

2022 Warden's Forum

Thursday, June 16, 2020, 4:00 p.m.
Sydenham Campus, Owen Sound

Present: [Master List of RSVPs](#)

Campus Tours

Prior to the beginning of the Warden's Forum, Sydenham Staff provided optional tours of the Sydenham Campus to participants.

Opening Remarks

CAO Kim Wingrove provided introductory remarks. Regrettably, Warden Hicks was unable to attend but provided a video message welcoming everyone to the event and highlighted the importance of the evening's theme.

Introductions to Grey County staff were provided by Kim Wingrove. The Head of each Municipality introduced their staff and council members in attendance.

JunCtian Presentation – Joan John

Ms. Wingrove introduced Joan John – President of the JunCtian Organization. Joan discussed her early upbringings and arrival to Canada, which has inspired her current role. JunCtian is a non-profit organization that believes in diversity and acceptance of a range of backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and orientations. The JunCtian Team is composed of mostly local individuals who strive to create a safe hub for adults and children through arts and other activities. Joan highlighted various events and programs organized by JunCtian including Starz of Southgate, Beautiful Girls, Boys to Men, and Black History Month programming. Mental Health Wellness initiatives have also recently been launched. Moving forward, the organization will work to continue bringing arts-based learning opportunities to the community, while also hoping to expand their programming.

Following Joan's presentation, Southgate Mayor John Woodbury discussed the impact Joan and JunCtian have made on the community. Mayor Woodbury emphasized that

the work has been completed by the organization – not the municipal council. He suggested that other councils provide necessary support to similar organizations, but allow the experts, like Joan, to take the lead.

Kim Wingrove further reiterated that recent discussions with the Mental Health and Addictions Task Force have shown many families are in crisis. It is great to see the work being completed in the community and the lives being touched.

GBLIP Update – Deepikaa Gupta and May IP

Savanna Myers introduced Deepikaa and May from the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) and highlighted the great work that is currently being completed. In 2020, funding was received from Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Grey-Bruce Initiative was formed to service the entire region. There is adequate funding to continue the programming until 2025.

Deepikaa explained that the goal of GBLIP is to bring together individuals and organizations interested in assisting newcomers. Staff are currently trying to build capacities by engaging all with all municipalities in Grey and Bruce to develop a resource hub and share relevant information. Deepikaa and staff aim to share best practices and challenges amongst all members, while fostering inclusion within the community.

May identified the members of GBLIP's Partner Council and explained the importance of newcomer integration. A recent initiative of GBLIP was a collaboration with stakeholders to host JEDI training facilitated by a consultant. Work is now being completed on the 'Train the Trainer' program so that GBLIP staff can continue to provide this necessary training. Delegations are also being provided to municipal councils to inform of the work being completed and raise awareness of the resources available. May further discussed a Discrimination Study completed by Western University. The findings of this report will be available in early July and will be shared with municipal leaders. It contains information on how immigrants, visible minorities, and indigenous peoples face discrimination and racism. These findings will provide a necessary starting point on how to promote more welcoming communities.

There are 37 Local Immigration Partnerships across Ontario and 81 in Canada. Staff from GBLIP are working to collaborate with these partnerships. Recently, the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus released a Newcomer Readiness Assessment Checklist. This document can be used to determine how accommodating and welcoming a local community is. Deepikaa lead participants through a sample of these questions. It was stressed that GBLIP is a resource that can, and should, be utilized by all municipalities.

Following the presentation, Dave Milliner (Southgate CAO) asked for the full readiness checklist to be emailed to participants. Deepikaa ensured this would occur and also indicated it would be available on the website in the future.

Dinner Break

Community Foundations – Vital Conversation on Housing Report – Alanna Leffley and Christine MacGregor

Kim Wingrove introduced Alanna and Christine from Community Foundations.

Alanna provided an overview of past reports that were released, all of which are available on their website. On May 12th, the report on the Vital Conversation on Housing was released. It discusses the broader issues currently experienced with housing and translates the data into easy-to-understand infographics. The report also highlights stories of innovation and resilience. It concludes with a focus on community projects that could directly address the housing crisis.

