



Committee Minutes

Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee

February 9, 2022 – 8:30 AM

The Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee met on the above date through electronic means with the following members in attendance:

Present: Steacy Den Haan, Ashley Chapman, Ian Reich, John Kurvink, John Woodbury, Sue Carleton, Tom Hutchinson, Ian Boddy, Shirley Keaveney, Paul McQueen and Warden Selwyn Hicks

Regrets: Brian Davenport, Dave Shorey, Sharif Rahman and Councillor Bordignon

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture; Scott Taylor, Manager of Planning Services; Steve Furness, Manager Economic Development; Philly Markowitz, Economic Development Officer; Alison Theodore, Economic Development Officer; Courtney Miller, Business Enterprise Manager; Jacinda Rudolph, Economic Development Officer; Kim Trombley, Administrative Assistant and Tara Warder, Deputy Clerk / Legislative Coordinator

Call to Order

Tara Warder called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

Tara Warder called for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

ED01-22 Moved by: Councillor Woodbury Seconded by: Councillor Carleton

That Councillor Keaveney be nominated as Chair of the Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee for 2022.

On motion by Councillor McQueen, nominations closed.

Councillor Keaveney accepted the nomination and was acclaimed Chair.

ED02-22 Moved by: Councillor Carleton Seconded by: Councillor Keaveney

That Councillor Hutchinson be nominated as Vice Chair of the Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee for 2022.

ED03-22 Moved by: Warden Hicks Seconded by: Councillor Boddy

That Councillor Carleton be nominated as Vice Chair of the Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee for 2022.

On motion by Councillor Woodbury, nominations closed.

Councillor Hutchinson accepted the nomination.

Councillor Carleton declined the nomination.

Councillor Hutchinson was acclaimed Vice Chair of the Committee for 2022.

Councillor Keaveney then assumed the Chair.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations made.

Reports

Presentation on Planning and Economic Development Projects

Randy Scherzer highlighted various projects from Planning and Economic Development.

He provided an overview of the Climate Change Action Plan, noting that staff and ICLEI Canada have been working on it for 2 years. It will provide community and corporate strategies for climate change mitigation and greenhouse gas reductions.

Scott Taylor then provided information on proposed Official Plan Amendment 11 which incorporates housing, employment and growth projections into the Official Plan. It will further clarify some primary settlement area density policies, recognize two future secondary plan areas, update second unit policies and implement direction from the Affordable Housing Task Force. It will also implement early findings of the Climate Change Action Plan.

Mr. Taylor then highlighted the Age Friendly Community Action Plan. The County received funding from the Inclusive Community Grant Program by the Province for the creation of an Age Friendly Community Action Plan. The strategy and action plan will focus on the World Health Organization's age friendly community domains, including outdoor spaces and public buildings, transportation, housing, respect and social

inclusion, civic participation and employment, community and information, community support and health services and social participation. The report is anticipated to be presented to Council in the first quarter of 2022.

The next update provided was with respect to Affordable Housing. Various departments continue to work to implement the direction of the Affordable Housing Task Force and the County's Housing Action Plan. Mr. Scherzer spoke to recently completed and ongoing initiatives including reserving 1% of the annual levy for housing projects, the Community Improvement Plan (CIPs) template, development charges exemptions for purpose built rental units and projects funded through CIPs, the county/municipal surplus lands project for affordable housing, the updating of planning policies to allow second units, and a new supportive housing project in Owen Sound. A report was recently released from the Province's Affordable Housing Task Force that encourages additional units and increased density. It was noted that both affordable and attainable housing are critical to attracting and retaining the labour force.

There is also a Municipal Boundary collaboration taking place. In 2020 and 2021, council directed staff to begin researching opportunities and solutions for municipal collaboration along common boundaries. Step 1 was to complete the Growth Management Study which was completed in 2021. Staff are looking into matters of common municipal interest such as opportunities for shared services or boundary expansions. Staff will be organizing a workshop for municipalities to showcase other municipal approaches to both boundary expansion and servicing. Staff will be meeting with individual municipalities to assess their needs and ability to collaborate with neighbours.

