



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES **Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

The Committee met at 9:00 am in the Sutton Room, 55 Zina Street, Orangeville

Members Present: **Chair Darren White, Warden**
Joe Andrews, Dufferin Board of Trade
Jane Aultman, Dufferin Board of Trade
Guy Gardhouse, East Garafraxa
Michele Harris, Headwaters Tourism (via Teleconference)
Gail Little, Dufferin Federation of Agriculture
Keith Lowry, Township of Mulmur
MaryAnn Lowry, Mulmur Economic Development Task Force
Bob Mitchell, Dufferin Arts Council
Diana Morris, Dufferin Board of Trade
Mark Ostrowski, Amaranth Economic Development Committee
Ruth Phillips, Town of Orangeville
Pete Renshaw, Orangeville Economic Development Committee
David Reimer, Grand Valley Economic Development Committee
John Telfer, Town of Shelburne
Nancy Tuckett, Town of Orangeville

County Staff: Sonya Pritchard, Chief Administrative Officer

Others Present: Gerry Hurst, OMAFRA

Consulting Team: **Global Investment Attraction Group**
John Tennant
Kelly O'Brien
Bill Elliot

Chair White called the meeting to order at 9:05 pm.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Members of the committee introduced themselves and identified which organization they represent.

2. CONSULTING TEAM OVERVIEW

John Tennant introduced the members of the Global Investment Attraction Group team and provided an overview of their backgrounds and experience.

3. REVIEW OF PROJECT TIMELINES

The consulting team reviewed the detailed project schedule (attached) with the committee.

There was considerable discussion with respect to stakeholder and public consultation and the importance of this phase of the project. Questions and comments focused on the purpose, method, content and expected use of the survey. The committee requested that written surveys in addition to online surveys be included and that the response period be longer than proposed. Members also recommended that care be taken to ensure all areas of the community are represented.

4. UPDATES ON LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Members provided updates as follows:

Municipal/ED Committee Updates

Melancthon – Economic development activity is limited and will remain so with no serviced land, little supporting infrastructure and few properties zoned industrial or commercial. Agriculture is the most important sector and some increases in secondary farming businesses through Mennonite community have occurred. The municipality is supportive of increased economic activity throughout the county with a primary interest in protecting farmland. They are working on their first Strategic Plan.

Mulmur – A community of communities. Residents have indicated they are not interested in gravel pits, windfarms or large industrial development. There is industrial and commercial zoned land in Primrose but Mulmur has the lowest percentage of tax assessment from these classes of all Dufferin municipalities. The Economic Development Task Force identified a desire to focus on cultural, tourism and outdoor recreation, agricultural ie farmgate sales. Most business is SME. Ski Hill and Mansfield Outdoor centre are biggest employers.

Orangeville – Implemented a diversified approach to business attraction and BR&E. Focus on advanced manufacturing, professional services, creative industries. Plastics cluster and food processing more recently. Food sector has good potential. Services through Small Business Enterprise Centre to stimulate entrepreneurship throughout the region. Tourism Plan and Cultural plan in place that include marketing and advertising campaigns. There is a Visitor information Centre. Updated land needs study finds designation is adequate to build out for both residential and industrial and commercial. Significant commuting population. There is pressure to re-designate employment lands to residential. This will impact the population to employment ration of 2:1. Workforce development is a priority to ensure available jobs and applicant skills match.

Amaranth – Economic Development and sustainability Committee in place for 10 years. A plan was done in 2011 and includes inventory of resources and SWOT. A fairly small industrial and commercial base exists. Identifies opportunities for sharing information and resources. They hold an economic development breakfast with an agriculture focused. They try to be open-minded to identifying local projects. Waiting for County work to move forward before doing any additional work. Employment land is at SE corner. Industry located there is privately-serviced. Large number of successful small businesses.

East Garafraxa – no formal economic development. Some land designated for employment in eastern part of township but there is no serviced land. Council is willing to look at opportunities as they come. Primary industry is agriculture and some secondary businesses. Many residents are commuters. Residents are not looking for development or many additional services. Happy to provide amenities through partnership agreements. Supportive of growth in urban centres of the County.

