

Deep River Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2015 - 7:00 PM

Present: Joan Lougheed
Mary MacCafferty (Chair)
John Walden
Ken Philipose
Uditha Senaratne
Kent Fitzhugh (OMAFRA) (Guest)
Phil Simpson (Guest)
Michael Stephens (Guest)
Jim Ungrin (Guest)
Alan Carmichael (Guest)

1. Presentation by Kent Fitzhugh of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs re: The First Impressions Program

Kent ran through a PowerPoint presentation on this program where two communities of similar size are paired up. Citizens from each community visit the other community and give their impressions of the community. The exercise is based on a comprehensive list of questions tailored for the type of information the host community requests. A report is done based on what people experienced during their visit. Typically 7-10 people participate per community. It allows communities to see themselves through the eyes of visitors from elsewhere and help them establish strategic priorities. This is a very low cost exercise and can deliver great value.

After the completion of Kent's presentation - the guests left the meeting. Mayor Lougheed and regular committee members remained for a regular Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting.

2. Agenda Approval

Visitor's Directory and First Impressions were added to the agenda and the agenda was approved as revised.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There was no disclosure of pecuniary interest by anyone.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 9th meeting were approved as presented.

5. Terms of Reference

The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference. There are no outstanding issues or concerns.

6. Summary of Next Steps

Mary presented the concept of a Deep River Welcome Mat as a way of overcoming the perception that we are not a welcoming community. The welcome mat concept would cover all sectors, including potential investors, visitors, potential residents and others. Mary stressed that it is not the job of any one group to make people welcome, but it is everyone's job. Every resident is an ambassador for the community.

Ken raised the issue of the need for more accommodation facilities. He agreed to put some questions together for current hotel owners so that we can get some data on occupancy rates and need for additional facilities. The committee will review the questions at the next meeting.

7. Review the results of the town's recent strategic planning effort.

The committee looked at some highlights of Deep River's recently developed strategic plan document. It was noted that "Investment in Economic Development" is one of "4 Key Areas" for Council.

8. Job Fair/ Home Based Business Show

It was noted that there are many home-based businesses in Deep River, and that it may be overdue to give these businesses an opportunity to showcase their products and services through a trade fair. The idea of including a job fair and working with the Petawawa Family Resource Center was discussed. John agreed to talk to PMFRC and the Women in Business Network. Mary and John will work on developing a plan to be discussed at the next meeting.

9. First Impressions

Committee members were unanimous in their support of this program and the Committee intends to move forward with it. A report to Council will follow so that Council members are well informed and have an opportunity for input.

10. Visitor's Directory

John presented a Visitor's Directory that features a street map of Deep River and asked for the committee's input given the ready availability of GPS technology. It was agreed to wait until after First Impressions is done before deciding to move forward with a directory or not.

11. Next Meeting Date - May 27th - 7:00 PM Town Hall

12. Meeting Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: John Walden

Seconded: Uditha Senaratne