

Tourism Advisory Committee

March 3, 2016 – 5:15 p.m.

The Tourism Advisory Committee met on the above date at the Flesherton Public Library with the following members in attendance:

Present: Chair Gary Gingras, Vice Chair Philip Allanson, Councillor Gail Ardiel, Councillor Barb Clumpus, Jim Halliday and Andrew Siegart

Regrets: Peter Majewsky

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, CAO; Bryan Plumstead, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism; Heather Aljoe, Tourism Specialist; and Mary Jane Hills, Recording Secretary

Also

Present: Bill Sullivan and Alex Hogan, Regional Tourism Organization 7; Consultants Jillian Dickins and Oliver Martin (via telephone); and Councillors Paul McQueen and Stewart Halliday.

Call to Order

Chair Gingras called the meeting to order.

Review of Draft Report Grey County Destination Development

Action Plan (DDAP) Update Phase 1

Jillian Dickens of Bannikin Travel and Tourism Consultants led the review of the draft report. Oliver Martin of Bannikin joined the discussion by telephone.

A draft report prepared by Bannikin incorporated the results from stakeholder surveys, personal interviews, a stakeholder meeting, and a workshop. The workshop attendees and the Destination Development Action Plan Steering Committee were given the

opportunity to review the draft document and provided further input and clarification. The document reviewed today is the outcome of combined contributions from all groups.

The final report going to Planning and Community Development Committee from Bannikin will include recommendations for a three to five year action plan and will include in its appendices the detailed findings that were drawn upon to reach the report's recommendations. Those recommendations will be based on work that can be completed using existing department staffing levels, and without a call for further increased budget spend.

The draft plan was reviewed and discussions took place on the listed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of tourism in Grey County.

Types of existing accommodations were discussed as were opportunities for new boutique hotels/inns that would offer another level of accommodation.

Making the most of the important Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market was discussed. Statistics indicate that the VFR market keeps visitors in the area for longer stays than those visitors who book typical accommodations.

Keeping day trippers in the area for longer stays also needs to be addressed. The final report will list and prioritize key demand generators and will indicate those demand generators that should be enhanced. Generators could include culture seekers, sport team event participants and families.

Grey County Economic Development staff has recently updated community profiles. Identifying local tourism business opportunities could be undertaken in the future and could include up and coming demand generators and trends to watch. Tourism staff need to identify the visitor market segments that are coming now, what other market segments could come, and what interests those segments so that overall visits will increase along with lengths of stay.

The last DDAP used four main pillars as the framework for the plan, and these pillars have been reviewed and updated in the new report. The importance of each of the four pillars was discussed including priorities and ideas for improvement. These pillars are Community Engagement, Destination Management, Market Research and Tracking, and Resource Allocation.

The consultants recommend that Grey County become members of the Adventure Travel Trade Association. This organization offers excellent seminars, webinars, conferences and workshops that will enhance staff's expertise and that expertise would be transferred by staff to local industry members to enhance their product offerings.

The final report going to County Council will focus on a prioritized list of actions with a planned completion date within three to five years, leaning towards a three year plan. To do this, the scope of work must be narrowed so that efforts are not diluted by trying to do too many things without the capacity to do so. Priorities will be laid out by quarter and year with the Manager reviewing priorities and budgets annually to ensure staff can complete the work within those time frames. Staff must keep Council informed of opportunities, so Council can ensure the budget meets the needs.

Mr Plumstead will ensure that Bannikin is provided with a copy of the approved Economic Development Action Plan for its review.

The final report from Bannikin is due on March 17 and will go out to the DDAP Steering Committee for review and comments by March 22. Those comments will be incorporated into the final report which will be submitted to the Steering Committee on March 31st and upon its approval will be sent to the Planning and Community Development Committee for its April 14th meeting. Bannikin will present the final report to the Committee .

Mr. Plumstead left the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Agenda

There were no additional agenda items.

Moved by: Philip Allanson Seconded by: Councillor Clumpus

THAT the Agenda for March 3, 2016 Tourism Advisory Committee be adopted.

Carried

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There was none.

Minutes of Meetings

The minutes from the October 6, 2015 Tourism Advisory Committee are for information only as they were adopted by the Planning and Community Development Committee on October 20, 2015 and by Grey County Council on November 3, 2015.

Business Arising from the Minutes

Tourism Advisory Committee Minutes dated October 6, 2015

There was none.

General Discussion:

The Brochure Swap is an annual event that is hosted every other year by Grey County or Bruce County. The 2016 Brochure Swap is being held in Wiarton. Attendance is typically split 50/50 between Grey and Bruce County operators.

It was suggested that Grey County hold a second swap closer to the southeastern area of the County. This would be specifically for Grey County operators who find it difficult to travel to Wiarton.

In future years this swap could include an educational component for those attending, or an update on activities ongoing at the County level. An invitation will be sent out shortly after the Wiarton Brochure Swap to see if there is an interest in a second brochure swap being held for Grey County operators as noted above.

Other Business

The Fish Art Trail will be continued into Blue Mountains and will include the Thornbury Fish Ladder. The Fish Art Trail is a regional tourism initiative developed several years ago with Fish Art Trail locations in Owen Sound, Durham and Hanover along with others in Bruce County.

Invitations have recently been sent out for The Meaford Scarecrow Invasion Planners Day event. This is a well-organized event and would be of interest to many in the industry.

It was discussed how websites that are not on a mobile platform will no longer be accessed by Google as of April 2016. This is very important for industry people to be aware as it could potentially lead to lost business if potential customers cannot find a business online.

Next Meeting Dates

The next Tourism Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled by staff.

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On motion by Philip Allanson, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Gary Gingras, Chair