

## Tourism Advisory Committee July 5, 2018 – 8:30 AM

The Tourism Advisory Committee met on the above date at the County Administration Building with the following members in attendance:

Present: Chair Gary Gingras; Phillip Allanson; Jim Halliday; Andrea O'Reilly; and Councillors Selwyn Hicks and Gail Ardiel

Regrets: Andrew Siegart and Jim Diebel

Special  
Guest: Michael Maish, The Roost Winery & Vineyard

### 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; Mandy Mulligan, Tourism Assistant; Olivia Yale and Julia Vachon, Summer Students; and Jacquelyn Morrison, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator

## Call to Order

Chair Gingras called the meeting to order at 8:39 AM.

## Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

## Staff Introductions

Bryan Plumstead introduced the new Grey County tourism staff members:

Alison Theodore, Tourism Partner and Media Relations Specialist;  
Mandy Mulligan, Tourism Assistant;  
Olivia Yale, Summer Student; and  
Julia Vachon, Summer Student.

It was noted that Grey Highlands has hired Michelle Harris for Economic Development and Tourism.

## Tourism Business – Grey County Experience

Michael Maish provided information and background on his company, The Roost Winery & Vineyard. The winery has been operating for approximately one year and is classified as a micro-winery. Mr. Maish provided information on how the grapes are grown in the area and an overview of the products sold by the winery.

Mr. Maish advised that The Roost has been well received in the area and that Grey County tourism has been very supportive. He noted the familiarization tour, media tours, and saints and sinners trail, which were facilitated by Grey County. He stated that the support has been encouraging to the small business.

Mr. Maish described how the company has addressed challenges it has faced. He discussed challenges in regulations affecting wineries in the area, including the size limits for tasting rooms and processing. Discussion regarding official plan amendments and hosting large events on the property occurred.

Mr. Maish spoke to attracting more wineries to the area. He noted that the Vintners Quality Alliance (“VQA”) does not recognize the cold climate vines grown in this region, which is a challenge to wineries in this area. This has legal and tax consequences for the wineries. He noted that only VQA wines can be sold at farmers markets. The Roost does have some VQA wine, but the grapes are largely from Niagara. However, many customers want to taste wine from the grapes grown on the property.

Kim Wingrove suggested that the three wineries in the area collaborate as an organized group to seek an opportunity for discussions with the Niagara Escarpment Commission (“NEC”) or Wine Council of Ontario. She noted the need to understand the policy behind the VQA decisions regarding cold climate grapes.

Gail Ardiel suggested a delegation to the NEC or the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (“AMO”). She noted the importance of tourism and growth within Grey County.

Bryan Plumstead will reach out to the three wineries to coordinate conversations around issues unique to wineries in this area.

Mr. Maish noted that his customers include residents from the area and international guests from The Blue Mountains. The winery experiences the highest customer volume on the weekends. Discussions regarding Grey County being a four season destination occurred.

Discussions occurred around the summer students' activities and what they are hearing from business owners. The summer students also discussed their role in promoting tourism to Grey County, specifically their social media presence. Gary Gingras suggested highlighting weekday opportunities with residents. Discussion occurred around the flavours of Grey County.

Michael Maish, Kim Wingrove, Julia Vachon, Olivia Yale, and Mandy Mulligan left the meeting.

## Destination Development Action Plan Progress Review – Quarter 2 Scorecard

Bryan Plumstead noted three actions that are being extended, including creating a visiting friends and relatives marketing campaign, creating the tourism mobile app, and creating profiles of target market audiences.

Alison Theodore addressed Pillar 1 – Stakeholder Engagement. The listings in the database include 795 unique listings. She is moving forward with establishing criteria for the database. She noted effective stakeholder communication, including newsletter subscriptions, click through rates, and bounce rates. The newsletter will be refreshed. She advised the industry website is doing well, noting the page views and session duration. Ms. Theodore advised there have been two events for tourism talks, which were well attended. Gary Gingras suggested tourism industry awards be considered.

