

Report to Council

Report Title: Community Development Coordinator Update

Prepared By: Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator

Department: Economic Development

Date: August 11, 2020

Report Number: ED2020-08 **File Number:** C11ED, P03

Attachments:

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number ED2020-08 - Community Development Coordinator Update, prepared by Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator, for information purposes.

Report:

Background:

The Community Development Coordinator files regular updates to Council about community and economic development. The past six months have been exceptional with the COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency affecting virtually all businesses in Brockton, as well as our own municipal operations. As a result, we have realigned our strategic priorities and budget for 2020, with economic recovery our main focus.

Brockton staff conducted a survey of Brockton businesses in March as illustrated in Report Number ED2020-03 - COVID-19 Business Survey, which was presented to Council on April 28, 2020, and actively participated in the Bruce County Economic Recovery Task Force, which met weekly until late July.

Together, these formed the backbone of our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan for Brockton, which was approved by our Economic Development Committee.

Analysis:

We have taken the following measures to help offset the financial impact of COVID-19 on our businesses:

- Waived penalties and interest for late payment of municipal taxes to June 30, 2020
- Issued 11 business updates focused on COVID-19 relief through the [Brockton Business e-Newsletter](#), highlighting funding opportunities and assistance, webinars, re-opening procedures, COVID-19

legislation, community champions, and more and connected personally to assist with applications as required.

- Promoted local businesses through the Brockton [Stay Home Shop Local](#) webpage, and through the [Grey Bruce Huron Strong App](#).
- Created a [COVID-19 Updates](#) webpage and a [Business Recovery and Support](#) COVID-19 resource webpage for businesses on the Brockton website.
- Issued regular video updates from the Mayor and made virtual Council and committee meetings accessible through Zoom
- Created and distributed an Economic Recovery Package for Brockton businesses which included custom Open for Business posters, information about grants, loans and government programs, sector-specific COVID-19 guidelines, municipal support programs, and order forms for #InItTogether Brockton flags, masks, and floor decals to promote physical distancing. The business response has been positive and the collaborative look is pleasing.
- Contributed to the Bruce County Economic Task Force, which met weekly until the end of July, 2020 and created several innovative support programs. The uptake by Brockton businesses was very positive, with over \$170,000 accessed locally through grants and loans. A quick summary:
 - 16 Walkerton organizations applied for Spruce the Bruce grants and 9 were approved. (A maximum of \$30,000 was allotted for each municipality- funds were maximized).
 - 6 local businesses applied for and received low-interest Support the Bruce loans, worth a total of \$95,000.
 - 12 Brockton businesses applied for Pivot/COVID-19 Adaptation grants and 7 were approved, receiving \$37,700.
 - 1 business received a Tourism Innovation Lab grant, valued at \$10,000.
 - The Business Safety Supplies grant program is still open, and available on a first-come, first-served basis. It is expected to close very soon.
- Implemented the Sidewalk Patio Guidelines Policy to permit restaurants to create new outdoor spaces for patrons, in accordance with Stage 2 of the province's re-opening plan and worked with businesses on patio expansions on private property and funding opportunities.
- Opened the former Wong property (now Durham Street Park) to serve downtown businesses and offer shoppers a space to eat and relax while following COVID-19 guidelines from the Ministry of Health. The space includes 6 picnic tables with umbrellas, a handwashing station and portable toilets. Local businesses have said they appreciate the space and it even serves as a good outdoor meeting space that has been utilized by staff when meeting with business owners.
- Hosted a business webinar with MPP Lisa Thompson and guest, MPP Prabmeet Singh, associate minister of small business, focused on COVID-19 recovery.
- Met with Saugeen Airport restaurant and board representative regarding re-opening of the Tilted Wing Restaurant

- Worked with the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority to support summer operations in Cargill (Visitor Centre, BBQ stand, and Margaret's Mercantile) while ensuring COVID-19 protocols are followed. They have served close to 150 people in the past two months.

Beyond COVID-19, we are getting set to launch a new social media campaign, Connect Brockton, working in collaboration with the BIA to promote outdoor recreational activities, shopping and dining to both locals and visitors from nearby communities. Weekly prizes will include Brockton swag and Walkerton dollars. The six-week campaign is set to launch the week of August 10, 2020.

We continue to receive inquiries about available land and business opportunities in Brockton. In recent months we have seen sales in the East Ride Business Park, the former Energizer plant leased, TK's Deli building sold, the Guest House move to a new location across the street (and a café soon to open on the premises), the All Natural Soap Company moving to the former Guest House space, a new tenant moving into the All Natural Soap Company space, Fork 'n Good Food closed, and the owners of both TK's Deli and Owen King Contracting retiring after many years in business.

We are completing the Walkerton downtown banner and South Industrial Sign projects. We continue to support local organizations, residents, and business owners on a daily basis in a collaborate way. We will be moving our focus to more long-term strategies and suggested policy changes related to the Community Improvement Plan and business supports that will enhance long-term growth opportunities.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

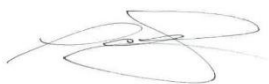
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| • Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? | N/A |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?
N/A

There are no financial requests included in this report.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paulette Peirol".

Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator

Reviewed By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sonya Watson".

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer