

Southwold Economic Development Committee

Southwold Economic Development Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, March 7, 2018
8:30 a.m., Council Chambers, Fingal

PRESENT: Voting Members: Chair, Deputy Mayor, Ian Chard
Councillor Peter North (8:30-9:55)
Steve Bushell
Jack VanderKooy
Jim Carder
Barry Harrison

Non-Voting Members: Jessica Debackere, Elgin County
Alan Smith, Elgin County (8:30-9:25)
Jeff Sheridan, Elgin Business Resource Centre

Staff Resource: Kim Grogan, Treasurer
Lisa Higgs, CAO (8:30-9:55)

ABSENT: Voting Members: Chris Meyer
Ernst Hoffsuemmer
Valerie Cron

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

2. Introduction of new Elgin County Economic Development Committee Representative

Ian introduced Jessica Debackere from Elgin County Economic Development who is assuming Kate Burns role for a year. Ian introduced Alan Smith, General Manager of Economic Development at Elgin County.

3. Confirmation of Agenda

4. Approval of minutes from January 31, 2018 meeting

Moved by Jack - Seconded by Barry: Minutes from the meeting of January 31, 2018 were reviewed and approved.

CARRIED.

5. Business arising from those minutes.

a) Lisa discussed Council's acceptance of the Shedden Property report and recommendation of this Committee. Direction of Council is to retain and remove from surplus land inventory. Council will determine the future status of municipally owned properties when the Environmental Assessment in Shedden and Fingal settlement areas is completed.

Lisa provided an update on the sale of the available lots on the recently acquired Teetzel and Stoss properties. All lots on the former Teetzel property have been sold. We have received a verbal offer for the last remaining lot on Stoss property. Lisa provided details of the current Environmental Assessment and the related timeline and noted that there is availability in the Official Plan for future growth on both properties.

Lisa provided an update from the public meeting regarding the Strategic Plan update. The meeting was attended by 45-50 residents. Public input included need for fiber internet, municipal services to villages, senior services and transportation. Moving forward, the plan will be summarized in March, an action plan will be recirculated to committees of Council in April, after input, the plan will return to Council in May as a formalized document for finalization and the finalized plan will be presented to the public at Rosy Rhubarb. The Township is still accepting comments.

- b) Jessica provided an overview of the Market Threshold Analysis and Resident Survey report and advised that Kate will be coming to Council on March 12 to present a detailed analysis. The document compares the survey completed in 2017 to the market threshold analysis of the province and neighboring communities by sectors. The report summary details opportunities within Southwold including gas stations, health and personal care, grocery, real estate, legal and professional services and seasonal accommodation services. Once presented to Council, next steps will be discussed at the next EDC meeting. Ian discussed the transition from our sustainability plan to a strategic plan. The Committee discussed the potential impact of the threshold analysis results given anticipated growth. The Committee was asked to review the document and provide comments. Jeff offered to contact Mike at the Country Grocer as a test case for spending habits/migration travel patterns of population growth and the impact on sales of pizza in Shedden. This analysis would allow measurement of results that could be used in future discussions to attract businesses.
- c) Jessica and Alan discussed the County's alternative accommodation strategy including accommodation other than typical hotel or motel accommodation. Alan provided that alternatives would include the following accommodation experiences: yurts, on farm accommodation, guest houses, B&Bs, bunk house conversions, treehouses, trailer parks, etc. Often, City residents are looking to experience rural activities which presents potential for tourism. Peter discussed the possibility of transient trailer accommodation options in Shedden. Ian discussed overnight primitive camping options in Fingal. Jessica and Alan provided details of the collaboration with Norfolk and Haldimand Counties on a County wide alternative accommodation strategy. MDB created a draft handbook and the County is working toward finalizing. Handbook looked at "What is Alternative Accommodation?", "How to get started?", "How to make it happen?", "What are regulatory requirements?" The County is focusing on how interested businesses can get started and provision of a package identifying the steps involved. The Counties then partnered with Fanshawe College to further develop the strategy. The County met with 10 businesses to discuss interest and selected Wildflowers Farms and Great Lakes Farms as case studies of Elgin businesses looking to expand into alternative accommodation. Fanshawe created a draft tool-kit that Jessica will distribute to the Committee. Committee members are cautioned that the report is in draft form and should not be made public at this time. Implementation of the strategy will be more difficult in Elgin County given 7 lower-tiers. The Committee discussed the need to eliminate the red tape and barriers included in regulations that impede alternative accommodation. Lisa commented that the restrictions that exist in our Zoning By-law and Official Plan (OP) could be reviewed during the OP review which includes consultation with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). The local Conservation Authority also plays a role in regulatory restrictions. Alan and Jessica provided examples outside of Elgin that provide alternative accommodation and advised that the County has met with all lower-tier planners to discuss options. Jessica noted that demand for

alternative accommodation exists in Southwold as we host many events and there is a demand to share the rural experience. Alan spoke about Cruise the Coast and other cycling and hiking event opportunities. The Committee questioned how Haldimand County had accomplished this? Lisa indicated that she would review the PPS, OP and zoning by-law and provide details of the current regulations to the committee at the next EDC meeting and provided that existing accommodation businesses should be considered in any future revision discussions. Lisa to report back at next meeting on current situation. Jessica will also provide details of how alternative accommodation is approached in Counties who provide existing alternative accommodation options.

- d) Ian reviewed draft version of the marketing brochure with the Committee and identified differences between the brochure and community guide. The brochure will be ready for distribution at the St Thomas Home Show. The Committee provided comments on the new pop up marketing material with branding and map to be used at Township events and marketing activities. The Committee suggested that the logo in the bottom left hand corner of the map be replaced by a small circle map indicating Southwold's location in Southwestern Ontario on subsequent versions of marketing materials.
- e) Jeff indicated that he will confirm a date for the last week of September or the first week of October, a Tuesday or Wednesday for a joint Elgin Business Resource Centre, Southwold Economic Development Committee and Elgin County marketing seminar/meeting with guest speakers.
- f) The Committee discussed staffing for the Home Show on March 24, 25 and 26. Ian and Josie will attend, Jeff-Friday night, Steve-Friday night, Barry-Friday night if needed. Jim-Saturday and Sunday. Additional staffing from Brenda Longhurst and Pat Temple from History Committee. Ian will coordinate with members and staff.

6. New Business

Kim presented the 2018 Budget to the Committee and responded to questions.

7. Other Business

- The next meeting will be held April 11, 2018 at 8:30 am at the Municipal Office.

Moved Jim- Seconded Barry: Meeting adjournment at 10:15 a.m.

CARRIED.