

Pembroke Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Via Zoom
Pembroke, Ontario
May 26, 2020
6 p.m.

Present:

Stephane Levesque
Jamie Bramburger
Adam Gunter
Roger Martin
Mike Thompson
Cameron Montgomery
Mayor LeMay
Lisa Edmonds
Councillor Plummer
Michael St Jean
Lorraine Pecoskie
MJ Levesque

Regrets:

Amy Brousseau

Also Present:

Heather Sutherland, Economic Development & Tourism Officer
Terry Lapierre, CAO
Heather Salovaara, Economic Development Officer (returning)

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for May 26, 2020 was approved by consensus.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 10 2020 were approved by consensus.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

4. 1-Minute Update from Committee Members

Each member provided a 1-minute update on how things have been for them during the pandemic.

5. Current Climate

Heather Sutherland presented a report outlining summary information of the current business climate in the region as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. County of Renfrew Economic Task Force

Heather Sutherland presented the report outlining the goals, makeup and proposed actions of the County of Renfrew's Economic Task Force.

7. City of Pembroke Recovery Plan

The committee brainstormed ideas of what actions the City could consider to help the local economy move forward during the recovery phase of the pandemic. It came up with the following points:

1. Communication – find the good stories and share them (ex. KI's retooling of its way of working to stay operating)
2. CIP shift – Use CIP funds to support businesses specifically related to struggles caused by COVID-19
3. Connect businesses to each other to allow for innovative partnerships (ex. Blendz offering retail space to a restaurant paper supplier)
4. Promote shop local (Note: County of Renfrew is launching a "Shop Ottawa Valley campaign" that does include Pembroke as well)
5. Analyze consumer behaviour and how it is changing – then look at ways to address new concerns/habits
6. Resident recruitment opportunity – more companies shifting to working remotely. So people can live here with the benefits of more rural living while still getting high-paying jobs in urban centres
7. Support local newspaper so we don't lose it
8. Consumer confidence research/survey. Ex. What kind of dining experience do people want in the era of COVID-19 to make you comfortable to go to a restaurant?
9. Support local businesses with their digital presence to ensure what it says online and what is happening at the store matches, as much as possible. Make the consumer experience as easy as possible
10. Share best practices among businesses (ex. East Side Mario's could share corporate guidelines with other, independent restaurants)
11. Educate businesses to help with best practices, how to pivot business if necessary, how to reopen, etc.
12. Connect businesses with space. Ex. In-home stylist now looking for storefront because doesn't want people in personal home space
13. Education campaign with community champions – people who lead by example. Ex. Wearing masks (because for these practices to become the norm and comfortable for people, will require a culture change)
14. Coordinated contact with local landlords regarding rent relief assistance program
15. Advocate for rural solutions and innovation because our situation is not the same as the urban centres, which is from where protocols are being dictated
16. One-stop shop website with business information highlighting COVID changes, guidelines, etc. Connects businesses and the public, and businesses and the information to help them with operating

17. Add a COVID-19 field to the existing business directory where businesses can input their updated information regarding operations during the pandemic
18. Encourage local businesses to encourage their staff to support local deliberately at least one day of the week
19. Have local sewers create masks that have “buy local” messaging on them
20. Collect local data on what industries are struggling and which are thriving in the city to help inform actions
21. Hiring of summer student to assist with gathering data/information on various programs available to support local businesses
22. Research options to lower the consumer’s mental load in order to make shopping more attractive to them – encourage business consistency as much as possible
23. Communicate guidelines for the public and for business to help reduce stigma of what’s allowed or not due to the pandemic – Information to come from province and health unit
24. Promote the advantages of being in the Ottawa Valley – brag about our opportunities

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.