While the report was not provided to participants for environmental purposes, they were encouraged to access and review it on the Community Foundations website. Christine discussed how the housing crisis is now affecting everyone in all aspects of life. The report uses United Nations Sustainable Goals to help local efforts align to broader global priorities. These goals are as follows:

- *Affordability and Availability* – in 2021 annual average house price rose by approximately 35%. With growing housing costs, certain areas have become unaffordable
- *Equity* – the report addresses how certain demographics are disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis
- *Living Standards* – the United Way has identified that in March 2022, in order to afford \$1500 rent for a one-bedroom apartment, a household would need to earn an annual income of \$60,000. The location of affordable housing is also important because typically it is not found near required stores or services
- *Wellbeing* – this goal was identified as an intersectional subject, with below average wellbeing generally being reported in women under 35 who are living alone

Christine and Alanna were asked how many families are already homeless because of the housing crisis. While it is very difficult to capture those numbers, the Counties are keeping track and there are currently large wait lists for housing. Anne Marie Shaw further explained that a by-names list has been created. This allows any agency or hospital who identifies a homeless person to keep track of the individual and acquire

necessary information. Staff will then follow-up and keep in touch to provide necessary assistance. Right now, there are 142 people on the Grey County list and 80 in Bruce County. For anyone requiring assistance with a homeless individual, they are encouraged to call 211 who will be able to find shelter for them that night.

Christine and Alanna were also questioned about “under-the-radar homelessness” (i.e., a student who is sleeping on the couch in an aunt’s house). Again, these cases are very difficult to track but the report tried to capture these examples through various stories of these realities. The problem is that many people in these circumstances do not understand they are homeless, so further education is required.

When asked what an attainable housing rate would be, Alanna responded that spending more than 30% of a household wage on housing is considered precarious.

Roundtable

Ms. Wingrove opened the floor for roundtable discussions.

Councillor Dane Neilsen from Grey Highlands questioned how the County is planning to deal with the \$10/day childcare agreement. Councillor Neilsen is on the Board of Directors for a local daycare and acknowledged it is a very complicated system to implement on a short timeframe.

- Anne Marie Shaw, Grey County Community Services Director, responded that the County still has not received answers from the Province. County staff are currently meeting one-on-one with providers to provide any information that is available. The agreement includes many vague terms (i.e., reasonable) that must be further understood. Providers have until September to sign on to the agreement and at that time, parents should be provided with a 25% fee reduction, retroactive back to April. If a provider chooses not to sign on, they can still do so next year. By next year, a reduced rate of 50% should be implemented

Councillor Neilsen expressed frustration over the inability to increase fees when inflation is occurring. This is also coupled with the difficulty of finding staff.

- Kim Wingrove identified that the County is submitting an AMO delegation on this topic and to also advocate for fair wages for ECEs.

Southgate Mayor, John Woodbury, reported that his Township has started an Affordable Attainable Housing Committee that will report to Council. One of the ideas from this Committee was to start a South Grey Attainable Housing Corporation, which would include staff members and a board of directors with expertise on the topic. Southgate will be looking to his neighbours to help implement this.

Councillor Woodbury also identified fibre concerns, specifically that some of the townships in the southern portion have been designated wireless. With the growth and businesses in Southgate, the concern is that wireless will not be sustainable.

- Mayor Soever from the Town of The Blue Mountains expressed this is an ongoing issue. Kim Wingrove suggested that success will come from supporting and helping each other.

Grey Highlands Mayor Paul McQueen discussed transportation concerns and recent discussions that have occurred. COVID has brought many people to Grey County and further exacerbated problems on the roads.

- Grey County Transportation Services Director, Pat Hoy, spoke about a bus tour that occurred over the past two days that included both Southwestern and Central Region MTO Directors. This is the first time this has been done. A commitment to scheduling regular meetings was agreed upon and further ideas were discussed.
- Kim Wingrove thanked Blue Mountains CAO Shawn Everitt for his work in coordinating these conversations.

Adjournment

Kim Wingrove thanked everyone for attending and acknowledged how wonderful it was to meet in-person. Further, she commended the work that every elected official has completed over the past four years despite it being a very different term than what was expected. The commitment and dedication has been outstanding, and there is much great work ahead.

Adjourned at 7:38pm.