



**Brockton Economic Development Committee
Draft Minutes
Monday, September 21, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting
12 pm**

Voting Members

Dan Gieruszak – Chairman	Present
Mayor Chris Peabody – Ex Officio	Absent
Dean Leifso – Councillor	Present.
Kym Hutcheon – Councillor	Present
Lindsay Hill - Business Improvement Area	Present
Jessie Bates – Business Improvement Area	Present
Carl Kuhnke – Institutional Representative	Present
Mike Dupuis – Agriculture Representative	Present
Matt Rapke – Public Member	Present

Non-Voting Members

Sonya Watson – CAO/Clerk	Present
Paulette Peirol – Community Development Coordinator/Sec.	Present

Advisory Members

Rose Austin – Saugeen Economic Development Corporation	Present
Tina Rupert – VPI Working Solutions	Absent

Others Present

1. Call to Order/Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm

2. Acceptance of the Agenda

Moved by C Kuhnke, Seconded by K. Hutcheon

To accept the Sept. 21, 2020 Brockton Economic Development Committee Agenda as presented.
CARRIED

3. Disclosure of pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof.

None

4. Delegations

None

5. Passing of Minutes

5.1 Brockton Economic Development Committee Minutes, June 15, 2020

Moved by M. Dupuis, Seconded by C. Kuhnke

To accept the June 15, 2020 Brockton Economic Development Committee minutes as presented.

5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

None

6. Business Items

6.1 Walkerton Legacy Fund – Update

P. Peirol updated the committee on the status of the fund, including an additional \$2,500 donated by the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, to bring the total capital in the fund to \$11,500. The fund will be able to name its first recipient in 2021, on the anniversary of the e-coli water tragedy in Walkerton, and offer a \$1,000 grant for them to study environmental issues and clean water management. The fund is administered by Community Foundation Grey Bruce, with members of Brockton staff and the WCWC on the granting committee.

C. Kuhnke said the WCWC would be willing to donate \$1,000 per year to the Legacy Fund, and D. Gieruszak said he would like Brockton to do the same. Committee members suggested that the CDC approach potential corporate donors, to build up the fund's capital.

6.2 2020 Façade Improvement Grants

P. Peirol said the façade committee has awarded \$4,790 to Walkerton businesses for signage and façade improvements worth over \$26,000. Recipients include Rory Chappelle, Skin City Ink, the Walkerton Technology Centre, Amazing Assets, and Bombshell Spa (pending an encroachment agreement for a perpendicular sign overhanging the sidewalk).

6.3 Community Improvement Plan – Points for Consideration

P. Peirol presented an overview of Brockton's current CIP, amendments to CIPs in other municipalities, and points for consideration regarding updates to our own, particularly expanding the geographic area and offering tax incentives to developers to remain competitive.

A copy of the presentation is attached.

D. Gieruszak asked about timing and consultation with stakeholders such as the BIA. Inclusion of agricultural incentives for projects such as farm-gates was also discussed.

M. Rapke asked whether the CIP should focus on urban areas such as downtown Walkerton or include hamlets, villages or the entire municipality.

S. Watson noted that tax relief on the incremental increase in the value of properties approved for CIP projects is a way for the municipality to encourage development of vacant land or older buildings without a financial outlay.

The CDC will follow up with a report to Council.

6.4 Covid-19 Economic Recovery in Brockton

P. Peirol updated the committee about the All In Ontario Challenge launched by Bruce Power, which Applus and Brockton's mayor are involved in, raising money for local charities through an online auction. Over \$3,000 worth of goods and services from Walkerton-area businesses were purchased by Applus for the auction, and Mayor Chris Peabody added \$200 Walkerton dollars. Details are available at <https://www.gbhstrong.com/all-in-ontario-challenge>.

Eighteen businesses in Brockton received money through the Bruce Sustainability Fund, designed to help business owners adapt to the pandemic. Total grants and loans supported by the fund in Brockton: \$230,015.

Spruce the Bruce - \$30,000

Support the Bruce Loan - \$115,000

Tourism Innovation Lab - \$10,000

Business Safety Supplies Grant - \$37,315

Business Pivot and Adaptation Grant - \$37,700.

