

Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force December 11, 2020 – 9:30 am

The Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force met on the above date through electronic participation with the following members in attendance:

Present: Councillors O’Leary, Desai, Milne and McQueen; and Warden Hicks

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, CAO, Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning, Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing; Barb Fedy, Director of Social Services; Heather Morrison, Clerk; Scott Taylor, Senior Planner; Tim Simmonds, Owen Sound CAO and Brian Tocheri, Hanover CAO

Guests: Gemma Mendez-Smith, Linda Alexander, Sue Seifert

Call to Order

Warden Hicks called the meeting to order at 9:30.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There was none.

Business Arising

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Warden Hicks requested to step down as the Chair of the Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force. Nominations were then open for Chair of the Task Force.

Moved by: Warden Hicks

Seconded by: Councillor Milne

That Councillor O’Leary be nominated as Chair of the Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force

On motion by Councillor McQueen nominations closed.

Councillor O'Leary accepted the position of Chair.

As Councillor O'Leary was the previous Vice Chair, nominations were then open for the position of Vice Chair.

Moved by: Councillor McQueen Seconded by: Councillor Desai

That Warden Hicks be nominated as Vice Chair of the Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force.

Moved by: Warden Hicks Seconded by: Councillor O'Leary

That Councillor Milne be nominated as Vice Chair of the Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force

On motion by Councillor Desai nominations closed.

Warden Hicks declined the nomination. Councillor Milne accepted the position of Vice Chair.

Chair O'Leary then assumed the Chair.

Recommendations and Opportunities

Randy Scherzer reviewed the Recommendations and Opportunities document which highlights points, questions, opportunities and further information requested from previous Task Force meetings. He provided an overview of the most recent meeting discussions related to social services and the United Way program. He highlighted the common themes from the December 1, 2020 meeting which are contained within the Recommendations and Opportunities document.

Mr. Scherzer spoke to questions arising from the previous meetings.

Delegations

Labour Markets-Owen Sound and Hanover, Gemma Mendez-Smith, Executive Director-Four County Labour Market Planning Board

Ms. Mendez-Smith spoke to Task Force members about the unemployment rate in both Hanover and Owen Sound along with a comparison province-wide. She noted that these rates are based on 2016 census data. She did indicate that the current unemployment rate is 5.4% across the four counties of Grey, Bruce, Huron and Perth. Discussion was held on the options of gathering more current data. Staff will endeavor to gather this to provide to the Task Force as follow-up. She highlighted top sectors that currently employ within the urban areas.

Ms. Mendez-Smith then outlined occupational categories for workers noting that sales and services occupations have the highest number of employees in both Hanover and Owen Sound. She outlined commuter statistics noting a majority travel under 15 minutes to work. She stated that 11% of Hanover residents and 19% of Owen Sound residents commute to a different census area, or community, for employment. She did note that 19% of commuters from both Hanover and Owen Sound have a 30 minute or more commute. Ms. Mendez-Smith will follow up with statistics related to commuters coming into both Hanover and Owen Sound for employment purposes.

Ms. Mendez-Smith provided an overview of the Employer One survey recently completed. She noted that 84% of businesses hired at least one employee in 2019 with 62% of those being full time, 76% of employers experienced at least one separation in 2019 with 59% of those being a quit and 76% of employers planned to hire in 2020 with 50% of those employers using online job boards or social media to recruit. She did note that the above statistics are higher in all areas for Hanover and Owen Sound than Grey County as a whole.

Ms. Mendez-Smith indicated that 54% of employers experienced hard to fill positions and 13% have spent over one year trying to fill some positions. She noted that the top three reasons positions were hard to fill include lack of technical skills, lack of work experience and not enough applicants. 50% of surveyed businesses indicated that retention was a concern. She outlined the top three retention strategies including regular increase in salary, recognition for service and training opportunities.

Ms. Mendez-Smith then shared migration data for both Hanover and Owen Sound. She noted that residents of West Grey and Brockton move to Hanover and residents of Chatsworth, Toronto, South Bruce Peninsula, Georgian Bluffs and London move to Owen Sound.

