

Tourism Advisory Committee

August 9, 2016 – 9:30 a.m.

The Tourism Advisory Committee met on the above date at Grey Roots Museum and Archives with the following members in attendance:

Present: Chair Gary Gingras, Vice Chair Philip Allanson, Councillor Gail Ardiel, Councillor Barb Clumpus, Jim Halliday, Peter Majewsky and Andrew Siegart

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, CAO; Bryan Plumstead, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism; Heather Aljoe, Tourism Specialist; and Mary Jane Hills, Recording Secretary

Also

Present: Councillor Paul McQueen

Call to Order

Chair Gingras called the meeting to order.

Adoption of the Agenda

Two additional agenda items will be added to the agenda under Other Business; taxation changes to private campgrounds, and selecting a representative to attend an upcoming Regional Tourism Organization 7 meeting in August.

Moved by: Philip Allanson

Seconded by: Councillor Clumpus

THAT the Agenda for August 9, 2016 Tourism Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

Carried

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There was none.

Minutes of Meetings

The minutes from the March 3, 2016 Tourism Advisory Committee are for information only as they were adopted by the Planning and Community Development Committee on March 10, 2016 and by Grey County Council on April 5, 2016.

Business Arising from the Minutes

At the last meeting, it had been suggested that a second brochure swap be held in the southwestern portion of the County since the Grey Bruce brochure swap was being held in Wiarton. Since that time Grey Highlands hosted a tourism industry speed dating night that was well attended and filled this need.

Action Plan Updates

The Action Plan was approved by Grey County Council in early July and staff is busy working on priorities identified in that plan.

Mr. Plumstead spoke about the Action Plan work priorities that were originally aligned under three full-time and one part-time staff position. Since that time staff changes have been made and these priorities will now be shared between three full-time staff positions. A draft task list was distributed that showed staff leads for each Action Plan Recommendation.

A priority calendar is in draft form that identifies a timeline for work on the plan to be undertaken during each quarter of the next four years. In addition to the calendar, a scorecard will be used to track outcomes of each action identified in the plan.

Mrs. Aljoe spoke about the draft marketing plan that has just been received. It was the result of a two day workshop facilitated by Bannikin in June, and will provide direction for marketing campaigns and embracing the brand. The summer marketing campaign is currently underway and the fall marketing plan will start two weeks from now.

The summer campaign has focused on the family market using social media channels. It has been very successful with a large increase in Facebook likes and downloads of specially created marketing pieces for the campaign. In order to bring more awareness

to Grey County's Colour it Your Way tag line, all social media posts are being tagged with #colourityourway.

A plan is in place for a fall marketing campaign that identifies Grey County as "Ontario's Best". The target market is empty nesters and couples, and will focus heavily on social media with some print ads, and guest blogs. During this time, Grey County will host several media personalities this fall who will experience "Ontario's Best" and write about it for immediate on-line social media impact.

Discussions took place and some promotion ideas were identified for staff to pursue.

The importance of marketing to the Visiting Friends and Relatives market was discussed.

Other Action Plan priority items were discussed including the clean-up of the stakeholder database which is well underway. Also the department will host an industry outreach event on September 20. Invitations will be sent out next week. An industry Facebook group is being planned, with more on that being announced at the meeting.

September 20 Outreach Meeting Planning

Industry Workshops

Mr. Plumstead summarized some industry survey comments provided as part of the research behind the new Action Plan. These comments will help with planning the ongoing industry outreach meetings taking place over the next few years. It is important to understand the needs of industry members and for tourism staff to provide assistance where it is most needed.

The meeting is expected to attract many participants, from business, municipalities, and local destination marketing organizations. The agenda will be a mix of providing helpful information to participants, and learning where Grey County Tourism can best help business, be that through industry training opportunities, workshops, etc.

It was determined that after the first meeting it would be helpful to hold separate meetings for business and municipal participants. The municipal meetings could then focus on items such as setting out roles and responsibilities for the various tourism groups to better serve business, and signage and infrastructure needs.

Signage was also discussed, with the integration of mobile wayfinding identified as an area needing improvement.

Philip Allanson and Peter Majewski left the meeting at 11:30 a.m..

Business Survey Metrics and Measurement

One of the goals of the first outreach meeting is to identify what information business and municipal stakeholders want Grey County to collect, tabulate and return to them, and at what frequency (e.g. monthly, seasonally, annually). These statistics could include occupancy rates, length of stays, visitor hometowns, ethnicity, age, interests, average spend per sale, etc. The recommended approach is to provide open access to the results, and to distribute a value-added analysis to those businesses who provide the information.

Depending on the audience at the meeting, it may be helpful to explain why certain metrics could be helpful for their business especially if they are planning to expand, sell, or when making changes to their business offering.

Other Business

Taxation Changes to Private Campgrounds

A letter from the City of Quinte West regarding newly imposed tax changes by the Canadian Revenue Agency adversely affecting small campgrounds was distributed to the committee. The changes are making a large impact on privately owned campgrounds and it is not understood why the changes have been imposed. It is being seen as an attack on small business. It was discussed that this topic will be brought forward at the upcoming Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) conference.

Regional Tourism Organization 7 Meeting Representation

Regional Tourism Organization 7 is seeking input from Grey County Tourism at its August 31, 2016 meeting being held at Cranberry Resort for the development of their 2017/2018 Business Plan. Mr. Gingras will check his availability to attend the meeting on behalf of the Committee.

Other

A free breakfast meeting sponsored by the County of Grey is being held on September 14th with the topic Renew Meaford. Stephen Murray the Economic Development Officer for the Municipality of Meaford will speak about recent successes with its downtown improvement initiative. It is a great opportunity to learn and network.

Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) conference is coming to Blue Mountain May 3 - 5, 2017. Grey County Economic Development and Tourism should consider hosting an information table at this conference.

Next Meeting Dates

The next Tourism Advisory Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the Grey County Economic Development Committee meeting at a local business on September 21, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. The location of that meeting will be advised in the near future.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jim Halliday at 12:15 p.m.

Gary Gingras, Chair