

Planning & Development Committee Meeting

Council Chambers
Pembroke, Ontario
November 5, 2019
6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Councillor Reavie Chair
Mayor LeMay
Deputy Mayor Gervais
Councillor Abdallah
Councillor Jacyno
Councillor Lafreniere
Councillor Plummer

Also Present:

Terry Lapierre, Chief Administrative Officer
Heather Sutherland, Economic Development & Tourism Officer
Heidi Martin, Recording Secretary

Councillor Reavie called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interests declared.

3. Approval/Amendment of Meeting Agenda

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Gervais

Seconded by Councillor Plummer

That the agenda of the Planning and Development Committee meeting of November 5, 2019 be approved as circulated.

Carried

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Jacyno

Seconded by Councillor Plummer

That the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meeting of October 1, 2019 be approved as circulated.

Carried

5. Business Arising from Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

6. Presentations

a. Regional County Municipality of Pontiac

Jane Toller, Warden of the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac and Mr. Donald Gagnon, Mayor of Chichester spoke to Committee in regards to the benefits to the tourism industry and the economy of the region through the promotion of the waterways. They wished to see if there was interest in a joint collaboration to market the waterway. A discussion was held and the following points were raised:

- waterway is not well known – increased marketing is required
- the Ottawa River is our greatest tourism asset
- the waterway is open from Mattawa to Montreal
- equipment on the waterway can handle boats up to 30 feet

b. Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

Mr. Paul Murphy from Calabogie Peaks presented on behalf of some members of the local accommodation sector on the Municipal Accommodation Tax. His group feels that the MAT will destabilize the hotel industry in Renfrew County, which is already the weakest in the Province and will not work as tourism is isolated to niche activities and locations. The group believes that the MAT will make their businesses unsustainable. A discussion was held and the following points were raised:

- MAT tax should also be applied to Airbnb's, Vrbo and Online Travel Agencies
- many municipalities already apply the MAT
- Unique boutique hotels already have a razor thin hotel margin and will be affected by MAT

The Chair thanked Mr. Murphy and his group for providing the information which will assist Council to make an informed decision.

Ms. Meghan James spoke to the same issue on behalf of the Best Western Inn however indicated that her hotel is in full support of the MAT. She stressed that this opportunity will generate funds to increase marketing in our area and none of it is at the cost of the business owners. She reviewed the MAT tax across the province and highlighted conversations she had with other Best Western business owners from various municipalities that have implemented the MAT. A discussion was held and the following points were raised:

- the tax is paid by the guest
- the money generated will help with marketing – more exposure = more tourists, more tourists = more money, more money = better economy
- area currently receives corporate and business customers however we are missing the leisure customer, marketing would help

The Chair thanked Ms. James for providing her information on the MAT.

Direction:

Staff was directed to prepare a report with recommendations on the form a MAT program might take in order to allow Council to make an informed decision on whether it wishes to implement a Municipal Accommodation Tax or not.

7. New Business

a. Main Street Revitalization Initiative

Ms. Sutherland presented the report.

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Gervais

Seconded by Councillor Plummer

That the Planning and Development Committee recommends that the remaining funding of \$22,387.30 from the Main Street Revitalization Initiative funding be placed in the Community Improvement Plan Reserve.

Carried

8. Adjournment

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Gervais

Seconded by Councillor Abdallah

That the Planning and Development Committee meeting of November 5, 2019 adjourn at 7:17 p.m.

Carried