Savanna Myers then noted that staff will be updating the Committee on economic development, tourism and culture initiatives.

Steve Furness addressed the Committee on the draft Investment Strategy, noting that Grey received 50% funding in 2021 to develop the Grey Investment Strategy. Think Compass was retained to undertake consultations and develop the strategy. Staff are now consulting with municipal representatives and will be talking to existing businesses to finalize the draft before presenting to Council later this spring. Staff will also arrange an April meeting with Committee and the consultants to thoroughly review prior to the report. The strategy will help secure new investment but supporting retention efforts first.

He then provided an overview of Sydenham Campus. It continues to incubate and support small businesses and deliver on the approved business plan. Child care services have started up and a proposal for a community garden has been received. Next steps include developing the Fab Lab and purchasing/installing equipment. The

County is looking at starting with wood working, a metal shop and electronics/robotics lab, and are currently consulting with industry/community on this project.

Courtney Miller then introduced Linnea Catalan, Business Enterprise Centre Coordinator. She provided updates on the Business Enterprise Centre, noting that the Provincial contract has been renewed for a two year term with the option of a one year extension. There is a greater focus on one on one advisor/specialist support. This is a need and request that has been heard from the business community throughout the last couple of years. There will be a continued focus on partnership development through the Grey Bruce Entrepreneurial Ecosystem which includes Bruce county, Catapult Grey Bruce and other local and provincial small business support agencies.

Jacinda Rudolph provided information on the Local Immigration Partnership. She introduced Deepikaa Gupta and Hayley Moody who are the Coordinator and Facilitator for the partnership. She noted that justice, equity, diversity and inclusion training for municipal leaders and employers is in the works and a train the trainer program is coming soon.

Questions from the Committee were then addressed regarding the alignment of the Province's recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force.

Committee members noted concerns on the ability to expand businesses and that the housing issue is a desperate one for employers and potential employees. Long term rentals are disappearing and it is difficult to overcome these obstacles.

Further discussion occurred on the need to see how to move forward with boundary issues, servicing, housing, etc. until those legislative changes are seen and what things can be done in the short term to help with some of these items. It was noted that the City of Owen Sound has land and water and wastewater capacities that would service more than the current population of Owen Sound. There is opportunity for expansion and development in the City.

The importance of continuing to support small and medium sized internet service providers was noted and the need to implement fibre were noted.

Roundtable Discussion

Chair Keaveney then asked the roundtable questions to which the Committee responded.

- a. What are you hearing in your communities or sectors as the biggest challenge, need, or opportunity?

- Labour – there is a strong desire for immigrants to choose Grey County as a place to settle.
 - Housing - there are staff to hire, but they can't be hired because housing is too expensive.
 - Taxes - too high in certain areas for the services received and there is a perceived lack of things to do in rural areas.
- b. What role do you see for the County to address these needs or act on these opportunities?
- NIMBYism – there is an opportunity to address the terminology. People are fearful affordable housing will bring negative social issues with it, but it is providing a place for people to live while working in the community. Feedback on Grey County's mixed housing building was provided. It was noted that it was a good system that worked well. If the County can continue to offer incentives, it helps significantly.
 - Living wage – what is the county's role in advocating for a living wage.
- c. What priorities should staff be considering in 2022 and beyond?
- Partnership that Grey County has formed with Georgian College. We need to continue to strengthen the relationships with education partners. The more we can train people locally, the more likely they are to consider opportunities in our area. The trades provide wonderful career opportunities. Grey County can play a role in promoting more Launchpad type models.
 - Climate Change will be an opportunity

John Kurvink, Ian Reich and Ashley Chapman left the meeting at this time.

- d. What should the role of this advisory group be moving forward?
- This group should continue having more of these discussions
- e. What would you like to be doing that we're not doing?

- There was support for business tours
- f. What are we missing that we haven't talked about?
- Drawing attention to our outdoor recreation opportunities and the mental and health benefits for everyone. What more can be done to attract because of these additional opportunities.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Next Meeting Dates

April 2022

Adjournment

On motion by Councillors Carleton and Woodbury, the Committee adjourned at 10:11 AM.

Shirley Keaveney, Chair