

North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting

Agenda

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

3:30 p.m. via Webex

1. Call to Order
2. Approve Agenda/Additions to the Agenda
3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest
4. Review and Approval of November 25, 2020 Minutes
5. North Perth Economic Development Update (Kim Kowch)
6. Perth County Economic Development Update (Sarah Franklin)
7. COVID-19 Impacts on Business
8. Next Meeting – see attached 2021 Meeting Dates
9. Adjournment

Mandate:

- The Committee provides advice and recommendations to Council on policies and programs relevant to the Municipality's Economic Development in alignment with the North Perth Strategic Plan.

North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee

Wednesday, November 25, 2020 at 3:30 PM

Webex Meeting

Present: Doug Kellum, Todd Kasenberg, Kim Kowch, Kriss Snell, Justin Dias, Jessica McLean, Becca Newbigging, Andrew Coghlin, Martin Vogt, Trevor Reading, Tonya Haverkamp

Regrets: Lee Anne Andriessen

Guests: Pat Berfelz

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order @ 3:30 pm by Deputy Mayor Kellum.

2) Election of Chair and Procedural Items

Nominations were opened for the position of Chair. Todd Kasenberg nominated Doug Kellum. Doug accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations. Through a vote, Doug Kellum was declared Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee. Nominations were opened for the position of Vice Chair. Doug Kellum nominated Todd Kasenberg. Todd accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations. Through a vote, Todd Kasenberg was declared Vice Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Items in the North Perth Procedural By-law were shared with the committee members. Please contact Clerk Berfelz if you have questions now or in the future.

3) Additions to/Approval of Agenda

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

It was moved by Tonya Haverkamp and seconded by Andrew Coghlin THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were none.

5) Introductions

Committee member introductions were made, including the economic sector each represented and their role in the local business community.

6) North Perth Economic Development Background

Kim Kowch provided a background on the work completed/initiated by the previous Economic Development Committee in 2019/2020. She shared priorities for 2021 as stated in the 2021 Economic Development Business Plan.

7) Perth County Economic Development Background

Justin Dias gave an overview of Perth County's role in economic development and relationship with North Perth. He reviewed recent and ongoing activities and initiatives of the Economic Development and Tourism Office. He suggested Maggie Martin, Transportation Coordinator, make a presentation on PC Connect to the Committee at a future date.

8) COVID-19 Impacts of Business

Kim Kowch shared a pulse survey was completed for COVID-19 business impacts in September. Concerns amongst committee members for impacts on the restaurant sector. Importance of Municipality and others to promote local shopping. Concerns on lack of information from Public Health for employers.

9) Questions for Discussion:

- a) What do you think the local business community needs?
 - Labour attraction/retention key issue
 - Local apprenticeship/industrial training
 - Youth attraction/retention
 - Attainable housing
- b) What do you think this Committee should address? – To be discussed at future meeting

10)Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 20, 2021 @ 3:30 pm.**

11)Adjournment

It was moved by Andrew Coghlin, seconded by Tonya Haverkamp THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting now adjourns at 4:53 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee (NPEDAC)

Community Development Report – Jan 20, 2021

Community Improvement Plan / Streetscape

- **Signage and Streetscape projects:** Not planned in 2021.
- **Façade Improvement Program and Commercial Building Guidelines** – The project continues to progress. An update on the project was made to North Perth Council on Dec 21, 2020. A thorough review of best practices of both programs is complete. The next stage involves public engagement including community surveys on YourSayNorthPerth.ca plus business surveys on program elements that will be emailed to each business. Surveys and links to be issued the week of Jan 18th for 3-4 weeks. Interviews and remote focus groups will follow. A presentation for Council review and approval will be made in March/April 2021 with program recommendations to be launched in early summer 2021. The capital budget sought \$80,000 for grant/loan allocation to participating businesses dependent on program guidelines. Grants and loans are not eligible for RED funding.

Pre-apprenticeship Training (TTG)- Current North Perth in-class training complete; placements with North Perth employers in Jan/Feb 2021. A 2021 North Perth application for Pre-apprenticeship training in Welding, Metal Fabrication and General Machining was submitted in early Jan 2021 for a Sept 2021 start. A strong application with sufficient employer interest for placements and apprenticeships was submitted.

