



**Brockton Economic Development Committee
Minutes
Monday, November 16, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting
12 pm**

Voting Members

Dan Gieruszek – Chair	Present
Mayor Chris Peabody – Ex Officio	Absent
Dean Leifso – Councillor	Present
Kym Hutcheon – Councillor	Present
Jessie Bates – Walkerton BIA	Absent.
Carl Kuhnke – Institutional Representative	Present
Mike Dupuis – Agriculture Representative	Present
Matt Rapke – Public Member	Present

Non-Voting Members

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

Advisory Members

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

Others Present

1. Call to Order/Attendance

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:00 pm.

2. Acceptance of the Agenda

Moved by K. Hutcheon, Seconded by M. Dupuis

That the agenda for the November 14, 2020 meeting of the Brockton Economic Development Committee be approved.

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, October 16, 2020

Moved by M. Dupuis, Seconded by C. Kuhnke

That the minutes of the October 16, 2020 EDC meeting be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

P. Peirol confirmed that Saugeen Connects will be a Gold Sponsor for Grey-Bruce Farmer's Week in January, gaining exposure in the brochure, online and during breaks during the conference. The cost will be \$1,000, to promote succession planning for agricultural businesses in Brockton, Hanover, West Grey, Wellington North and Minto.

6. Business Items

6.1 Covid-19 Roundtable

The Chair noted that Covid-19 cases are on the rise in our region, and asked for comment from committee members.

C. Kuhnke said schools may be closed in January, and if so the WCWC will continue to pay staff that must stay home to care for children.

There were concerns voiced that Covid-19 will worsen over the holidays if social distancing isn't maintained.

K. Hutcheon said it's a concern among Walkerton businesses and the BIA as well. Online shopping and curbside pick-ups are being encouraged, and businesses are better prepared for the second wave of Covid-19 than they were for the first.

R. Austin said initially, businesses were looking at 20% to 60% drops in revenue, particularly in tourism (March-June). Later, business picked up and some retailers and tourism operators did better than ever during the summer months, benefitting from an increase in people shopping local.

The recent Hometown Holiday Market was very successful in attracting shoppers to downtown Walkerton, with Covid-19 precautions in place. One committee member felt it was too crowded; another suggested booths on main street as well as in the park.

D. Leifso noted restaurants and tourism operators were hard hit. Lawyers were busy from May onward with real estate in particular, with a large number of buyers from the GTA, Kitchener and Guelph areas. Waterfront properties and cottages were "snapped up" as prices rose considerably. Contractors initially struggled to get supplies in, but supply chains later improved.

C Kuhnke said he's seeing traffic from out of town in the Brant subdivision, and three new families have moved in during the past week.

With more people working from home indefinitely, many are considering moving from larger and more expensive areas to here.

T. Rupert said the labour market is strong and VPI is busy supporting people already employed and looking for new jobs. Canada-Ontario job grant is available to help employers looking to hire PSWs and be paid while attending school.

P. Peirol said Bruce County is conducting a survey of businesses affected by Covid-19, which closes Nov. 30th.

S. Watson said the Municipality is increasing its communications about Covid-19 to help decrease business and community fatigue, and will be placing information in grocery stores and other frequented areas.

K. Hutcheon asked if Brockton would apply for Bruce Power's \$50,000 grant program for events.

6.2 Walkerton Clean Water Legacy Fund – New Donors

The Rotary Club has committed a minimum of \$1,000 a year for 10 years to the legacy fund. C. Kuhnke suggested distributing a marketing piece about the fund through local grocery stores, printing it in-house. The fund is currently at \$17,500, not including the Rotary club commitment.

6.3 Downtown Growth – New Businesses

P. Peirol said several new businesses have opened in recent weeks, including The Technology Centre, Willow Home, Her Story, Aborvitae Holistic Apothecary and Fish Tales and Story Trails, an aquarium and book store.

6.4 East Ridge Business Park Update

S. Watson noted inquiries are continuing regarding business park lands, and the municipality is hoping to tender work on servicing the Phase 2 lands in February, 2021. D. Gieruszek said there is interest in land fronting on County Road 19.

6.5 Airport Update

The Chair said the SMA is hoping to lease land for hemp growing in the spring (for fiber, not cannabis or CBD).

6.6 Tourism

P. Peirol said the Cargill promotional committee is looking to incorporate as a non-profit group and is hoping for municipal assistance with signage, beautification, office equipment and the visitor information centre.

She said there is an opportunity to enhance the tourism website, which is managed by Tourist Town, through a new arrangement. This will cost approximately \$4,000 a year.

7. Reports

7.1 BIA Report

K. Hutcheon said the BIA is working on a new Strategic Plan, to be finalized in December, and is hoping to get some funding for beautification.

7.2 Community Development Coordinator Report – Paulette Peirol

The CDC offered updates on the following topics:

- Business webinar Dec 2 with Terry O'Reilly - Jumping the Fence.
- Municipality assisted with Hometown Christmas Market and parkette. Mayor Chris Peabody donated the Christmas Tree.
- Christmas lights up for season
- Heritage murals soon to be installed

7.3 Saugeen Economic Development Corporation Report – Rose Austin

SEDC to receive second round of RRRF funding, worth just over \$1-million, but not all will be set aside for business grants. Instead, SEDC will be hiring business consultants with various specialties (labour

force development, training, etc) to assist businesses at risk of closing, which she estimated to be 30 per cent.

Loans will also be offered of up to \$40,000, with 25 per cent forgivable if paid by March 2023.

R. Austin said most businesses are taking advantage of federal and provincial funding opportunities and don't want loans. Instead, they want guidance on what they should be doing to mitigate the economic effects of Covid-19.

The Chair asked if conferences or webinars would be offered.

R. Austin said Saugeen Connects was not supportive of this. A futurist would be expensive, she said.

8. New Business

S. Watson said Council is reviewing its committees of Council, with a public meeting planned for Monday, Nov. 23rd. Proposed changes include this committee, EDC, to meet every other month, with the option of subcommittees being formed.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1 pm.

Next meeting: Monday, December 14, 2020
Virtual meeting, Zoom platform