Ms. Mendez-Smith provided participation rates for Hanover and Owen Sound. She noted that 15-19-year old's have a higher participation rate in both Hanover at 59% and Owen Sound at 54.3% than the rest of Grey County and the province. She noted the highest number of participation rates were for the ages of 20-24 years with 76.1% in Hanover and 83.5% in Owen Sound and 35-44 years at 86.3 in Hanover and 86.3 in Owen Sound.

Questions and comments from the Task Force members then followed.

YMCA of Owen Sound Grey-Bruce-Employment Services-Linda Alexander and Susan Seifert

Ms. Seifert provided the Task Force with an update related to YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce Employment Services. She spoke to annual resource centre visits of 11,000 people, 2000 one on one annual support appointments and the success of job seekers

with 136 people exiting the service monthly with seven of ten of those successfully moving to employment. She then provided a job seekers profile by gender, age, education, and source of income noting most are male, between 30-54 years of age with a grade 12 education or equivalent with either no source of income, employment insurance benefit income or part-time employment income.

Ms. Seifert spoke to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program job seekers noting that 62% exit the program due to obtaining employment or enrollment in further education or training opportunities. The synergy between social assistance life stabilization program and employment programs was highlighted.

Ms. Seifert noted there are two liaisons that support five Grey County high schools with over 500 youth receiving one on one employment related assistance annually. She highlighted youth job seekers noting the various programs that support this group. She then spoke to community partnerships and outlined the various community agencies working together including social services, economic development, Community Living, Chambers of Commerce and Georgian College.

Ms. Alexander spoke to local challenges for employers and job seekers including recruitment, retention and an aging workforce. Ms. Alexander outlined supports for local solutions including hiring incentives, second career opportunities, Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG) and skills training initiatives. Hiring incentives, through Employment Ontario, include job matching and training supports, job fairs and the use of job boards. The Second Career Program includes an anticipated fast-tracking criterion for targeted applicants, including those who have recently been laid off and easier access for employers to trained workers. Assistance with job supports such as training, among others, is also available as part of this program. Under the COJG there is an employer driven grant with a cost-sharing component to support those employers with over \$200,000 being provided to local employers annually.

New local solutions are also being piloted. These include partnerships and programs with employers and course offerings for a variety of different areas. One such program is the Restart Employment which provides training for retail specific employers and employees. Apprenticeship programs were noted as ongoing initiatives with various community organizations.

Questions and comments then followed. Co-op programs through the local school boards were highlighted as an opportunity to source out future employment opportunities.

Grey County Economic Development Update-Savanna Myers

Ms. Myers provided an overview of Made in Grey and the Grey County Economic Development Team. She noted that the economic development and tourism working

groups merged in 2020 and provide a very collaborative approach to economic development within the region. The group contains 35 representatives from across Grey County including municipal staff, provincial representatives and community partners. She then outlined the key staff teams and their respective members and portfolios.

Ms. Myers provided an overview of the corporate strategic plan and the three pillars contained in that, the first being grow the Grey County Economy by becoming investment ready and promoting the County's economic assets and opportunities. She provided a business overview noting that there are approximately 10,500 businesses in Grey County with 70% being sole-proprietor or home-based businesses.

Ms. Myers then spoke to labour force challenges. She noted that 83% of employers have indicated challenges with recruiting employees. She indicated that barriers for attracting and retaining the 25-45 age range include housing, transportation and available childcare and perceptions around 'things to do'. Ms. Myers spoke to the current pandemic situation and its impact on the movement of people out of larger urban areas into smaller more rural areas including Grey County.

Ms. Myers then provided details surrounding investment opportunities including foreign direct investment, transportation, community improvement plans, affordable/attainable housing, tourism infrastructure and reliable broadband.

She provided details around current attraction and retention campaign including the local immigration partnership program, Connect2Jobs website and workforce training and development. She outlined entrepreneurship opportunities including the Business Enterprise Centre and Catapult Grey Bruce. Ms. Myers spoke to the opportunities for the Sydenham Campus which supports a fulsome approach to entrepreneurship and workforce development.

Questions and comments from the members then followed.

Other Business

There was none.

Next Meeting Dates

December 14, 2020 9:30 am.

On motion by Councillor Milne and Councillor Desai the meeting adjourned at 11:34 am.

Brian O'Leary, Chair