Public Wifi Implementation Plan – The final report on the costs of public Wi-Fi execution in the downtowns and key outdoor amenities of North Perth is nearing completion. Initial projected costs are significant with further efforts needed by staff to supply existing connectivity before implementation across Listowel. A report seeking direction for next steps is being considered by North Perth Council on Jan 18, 2021. Rural Economic Development (RED) program funding is now open with applications due Feb 1, 2021. Direction on an application for a portion of the project where costs estimates are complete is also being sought by Council. Funding is at 30% of project costs with a remaining commitment close to \$70,000 by the Municipality.

Huron Perth Children's Museum / Agriculture Science Centre Feasibility Study – The final report funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation was presented to North Perth Council on Dec 21, 2020 by Jillian Lewis, Committee Chair and Ted Silberberg of Lord Cultural Resources. Based upon the research results and market viability, the project has changed to the Huron Perth Ag Science Centre which will engage more diverse age groups while continuing to support young children. Possible locations were evaluated and market research on operations, governance including staffing were presented. Gifting of property is needed for the project to be feasible. The Committee has requested conditional approval of the gifting of land plus support of annual operational costs for 2023/24 so that they can pursue funding from other levels of government, industry and private donations. This will be considered as part of the 2021 North

Perth Budget deliberations. Staff continue to prepare and submit financial and final reporting as part of the OTF funding agreement.

Covid-19 Business Response – A new marketing campaign with “Shop in North Perth this Winter” messaging rolled out in late November and through the holiday season giving residents and businesses ideas of ways to support their neighbours by shopping locally, specifically in North Perth. The various Shop North Perth options hosted on the municipal website were promoted: Open for Business Directory; North Perth Eats; ShopLocalNorthPerth.ca ecommerce website. This campaign continues to be shared on social media, Blackburn radio and via The Ranch radio. A variety of initiatives by business organizations, private businesses and individuals alike promoting shopping in North Perth has reportedly had strong results in supporting business. With the reinstatement of provincial stay at home orders and provincial lockdown on Jan 14, 2021 until Feb 11, 2021 most businesses have remained open with delivery and porch pick up options. The Mayor, staff, BIA and North Perth Chamber are meeting to plan a unified but multi-faceted approach to support business in the coming weeks

Driftscape App Launch – Meetings commenced Jan 13th with target live date March 1, 2021. Marketing campaign to be supported by Driftscape staff across App users with North Perth experiences, events and landmarks and tours. Items to include tourism destinations, Local Farm Gates, Trails, historical tours, etc. Being used to promote ‘couch surfing’ exploration now to and visiting in the future. Targeting Youth, visitors and future residents. Ideas on landmarks, tours or experiences to be promoted should be directed to staff.

Workforce Development - Research on costs/results of a socialization program at the Library for Newcomers and other social outreach opportunities to enhance workforce growth and retention planned in the near future.

Youth Attraction and Retention – Progress continues. Will update status of current implementation schedule of the Youth Attraction Strategic Plan to include recommendations from the Mayor's Taskforce and implement items as able due to Covid-19.

2021 Budget – Economic Development capital and operating budgets have been prepared and delivered for Council consideration. Capital projects proposed support the Façade Improvement and Commercial Guidelines Project and further implementation of the Elma Logan Community Social space.

North Perth Corporate Strategic Plan and Departmental Business Plan: The Economic Development Business Plan has been drafted and is being reviewed by Council for approval. The Business Plan identifies dates and allocation for implementation of Year 1 of the Corporate Strategic Plan and Departmental priorities. Includes items where ED staff will Lead, Contribute or Support.

North Perth Economic Development Committee Update

Wednesday, January 20, 2020

RTO4 Business Support Grants

Perth County is working in partnership with [RTO4](#) to implement the Tourism Adaptation and Recovery Program and the Technology Investment Program to support tourism businesses in our region. Over \$135,000 in grant money is available between these two funding streams. **Applications for both funding opportunities are due February 1, 2021 at 11:59PM.** For additional information on these funding programs, please visit: www.perthcounty.ca/BusinessGrants

Tourism Adaptation and Recovery Program

This program supports implementation of health and safety protocols and/or renovations and equipment to accommodate social distancing. In order to support as many businesses as possible we anticipate most grants to be \$2,500. A minimum 20% match is required.

Technology Investment Program

This program is designed to support tourism operators as they optimize their online approach and use physical technology towards a safe re-opening. Businesses can receive up to \$5,000 in support to implement COVID-19 technology investment projects.