Heather Aljoe spoke to Pillar 2 – Destination Management. She noted that Grey County is at 100% for brand marketing. It was noted that stakeholders will be asked their thoughts on the new brand. The social media outreach has been successful; small businesses and municipalities are promoting the brand. The County's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages have been increasing in followers. The summer students have created a SnapChat account for Grey County. The traffic on the website has increased. She noted the newsletter subscription rate has increased. The summer newsletter will go out soon.

Ms. Theodore spoke to media relations under Pillar 2. She informed the Committee of her contacts with media influencers. There will be two bloggers visiting Grey County to increase engagement online. Discussion regarding how to continue engaging influencers who have visited Grey County after their visit occurred. Further discussion occurred regarding how to focus on different, lesser known, areas of Grey County for media tours.

The overlap between tourism and attracting new development was noted. Mr. Plumstead will consider facilitating a joint Economic Development / Tourism meeting in 2019.

Mr. Plumstead spoke to the Tourism Mobile Application. He highlighted Play, Eat, and Stay statistics.

Mr. Plumstead spoke to Pillar 3 – Market Research and Tracking. He noted market research and tracking will occur at the end of this year. He indicated that a meeting with businesses would be beneficial to determine what they are looking for from market research.

Mr. Plumstead addressed Pillar 4 – Resource Allocation. He noted the industry sessions that staff had attended. It was noted that Statistics Canada has reported that in 2017 a significant number of people visited Canada and this trend seems to be continuing in 2018. It was noted that 2018 is the official year for joint tourism between Canada and China.

## Grey County Tourism Updates

### Stakeholder Outreach

Alison Theodore referred to the updates in Scorecard. She had no additional comments.

### 2018 Marketing Campaign

Heather Aljoe noted the Colouring It My Way series. This year, ten people will be featured in the series. She noted that specific tourism opportunities in various locations will be featured throughout the series. This will increase business in the featured areas. The kick off meeting is tomorrow and the campaign will run through the fall.

### Media Update

Alison Theodore referred to the updates in Scorecard. She had no additional comments.

### Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Signage

Bryan Plumstead spoke about the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Signage. Grey County has installed the signs on County Roads.

Discussion regarding the marketing of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail occurred. Mr. Plumstead noted that The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail completes its own marketing.

### Cycling Safety Program/ Cycling Trails Master Plan

Bryan Plumstead confirmed that the program was cancelled but the funding that Grey County has received can still be used. Most of the funds will be used for paved shoulder lanes for cycling.

Mr. Plumstead noted that funds were received for cycling education. He advised that these funds were used for radio advertisements on cycling safety and magnetic bumper applications. Mr. Plumstead noted the need to develop more awareness for cycling safety throughout the region and that some tourism print advertising has been used for this purpose.

## Metrics Backgrounder

Bryan Plumstead advised that the metrics backgrounder will be updated over the next week and the revised version will be sent out to the Committee.

He noted that there may be additional unique businesses in Grey County, specifically Airbnb rentals.

## South Georgian Bay Labour Task Force

The South Georgian Bay study is complete and a draft report is forthcoming. Bryan Plumstead discussed that the study would be presented to Committee of the Whole and then a staff report would be brought back by staff to Committee of the Whole.

The Committee recommended that once the South Georgian Bay Labour Task Force project is complete, Andrew Siegwart will work with the Clerk's department to present the findings to Committee of the Whole.

## Don Braden Memorial

Bryan Plumstead advised the Committee of a prize received from TIAO and the Rocky Mountaineer to travel through the Rockies by train. The prize will be auctioned and the funds received will be donated to a Don Braden Memorial. The Blue Mountain Foundation will lead the auction.

The Committee supported auctioning the prize and donating the funds to the Don Braden Memorial.

## Other Business

Discussions occurred around accommodation taxes. Bryan Plumstead advised that the tax is the responsibility of the lower-tier municipalities. Gary Gingras suggested that Bryan bring a report back to the Committee on this issue.

## Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held on November 1, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

On motion by Philip Allanson, the meeting adjourned at 11: 54 AM.

Gary Gingras, Chair