



Electronic Participation

The Corporation of the Town of Orangeville
Chair and Committee Secretary participated remotely

Minutes of an Electronic Meeting Of the Business and Economic Development Advisory Committee Held on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Please note that all attendees participated electronically.

Members Present

Councillor Joe Andrews, Chair

Pete Renshaw, Vice Chair

Buddy Pitt, Greater Dufferin Home Builders' Association Representative

Linda Horne, Orangeville Real Estate Board Representative

Diana Morris, Dufferin Board of Trade Representative

Regrets

Wendy Edwards, Public Member

Staff

Ruth Phillips, Staff Liaison, Economic Development & Culture

Betty Ann Lusk, Economic Development & Culture

1 Notice

Councillor Andrews advised that due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Board Room, 200 Lakeview Court is not available for the public to attend the Business and Economic Development Advisory Committee (BEDAC) meeting. However, steps have been taken to facilitate public viewing and access.

Councillor Andrews asked if public comments had been received by the recording secretary prior to the meeting. Betty Ann Lusk responded that none were received.

2 Call to Order

Councillor Andrews called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Councillor Andrews asked all committee members in attendance to identify themselves for the virtual meeting.

3 Disclosures of (Direct or Indirect) Pecuniary Interest

None.

4 Agenda

Recommendation 2020-001

Moved by Linda Horne.

That the agenda for the June 23, 2020 BEDAC meeting be approved.

Carried.

5 Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Recommendation 2020-002

Moved by Pete Renshaw.

That the minutes for the December 3, 2019 BEDAC meeting be approved.

Carried.

6 Activity Report

Councillor Andrews thanked BEDAC members and staff for their contributions to the community during COVID-19.

An activity report was circulated to members with their agenda packages. Ruth Phillips provided an update on activities for the period of January – May 2020 and highlighted steps taken to date to implement the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan now under development.

Ruth Phillips advised that due to the pandemic, the project had been re-worked to incorporate COVID-19 recovery strategies. Ruth Phillips welcomed BEDAC members to participate in the virtual townhall meeting on July 7 regarding the project. She said that the draft strategy is expected to be completed by year end.

7 Delegations and Presentation

Ruth Phillips provided an update on COVID-19 response, relaunch and recovery efforts by the division since March 19.

She highlighted the information sharing, guidance, and surveying completed in the initial stages of the pandemic. She advised of the relaunching initiatives of the office that included – among other things, a ‘buy local’ promotion, an “Ask the Expert” series hosted by Councillor Andrews, information and regulatory updates to businesses, establishment of a PPE database, and the introduction of a business resiliency map.

Ruth Phillips indicated goal to extend the role of BEDAC to assist with outreach and engagement of businesses over the coming months in an effort to gather more in-depth analysis of business recovery efforts and challenges.

She said that municipal practices and bylaws will be reviewed as required to quickly respond to the needs of business owners and cited the recent adaptations to the Town’s outdoor boulevard café by-law as one example of this. She advised that workforce planning and preparation for potential infrastructure stimulus projects could help to inform longer-term recovery efforts. Potential projects to stimulate local economic development potentially include the re-development of 82-90 Broadway, a central gathering plaza at Alexandra Park, completion of a Community Improvement Plan to support development related projects, and various tourism related initiatives that may come from the completion of the new strategy.

Linda Horne asked if there were new businesses coming to town. Ruth Phillips said the office uses annual data analysis from OMAFRA to accurately measure annual economic growth and explained that this information will be delayed this year since it is based on annual income tax returns. Ruth Phillips added that business retention and survival is the most significant concern currently.

Shokheen Singh commented that COVID-19 has hit the BIA merchants hard and that she would like to discuss the scope of the CIP proposal with ED staff. Ruth Phillips said that inclusion of the Downtown would be recommended for any CIP approved for creation by Council and that revitalization in other key community areas would also be good for the BIA. (Note: presentation was circulated to members following meeting by email on June 23/20).

8 Terms of Reference

Councillor Andrews said that Committees of Council should be reflective of changing times. He stated that the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference that members received in the agenda package would support the implementation of the Town's Covid-19 external recovery plan and initiatives of the Economic Development and Culture Office by:

- a) Providing information and education to community business members on resources and programs available through the Economic Development & Culture division to support and build business and tourism resiliency;
- b) Through member interactions with key community contacts and sector networks, identifying pandemic related challenges faced by businesses and recommending new initiatives to achieve economic recovery, sustenance and rejuvenation for businesses and workers.

Recommendation 2020-003

Moved by Shokheen Singh

That the revised BEDAC Terms of Reference, established to assist the pandemic recovery efforts of the Economic Development and Culture office, be approved by Council;

And that the revised Terms of Reference be effective July 2020 until the end of Council Term 2022.

Carried.

Councillor Andrews said that the Clerks division plan to review the Town by-laws and that bylaws affecting businesses would be communicated to BEDAC as information becomes available.

9 Other Business

Buddy Pitt, Home Builders Representative, described the challenges of adapting his business during the first two weeks of COVID. He indicated that home building activity has been robust but feared that 2021 will be tougher.

Linda Horne, Orangeville Real Estate Board Representative, said the market had been active in Orangeville. She advised that as there were fewer listings, prices have increased and that the average days on the market has decreased since March 2020. Linda Horne said there were very strict guidelines for showing properties since COVID and that only pre-authorized buyers were being granted viewing access. She said buyers were advised to do their due diligence prior to making offers. (Note: Linda Horne's report was circulated to members following meeting on June 23/20).

Diana Morris, Dufferin Board of Trade, said that the office provided links to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for resources related to COVID. She advised that the new mask-mandate announced by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit had created numerous questions about the new rules and that DBOT had obtained detailed clarification on behalf of its membership.

Diana Morris said that the DBOT Business Hub launched in February and then closed due to COVID in March, would be re-opening by July 1. She said DBOT expects the Business Hub to be in high demand with access to high speed internet and capacity to provide short term rentals to home-based workers who need space but don't want to commute.

Diana Morris said DBOT will be distributing one hundred "Open for Business" kits containing locally acquired PPE supplies to businesses in Dufferin County. She advised that DBOT is looking at new ways to deliver the Business Excellence Awards event to recognize businesses for their achievements, and new virtual networking opportunities are being investigated.

Shokheen Singh, Business Improvement Area representative, commented that the merchants have had a rough time due to COVID-19 and that the Farmers' Market had a late start but was doing well as they adapt to the new protocols set out by public health.

Councillor Andrews indicated that the Town's recent agreement with Wightman for a \$56 million fibre installation project will greatly improve high-speed Internet access to Orangeville and that the agreement will result in significant benefits to businesses, the economy and the delivery of education. He thanked BEDAC members for their future roles in connecting with the business community.

10 Date of next meeting

September 22, 2020

11 Adjournment

Recommendation 2020-004

Moved by Pete Renshaw

That the meeting adjourn at 10:35 a.m.

Carried.