



# Committee Minutes

## Tourism Advisory Committee March 11, 2019 – 9:00 AM

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

Present: Jim Diebel; Jim Halliday; Joel Dawson; and Councillors Shirley Keaveney and Sue Carleton

Regrets: Andrea O'Reilly and Andrew Siegart

### Staff

Present: Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager; Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Heather Morrison, Clerk; 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

The Clerk called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

The Committee members and staff present introduced themselves to the group.

## Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk opened the discussions for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Tourism Advisory Committee for 2019.

*TAC01-19* Moved by: Sue Carleton

Seconded by: Shirley Keaveney

**That the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Tourism Advisory Committee be deferred to the next meeting.**

Carried

Heather Morrison left the meeting.

Bryan Plumstead assumed the Chair.

## Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

## Destination Development Action Plan (DDAP)

### Overview and Priorities for 2019

Bryan Plumstead provided an overview of the Destination Development Action Plan and the priorities for 2019. He provided an overview of the tourism department and the role of the Tourism Advisory Committee. Kim Wingrove noted the value of the broad perspectives of the Committee members.

The Committee discussed communication and how information is passed to member municipalities and stakeholders. Mr. Plumstead noted the role of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) Mr. Plumstead confirmed that he will be presenting to the local councils this year. Discussion occurred on the connection between economic development and tourism.

Mr. Plumstead noted the four pillars of the Destination Development Action Plan, being (1) stakeholder engagement, (2) destination management, (3) market research and tracking, and (4) resource allocation. It was noted that each pillar has a respective staff lead.

Alison Theodore reviewed Stakeholder Engagement 2019 priorities. She highlighted Tourism Week, which is May 27 – June 2. She explained the concept of market-ready criteria, which will allow the industry to self-evaluate and implement best practices. Discussion occurred on customer relations management (CRM), which is an enhanced database that can assist stakeholders.

Jim Diebel joined the meeting.

Ms. Theodore discussed the Tourism Talks series. The first event was held on January 30<sup>th</sup> and was well attended despite the winter weather. The Committee discussed the possibility of including an industry chat room on the website. A chat room could increase industry connections and improve attendance at future Tourism Talks. The website is [www.visitgrey.ca/industry](http://www.visitgrey.ca/industry)

Heather Aljoe reviewed Destination Management 2019 priorities. She highlighted connecting the marketing campaign with media influencers. Discussion occurred on the importance of the human connection in tourism.

Bryan Plumstead reviewed Market Research and Tracking 2019 priorities. He advised that the industry and consumer survey has wrapped up and there was good participation. He is reviewing the information from the survey.

Mr. Plumstead reviewed Resource Allocation 2019 priorities. He highlighted the tourism industry summit that will be held in Blue Mountains on October 28-30<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged all members to attend.

## 2018 Report Card

Alison Theodore spoke about Pillar 1, Stakeholder Engagement. She highlighted the key activities, specifically the stakeholder database, the stakeholder communication plan, the Tourism Talks events, and the industry website. She noted the industry sessions that occurred in 2018.

Heather Aljoe spoke about Pillar 2, Destination Management. She highlighted the key activities, specifically the marketing plan, the brand, the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) marketing campaign, creating a mobile application, and the creation of packages and itineraries. She reviewed the 2018 Marketing Strategy and noted that there is 100% brand compliance in all marketing. Ms. Aljoe noted the positive Colouring It My Way campaign results.

Alison Theodore advised that in 2018 ten media persons were hosted in Grey County. She reviewed highlights from these visits. Discussion occurred on the target age groups of the influencers and the media coverage the influencers received.

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

## Grey County Tourism Updates

### Input on 2019 Draft Marketing Plan

Heather Aljoe discussed the marketing strategy for 2019. She reviewed the goals of the draft plan. The Committee supported the plan as drafted.

Ms. Aljoe reviewed the trends for 2019. She noted that destinations are embracing user-generated content. Discussion occurred on the experiences that people have and how to track whether there are gaps in experiences. It was noted that business listings on Google should be reviewed by operators.

Ms. Aljoe highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) list. Discussion occurred on the accommodation rates for the area; Mr. Plumstead noted that the availability of accommodation and the demand for accommodation are relatively equal. Discussion occurred on site selection requirements for building accommodations. It was noted that there may be an opportunity to market to families with children. It was also noted that an accessible list of local parks could be an opportunity to catch travelers passing through.

Discussion occurred on event listings on [www.visitgrey.ca](http://www.visitgrey.ca).

Bryan Plumstead noted that the tourism industry is changing with the introduction of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). This means that there will be more funds that Grey County tourism competes with. It was noted that it may also be a benefit not to charge the additional tax.

## Cycling and Trails Master Plan

Bryan Plumstead provided an update on the cycling and trails master plan. The plan should be complete by April 2019. A survey was just launched that is seeking feedback on what trails people are interested in.

Discussion occurred on paved shoulders and on opportunities for local municipalities. The Committee discussed the increasing interest in off road trails.

## Media and Stakeholder Engagement

Alison Theodore provided an update on media and stakeholder engagement. She noted that there will be a Tourism Mini Conference on March 21<sup>st</sup> at the Blue Mountain Resort. She also noted the Brochure Swap on May 8<sup>th</sup>, Tourism Week on May 27 – June 2, and the summer industry familiarization tours on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Theodore highlighted the media influencers who visited Grey County in 2018. She provided information on two upcoming media influencers who are visiting the County.

## Discussion on Sustainable Tourism in Grey County

The discussion on sustainable tourism in Grey County will be carried over to the next meeting. Bryan Plumstead asked the Committee to consider the topic prior to the next meeting, including:

- What is the proper balance for tourism in Grey County?
- What investments need to be considered to leverage the assets we have?
- What infrastructure investments need to be made?

## Other Business

There was no other business.

## Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held on April 15, 2019 at 9:00 a.m.

On motion by Jim Halliday and Joel Dawson, the meeting adjourned at 12:26 PM.