Several new businesses have opened during the pandemic, or have plans to open, in downtown Walkerton, including a new café (La Dels), tattoo parlour (Skin City Tattoo), an Italian Restaurant (Ti Amo), a fish and aquarium supplies shop, a cannabis retail store, and a wellness store. The All Natural Soap Company has expanded and moved to a new location on Durham Street, formerly occupied by The Guest House.

The municipality ran a fall campaign, #CaptureBrockton, with the Walkerton BIA, designed to attract people to the area to explore outdoor activities during COVID-19, such as golf, fishing, paddling the Saugeen River, and visiting the Greenock Swamp and Cargill. Local businesses were highlighted, such as golf courses and shops offering boat rentals, and the public was asked to submit photos of their favourite activities in Brockton. Weekly prizes included Walkerton dollars and Brockton swag.

6.5 Airport Update

D. Gieruszak said the Saugeen Municipal Airport commission plans to create a new strategic plan, which could include using some of the airport lands for housing, with optional hangars. He noted that municipal airports in London and Sarnia have closed, while the Goderich airport is looking to expand.

7. Reports

7.1 BIA Report – Lindsay Hill/Jessie Bates

The BIA has a new president, Jessie Bates, and vice-president, Richard Popiez. It recently decorated the Durham Street Park for fall and is planning a Hometown Christmas Market there, with outdoor vendors. A new website is being created, along with a shop local campaign for fall. Staff also created videos for local businesses with COVID-19 messages, and partnered with the Municipality on the #CaptureBrockton fall online promotion.

7.2 Community Development Coordinator Report – Paulette Peirol

See 6.4. The CDC also noted that the former Energizer plant has been leased, and that the owner is applying for a zoning amendment to permit marijuana growing. There is continued interest in vacant land in Brockton, and a 3-acre parcel has recently come on the market in the East Ridge Business Park, being sold privately.

Tourism activities in Cargill have wrapped up, with the group posting a banner year despite COVID-19, with more than 800 people recorded at the Visitor Centre and gross sales of over \$18,000 at

Margaret's Mercantile, an artisan's co-op featuring local work. Greenock Swamp tours were suspended this year due to the pandemic.

The CDC has been working with the BIA on fall and Christmas initiatives, and with Saugeen Connects on an immigration and newcomer attraction project.

New downtown banners are up in Walkerton, and a heritage mural project is under way with the Heritage Committee. Brockton's Community Improvement Committee has been disbanded.

7.3 Saugeen Economic Development Corporation Report – Rose Austin

R. Austin updated members about COVID-19 assistance programs that the SEDC has been involved with, such as the RRRF (Rural Recovery and Relief Fund) program, the Bruce Sustainability loan program, a PPE funding program, and a new program for tourism businesses in Bruce County. She said that through the RRRF, almost \$30-million in loans was approved, benefitting 996 companies and protecting over 3,000 jobs in Southern Ontario.

The Bruce Sustainability Program granted \$170,000 to 10 businesses within the SEDC catchment area – seven of them in Brockton.

Thirty-three Brockton businesses received PPE assistance of up to \$1,500 each. Eleven were main street businesses, 12 were tourism businesses, and 15 were operated by women.

The new tourism funding offers eligible businesses up to \$10,000 to adapt to COVID-19, with the business paying 20% of the cost.

8. New Business

None

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

**Next meeting: Monday, October 19, 2020
Virtual meeting, Zoom platform**

Brockton CIP Update

Points for Consideration by Brockton's Economic Development Committee

Community Improvement Plans

Governed under Section 28 of the Planning Act, a CIP designates an area within a municipality for improvement, and permits a municipality to offer incentives to the private sector to achieve strategic objectives.

Incentives can include grants, loans, waiving fees or charges, or reducing taxes on the incremental increase in the assessed value of a property.

Brockton's CIP

Brockton adopted its own CIP in 2014, designating Historic Walkerton as the project improvement area. It excludes businesses and industry outside the downtown east-west corridor of Walkerton, as well as in hamlets and villages.