Perth County Connect Bus Service

The PC Connect bus service has received a positive amount of interest and uptake from residents throughout the County, since its launch on November 16, 2020. To date, PC Connect has serviced a total of 234 rides, with 68 passengers on Route A, 41 on Route B, 29 on Route 1, and 96 on Route 2. As per the Government of Ontario's public transportation guidelines, PC Connect will continue to operate responsibly during the provincial COVID-19 lockdown, for essential travel only. A series of



COVID-19 preventative measures continue to be enforced on all fleet, which includes 50% reduced capacity, mandatory face coverings, and increased sanitization practices. At this time, all paid marketing efforts have been put on hold, and organic marketing communications are dedicated to educating residents on how to travel safely for essential purposes only. As public transportation is entirely new to many residents in Perth County, it is evident that marketing and educational efforts are essential to the growth and development of PC Connect. The team is confident that exponential ridership growth will continue when it is safe and responsible to resume all marketing efforts.

For more information, visit: www.perthcounty.ca/PCConnect

Digital Service Squad

The Digital Service Squad's free services are available to businesses across Perth County until the end of February. The goal of this program is to help Ontario's small businesses enhance their digital capabilities and online presence. The assistance provided by the Digital Service Squad can look like individual coaching and support, conducting a digital assessment to help identify opportunities, improving Google My Business listings, assisting with social media, website and e-commerce

development. Digital Main Street is also able to provide resources to small businesses of all kinds through different programs. In addition to one-on-one support, Clara is able to point business owners in the direction of resources they may find helpful! Clara can be contacted at cleney@perthcounty.ca for any questions or concerns.



For more information, please visit: www.perthcounty.ca/DSS

Business Support Calls

In December, Economic Development and Tourism staff undertook a series of telephone check-in calls with a sample of businesses across various sectors and municipalities. The phone calls were designed to understand the current and future needs of businesses to ensure that County programming and COVID-19 response was meeting the needs and make necessary adjustments.

In total, staff made 22 personal phone calls to business across all four member municipalities and across the following sectors: Agriculture/Food and Beverage Processing, Manufacturing, Retail, Restaurants, Accommodation and Transportation. Businesses were selected so as to include a variety of sizes as well as businesses that were new and others that were more established. While the calls were not intended to provide a statistically reliable sample, they were rather designed to understand some of the common issues and challenges faced by local businesses to ensure future programming was being responsive to their needs.

A brief summary of some of the findings are presented below:

- Companies in the manufacturing and food processing sectors were concerned about the impact of sick/isolating workforce due to potential exposure to COVID-19 and the impact on maintaining operations. While demand for their products had largely been shielded from the impacts of COVID-19, their ability to maintain production in the event of rising case counts and staffing impacts were their main concern.
- The CEWS wage subsidy had proved to be a lifeline for many businesses, particularly in the restaurant and accommodation sector.
- The accommodation sector continues to be seriously affected, even before the lockdown as the industry relies on out of town travel that has been discouraged for much of the pandemic.

The impact of recreation and travelling team sports has also had a tremendous impact on local accommodators as has the absence of the Stratford Festival.

- Many businesses anticipate their usual off-season in January-February and are better equipped to deal with a slowdown during that period than into the spring/summer when many experience their busy season. A second lost busy season for businesses would be very damaging, particularly those that are particularly seasonal in nature (restaurants and accommodations).
- When asked what program the County could offer many businesses were satisfied with the level of support and marketing being provided. Despite the many programs and some financial assistance from the province, PPE continues to be a need and assistance in this was greatly appreciated. The Perth County restaurant industry was especially grateful for PPE assistance, as their revenue was greatly reduced in 2020, so any cost savings were appreciated.
- Some local businesses had experienced an increase/offsetting of lost sales with new customers who had previously travelled into larger urban centres (London/Kitchener-Waterloo) staying local to avoid rising case counts and crowded big box retailers. While the business calls were conducted in the period before the announcement of the provincial lockdown, they did provide insight into both the immediate business needs as well as some of the supports that will be required for the next phase of re-opening.

Ontario Business Support Grant

Applications are now open for the Ontario Business Support Grant. The grants can help those businesses who have been required to close or significantly restrict services as a result of provincial public health measures. Starting at \$10,000 for all eligible businesses, the grant will provide businesses with dollar for dollar funding to a maximum of \$20,000 to help cover decreased revenue expected as a result of the Provincewide Shutdown.



Small businesses required to close or restrict services under the Provincewide Shutdown will be able to apply for this one-time grant. Each small business will be able to use the support in whatever way makes the most sense for their individual business. For example, some businesses will need support paying employee wages or rent, while others will need support maintaining their inventory.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/businesses-get-help-covid-19-costs#section-0>

North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee (NPEDAC)

2021 Meeting Dates

1. Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.
2. Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.
3. Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.
4. Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.
5. Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.
6. Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.