

Tourism Advisory Committee November 6, 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: Andrew Siegwart, Jim Halliday, Joel Dawson, Andrea O'Reilly and Councillors Shirley Keaveney and Sue Carleton

Regrets: Jim Diebel

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer, Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager; Heather Aljoe, Tourism Marketing and Communications Specialist; Alison Theodore, Tourism Partner and Media Relations Specialist; Savanna Myers, Manager of Economic Development and Tara Warder, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator;

Call to Order

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

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Reports

CAOR-TAC-19-19 Tourism and Local Food Campaign for 2020

Bryan Plumstead and Savanna Myers addressed the Committee on the proposal for a Tourism and Local Food Campaign for 2020. It was noted that, instead of just focusing on local food, there is a need to include agricultural aspects as well.

Culinary Tourism is growing, food experiences are thriving and Grey County has a very rich four season community and many outdoor assets that are threaded and connected together by a food story, which makes this area so unique.

There are many opportunities to seize, including the fact that many of the outdoor non-gated attractions in Grey County are free and experiences are authentic. There is potential to generate revenue by adding food as an additional layer.

It was noted that the campaign goals include enhancing local pride and a sense of place, reminding people of the importance of food in their lives, connecting activities to food and consequently increasing spending and raising awareness of Grey County's food story. There are opportunities to increase producer sales, and appeal to people's emotions by "being cheeky" and differentiating Grey County from other destinations.

Target audiences include local residents, in and out market visitors and County staff as well.

Next steps were outlined which include County Council approval and stakeholder buy-in, creating the campaign's creative approach and tactical plan. Long term implementation includes the development of a culinary tourism product and marketing strategy and the creation of a food sector implementation plan.

TAC07-19 Moved by: Andrew Siegwart Seconded by: Councillor Keaveney

That Report CAOR-TAC-19-19 regarding the 2020 Tourism and Local Food Campaign be received; and

That staff be directed to advance the concept to create a 2020 Tourism and Local Food Campaign.

Meet Your Visitor: Insights into Grey County's Visitor Markets Workshop

Bryan Plumstead addressed the Committee on the upcoming workshop. Mr. Plumstead outlined the segments. The purpose of the workshop is to focus on the target market segments and outline their characteristics, needs and how to serve these changing markets.

The Committee discussed visitor trends.

Sustainability Discussion

Bryan Plumstead spoke to the issues in recycling and waste management and the impacts on businesses. He noted some of the actions specific businesses have taken to be more eco-friendly, and issues that arise with waste management and the uncertainty around what actually happens to recycling and waste after pickup.

Kim Wingrove spoke to the need for a coordinated approach to ensure infrastructure, parking and garbage facilities are where they need to be in response to attracting visitors to the area to ensure safety, sustainability and good visitor experience.

The Committee noted that there is opportunity to do this well at the County level. Leadership is needed at the County and Committee level to drive the initiative.

It was noted that the County is developing its Climate Change Action Plan. The initiative could be part of it at later stages.

Next steps are to keep on talking with businesses. There was a suggestion of a subcommittee or a workshop to bring solutions to the table. Invitations will be sent out for a task force to begin spearheading the initiative.

Staff and the Tourism Advisory Committee can identify areas of concern and collect the necessary data to move forward.

Destination Development Action Plan Scorecard

Bryan Plumstead, Heather Aljoe and Alison Theodore highlighted the content of the destination development action plan and each of the pillars including stakeholder engagement, destination management and media and market research and tracking.

The metrics related to Social Media and Visit Grey were outlined, as well as the tourism website updates.

The Committee recessed briefly, then reconvened.

Staff Updates

Alison Theodore provided an update on the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario conference held recently at Blue Mountain Resort. Grey County's attendance at the Royal Winter Agricultural Fair was also discussed. The Committee noted the success of these recent events.

Other Business

2020 Priorities

Ms. Theodore provided a verbal update on 2020 priorities, including stakeholder engagement communications, tourism talks, updating the industry website and expanding the new Tourism Matters in Grey County campaign. The creation of a tour operator strategy was discussed. The first step of this strategy is to undertake an operator assessment to move forward with the market ready document that currently exists.

Heather Aljoe spoke to Destination Management initiatives and the launch of the Local Food and Tourism campaign with Economic Development.

Bryan Plumstead spoke to market research and tracking. One new initiative is the Tourism Data Analysis and Market Research project, which includes partnerships with Simcoe County, Regional Tourism Organization 7, Blue Mountain Village Association, and several municipalities. An application is being finalized to the Tourism Development Fund for 50% of the project costs.

Sharing Information With Visitor Centres

The Committee discussed opportunities to share information with Visitor Information Centres and how this could be achieved. It is important for each Destination Management Organization (DMO) to drive the information they want to share by using the templates and cheat sheets that have been provided. There is a need to revisit this to have it ready for the summer of 2020. It is important that data can be easily shared amongst everyone and hosting this on visitgrey.ca was one suggestion.

Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8th, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

On motion by Jim Halliday, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 PM.

Andrew Siegwart, Chair