Grand Valley – Economic Development Strategic Plan developed 2 years ago. 7 sub-committees were formed and 4 have completed research and reports. Recommendations have gone to Council. Communications is most advanced. Community Centre, marquee events, senior care facility are the other focus areas. Anxious to see commercial employment in the community. They have a short term goal to gain 50 plus employees. The long-term objective is to develop a business park – 100 acres close to CR109. List of employment land contacts requires updating..

Shelburne – Has found that for investment to occur there needs to be servicing and funds available. There is a need to spend money to attract business. Official Plan work needs to be done in conjunction with economic development work. Currently two large developments and lots of opportunity in the industrial park. New diverse community is bringing new entrepreneurial ventures. KTH is largest employer in community. The Economic Development Committee is very active. Recently hired an ED Coordinator who is to focus on marketing. Working to get to population of 10,000. Two main considerations – traffic (Shelburne bypass), new diversity has been difficult but it is creating strength (cultural, arts, home based business). More service oriented focus for downtown. BIA is another area of interest.

Mono – not interested in extensive development but there is support for commercial sector growth along the highways. The community puts heavy importance on environmental preservation. There is support for the equine industry and creative home based businesses. Some agriculture including a winery. Mono provides a recreational environment and quiet residential area.

Sector Updates

Agriculture – Number of farmers is a small portion of total population but 4th largest sector of employment. The sector should have a higher profile and better focus. Agriculture properties are very diverse in size, needs, and operations. It is important to seek input from different types of farming operations. The Dufferin Federation of Agriculture (DFA) is very concerned about loss of farmland. A large portion of County is

farmable. A lot of land that was previously considered non-agricultural is now being farmed. Agriculture is growing industry. Increased traffic on regional roads impacts farming operations. How do we involve farmers in the process? Limited access to internet. Need to reach out to farm communities. DFA is willing to help with this.

Board of trade – Acts as representative of business. The Board has recently completed a strategic planning process and is in the process of implementing the recommendations. They are taking an advocacy role. Issues are access to skilled workforce, lack of high-speed internet, cost and access to utilities i.e. natural gas.

Tourism – Headwaters supports cross regional tourism with an inventory of 1000 tourism related businesses across the area. Provincial statistics show 400,000 visitors a year. The vision is to be the premier rural tourism destination. Integrating tourism into partners' economic development strategies. The focus is on creating a sense of place. They deal with the consumer audience focusing on marketing and promotion. They do business to business work as well – capacity-building, support. Tourism is a value added portion of many businesses. Five sectors – arts& culture, fresh and local, fun and festive, horse and country, nature and leisure, arts and heritage. Limited resources means leveraging work of others and partners; and taking advantage of innovation. Power of collaboration.

Arts and Culture – Represented by the Dufferin Arts Council (DAC) who developed a strategic plan a year ago and is currently working to create an action plan. DAC is trying to take on more of a leadership role within the arts industry. Support the arts through programs to raise awareness about arts – artist in the schools program, endowment fund to support arts education. Roundtable of art associations. Goal - Headwaters a destination for the arts.

Post secondary – Currently doing research on what programs should be provided to promote local economic development.

Role of Steering Committee

Chair White commented on the importance of the work of the committee emphasizing that each members' contribution would be valuable in working together to ensure success. There was agreement that there is a general sense of optimism and strong willingness to cooperate. The committee agreed to move forward with the motto:

“Together We Win”

There is agreement that there should be a sense of urgency about the work and a need to build the case for change. The committee supports a proactive approach and promoting, “progress not perfection.”

The role of the committee in the Strategic Planning process is detailed in the Draft Terms of Reference (attached). In summary, the committee will provide input and feedback, distribute information, participate in the consultation process, and be Champions of the project.

Committee Communications

A committee online portal will be set up to share documents, schedule events, and allow on-line collaboration and review of reports.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Wednesday, March 8, 2017
9 am to 12 pm
Sutton Room

Thursday, May 4, 2017
9 am to 12 pm
Sutton Room