing a MAT. Some municipalities have set up independent economic development entities to flow funds to.

Mr. Plumstead noted that the occupancy rate in Grey-Bruce is 52%, which equals an average of \$70/day in revenue per room. He discussed his calculations of MAT revenue in Grey County, with the Blue Mountains receiving 50% and Owen Sound receiving 25%. In his opinion, a MAT may not make sense to implement right now. Including short term accommodations as a revenue source could increase the viability of the MAT. He noted that HST is collected on top of the MAT.

Andrew Siegwart discussed the importance of having a solid business plan prior to implementing a MAT.

Collaborative Approach to Labour Force Development in

South Georgian Bay

Andrew Siegwart provided an update on the labour force findings. He has presented this information to numerous councils. The Town of Blue Mountains council passed a resolution to implement the findings and to look into planning options. The Attainable Housing Corporation has taken a leadership role regarding attainable housing and will work with the Blue Mountains. Mr. Siegwart noted the commitment from the community.

Mr. Siegwart advised that Meaford council has directed staff to explore the next steps. He advised that Meaford's Official Plan is in line to move forward with supporting attainable housing.

Mr. Siegwart advised that Grey County Council was supportive of the findings. He suggested that the County's next step could be to organize discussions with the Blue Mountains and Meaford.

Mr. Siegwart noted that developers are now coming forward with interest in the project. He is excited that the momentum and interest in the issue are increasing.

He advised that there have been high level conversations in Simcoe County. Further discussions will happen with the new councils in Simcoe County.

Bryan Plumstead noted the County's draft Community Improvement Plan ("CIP") has also been presented to County Council. The CIP is a tool for municipalities to use to help encourage community improvement.

Other Business

Bryan Plumstead noted that the Minister of Tourism announced a new tourism strategy at the recent Tourism Summit. The strategy will focus on aligning the roles of the government and businesses. He expects the formal plan to be delivered in June 2019.

Discussion occurred on the issue of transportation. Andrew Siegwart advised that local municipalities have been looking into this issue. Bryan Plumstead noted the transit movement in Collingwood. Other opportunities were discussed.

Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held by the new Committee in the new year.

Gary Gingras thanked the Committee for their work over the last term. Bryan Plumstead encouraged interested Committee members to reapply.

On motion by Philip Allanson and Andrea O'Reilly, the meeting adjourned at 12:08 PM.

Gary Gingras, Chair