



Committee Minutes

Tourism Advisory Committee May 11, 2022 – 9:30 AM

The Tourism Advisory Committee met on the above date through electronic participation with the following members in attendance:

Present: Joel Dawson, Jim Diebel and Jim Halliday, and Councillors Tom Hutchinson and Sue Carleton

Regrets: Andrew Siegart

Staff

Present: Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture; Heather Morrison, Clerk; Heather Aljoe, Marketing and Communications Specialist; Alison Theodore, Economic Development Officer; Kimberly Trombley, Administrative Assistant; and Tara Warder, Legislative Coordinator/Deputy Clerk

Call to Order

Clerk Morrison called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM.

Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

Heather Morrison called for nominations for Chair.

TAC01-22 Moved by: Sue Carleton Seconded by: Tom Hutchinson

That Joel Dawson be nominated Chair of the Tourism Advisory Committee for 2022.

On motion by Councillor Carleton, nominations closed.

Joel Dawson indicated his intention to stand for Chair and was acclaimed.

Heather Morrison then called for nominations for Vice Chair.

TAC02-22 Moved by: Councillor Hutchinson Seconded by: Councillor Carleton

That Jim Halliday be nominated Vice Chair of the Tourism Advisory Committee for 2022.

On motion by Councillor Hutchinson, nominations closed.

Jim Halliday indicated his interested to stand and was acclaimed as Vice Chair for 2022.

Joel Dawson then assumed the Chair.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Delegations

Patti Kendall and Helen du Toit attended the meeting to provide an overview of the Blue Mountain Film Festival. The festival has a \$1 million budget and will take place June 1-5.

The event is an industry forum held over three days and will involve local filmmakers as well as have an international presence. There are many ways to support the festival, including sharing the information on social media. It was noted that there has been good media coverage on the event and the County was thanked for their sponsorship of the industry forum.

She then introduced Helen du Toit, Executive and Artistic Director for the Blue Mountain Film Festival. She spoke to her background and experience. She noted the potential for growth and economic impacts in the area. Film festivals are an opportunity to connect with people from around the world, and connect with others in the industry.

It was noted that 20% of the films are Canadian films, and others are from around the world.

Questions were addressed regarding the event.

Reports

EDTC-TAC-09-22 Tourism Infrastructure & Investment

Savanna Myers presented the above report.

She noted that there was opportunity in 2022 to shift tourism work based on the feedback over the past years. The shift has been towards an infrastructure and investment focus, moving some resources away from marketing and promotion since visitation numbers are strong.

Outdoor spaces are at capacity, and visitor experience, quality and the safety and sustainability of the spaces has been a major concern of almost every stakeholder. Staff are also focused on itineraries to move visitors from green spaces to shops and restaurants as well as extend visitation overnight to promote further spending in support of the industry, which was hard hit by many lengthy pandemic restrictions and will take awhile to fully recover.

She spoke to the Outdoor Management Group, a group of regional partner organizations. Information was also shared on investments in infrastructure, including CP Rail Trail stone dust completion, Kolapore Parking Lot, cycling and trails signage, and the redevelopment of the Hoggs Falls trail.

Tourism investment has also been ongoing in conjunction with member municipalities, including the sale of the Wiaraton Keppel International Airport, the municipally owned talisman lands, and exploration of hotel investments.

Steve Furness then spoke to the focus of marketing efforts both short term and long term.

Questions and comments were addressed. It was noted that staff will be looking at ways to leverage the use of QR codes and other easy ways for people to get information they need.

TAC03-22 Moved by: Sue Carleton

Seconded by: Jim Halliday

That Report EDTC-TAC-09-22 regarding the Tourism Infrastructure & Investment be received for information.

Carried

Ambassador Team

Alison Theodore then addressed the Committee. Staff are expecting a busy summer ahead. The Grey County Ambassador Network will be re-introduced. The main purposes are to manage outdoor spaces, track visitation and act as a way to inform visitors who are visiting those spaces.

She provided an overview of the network. There are seven teams that are a part of the network, including Blue Mountain Village, Bruce Trail Conservancy, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, Grey Highlands, Meaford, Owen Sound and South Georgian Bay Tourism.

Questions were addressed.

Staycation Marketing Update

Heather Aljoe updated the Committee. She noted that things have changed immensely over the last two years. During the pandemic, all messaging was directed to locals. Grey County is now ready to expand beyond Grey's borders again. The department is conscious of how Grey County is marketed and is working closely with stakeholders.

Local influencers are continuing to collaborate with Grey County and write about their experiences.

Staff have also created new billboard messaging and those will be up in the next few weeks.

Staff addressed questions around encouraging campgrounds. Efforts are being made to change the narrative around campgrounds. There is a lot of great investment that could happen in that regard, however there are misconceptions that often prevent the establishment of campgrounds.

Discussion occurred around strategies for tracking visitation.

Roundtable Presentation

Jim Diebel noted the difficulty in businesses being closed for two years. Government regulations are constantly changing and customers attitudes towards travelling internationally have changed somewhat, however they are eager to travel again.

Jim Halliday spoke to the increase in seniors in the Town of the Blue Mountains, many who are interested in taking up or continuing their active lifestyles.

Patti Kendall provided an update from the Blue Mountain Village Association, noting that the programming has started again. They are anticipating large numbers and focusing on marketing in the shoulder season as well.

Staff are still working closely with the communications department to ensure trail etiquette promotion continues.

Joel Dawson then updated the Committee. He noted that Free Spirit Tours are seeing the return of group events. There have also been supply challenges, especially with vehicles.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Next Meeting Dates

To be determined.

On motion by Jim Diebel and Jim Halliday, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Joel Dawson, Chair