Brockton's CIP offers the following programs:

1. Commercial Building Façade Improvement Program
2. Commercial Building Sign Improvement Program
2. Building Restoration and Accessibility Enhancements (including rehabilitating existing apartments or building new ones, upgrading buildings to code, improving energy-efficiency and improving accessibility)
3. Community Energy Efficiency (new green buildings, retrofits, and use of alternative energy sources)
4. Streetscape Beautification, Signage & Landscaping improvements
5. Public Space, Parks and Recreation Works

The first 4 categories are designed to stimulate private sector investment through municipal incentive-based programs. The last two are municipally driven programs.

Bruce County Incentives:

Bruce County currently offers the following programs to businesses within our CIP area.

- Destination Infrastructure
- Streetscape beautification
- Community Signage
- Façade Improvement and Patios
- Perpendicular Signage and Awnings
- Business Start-up Grants (Summer Company and Starter Company Plus)
- Tourism Innovation Lab (Until this year, the Tourism Innovation grant was only for businesses on the Bruce Peninsula. This year it was expanded to all municipalities)

Incentives Available through Brockton's CIP

Our CIP includes the following incentives.

Implementation is at the sole discretion of Council and is dependent on the availability of Municipal funding.

1. Grant Program (covering 50% of eligible costs up to \$10,000)
2. Loan Program (up to 33% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, interest-free)
3. Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Program (provides tax assistance equal to all or a portion of the municipal property tax increase following completion of an approved project. May be up to 100% of the tax increment in the first year, decreasing by 10% a year, up to year 5)

What does Brockton currently offer?

The Municipality currently offers grants for façade improvement projects and signage improvements. In each of the past two years, \$10,000 has been allotted to this, with applicants receiving a maximum of \$1,500 for each project.

No money has been allocated to building restoration, rehabilitating existing apartments, building new apartments, accessibility enhancements, or energy efficiency measures.

We do not have a tax increment equivalent grant (TIEG) in place.

Note that the TIEG program does not require any direct funding; it is commonly used to encourage the private sector to develop brownfields, vacant land or derelict properties, thereby increasing the Municipality's property tax base.

While it may seem like we are “losing” tax revenue, it's important to remember with a TIEG program this is an increase in our assessment base that would not have happened without the incentive.

What is being offered elsewhere?

Here are some of the incentive programs that have been adopted or considered by neighbouring municipalities in Grey-Bruce:

- Façade, Signage and Property Improvement
- Tax Increment Equivalent Grant
- Heritage Property Tax Relief
- Study & Design Grant
- Surplus Land Grant
- Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant
- Exemption from Permit or Application Fees
- Exemption from Development charges
- Housing rehabilitation or conversion grant
- Vacant Building Conversion/Expansion grant
- Destination Infrastructure Grant
- Brownfield tax assistance

What are our priority areas?

Priority areas for development generally fall into the categories below:

- **Residential:** To increase attainable housing stock, including secondary suites, multi-unit housing, rooming house developments, purpose built rental housing, and apartment dormitory style developments.
- **Agricultural:** To increase agricultural value, agri-tourism, or facility improvements
- **Vacant/Brownfield:** To promote the development, redevelopment and/or conversion of brownfield, and vacant properties
- **Downtown:** Downtown revitalization of store fronts, publicly used frontages, and streetscapes; reduction of vacant storefronts and increased residential capacity.
- **Commercial:** Adaptive re-use of commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, support development of new commercial uses.

Points for Consideration – Brockton

- A robust CIP and incentives for development give a municipality a competitive edge when investors and entrepreneurs are scoping out opportunities. Many neighbouring municipalities are amending their CIPs, including: Hanover, Huron-Kinloss, South Bruce (Mildmay, Teeswater), Saugeen Shores, West Grey and Owen Sound.

Recommendations:

- - Expand CIP to include all of Brockton. Preference can be given to certain areas for specific grant programs
- - Zero in on key priorities for development (not all have to be funded each year)
- - Set targets and allocate funding
- - Consider partnering and coordinating grant programs with Bruce County (eg: façade improvement, signage, interior structural renovations)
- - Market programs and assess each year