

ALMAGUIN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ACED)

MINUTES May 23, 2024

A regular meeting of the ACED Board was held at the Township of Strong Office and virtually on May 23, 2024 at 6:00pm.

Present: Wendy Whitwell, Township of Armour, Chair
Margaret Ann MacPhail, Township of Perry
Sheri Norman, AHCC Representative
Dan Robertson, Township of Ryerson
Justine Leveque, Village of Sundridge
Tim Bryson, Township of Strong
Chris Nicholson, Township of Joly
Jennifer Farquhar, AHCC Representative
Chris Hope, Village of Burk's Falls
Trista Porter, MND

Regrets: Brenda Scott, Village of South River
Ron Begin, FedNor

Staff: Dave Gray, Director of Economic Development
Courtney Metcalf, Economic Development Officer
Sarah Cooke, Communications Officer
John Theriault, Township of Armour

Guests: Rod Ward, Township of Armour
Vicky Roeder-Martin, Township of McMurrich/Monteith

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Thursday, April 25, 2024 meeting were adopted as amended.

Director's Report

The Director covered the following items from the report:

1. An update on core activity tracking, which lists what the department has done over the past month. These included business assistance, marketing, ACED website updates, social media activities, and communications.

2. Some of the updates in the report included:

- a) AHCC Partnerships – ACED placed an ad in the Almaguin Community Guide to promote business support, developed a regional map and wrote 4 articles to be featured. Staff helped with the Chamber with their After-Hours Social held on May 22, 2024.
- b) Regional Recreation & Municipal Support – Assisted Burk’s Falls recreation and the Sundridge Library with surveys. The Director has been requested as an advisor to the Village of Burk’s Falls Theatre Sub Committee to develop plans and strategies to promote the facility. Staff has also assisting in a phase 1 application to NOHFC for the new fire hall.
- c) Long Term Housing – Housing Task Force – draft housing report presented to the Task Force on April 25, 2024. A report has been circulated to staff from participating municipalities for comments and final draft is scheduled to be presented to the ACED Board in June 2024.
- d) Transportation – Draft community bus activities report was presented to the committee, edits were suggested and once report is finalized it will be distributed to all municipalities who will be asked to support it.
- e) AHSS Student Engagement – Staff has been working with AHSS to promote the Summer Company Program and circulate a student survey to as many students as possible. Currently 34 responses have been received; the survey closes June 1, 2024. A report will be presented to the Board at the next ACED meeting.
- f) Brand Strategy Implementation – A report has been prepared on the results for the “Spotlight Almaguin Project”. Staff is reaching out to AMP applicants to finalize their projects. Additional videos will also be completed.

The Explore Almaguin – Pop-up newsletter signup form has been added to website. Itineraries for summer tourism in development. Looking for feedback from users.

Social Media – Socials continue to see positive growth. Creating content strategy for the ACED page that will focus on ACED services.

Photography & Videography – All video footage received, working on gathering 10 new businesses for a business promotional video.

Brand Ambassador Program – The next meeting on May 30, 2024. Ambassadors will be updated on various activities. Will be planning next steps. 5 new ambassadors have joined this program for a total of 48 ambassadors.

Brand Strategy Media Push – Met with Metroland to discuss results from event targeting, digital display and Google Search ad campaigns. Results on par or above average with industry standards.

Roundtable Comments

The representative from the Township of McMurrich/Monteith advised the Board that her Township had approved their 2024 budget and that they would be joining ACED. The Board congratulated them on their decision.

The Chamber advised the Board that they have hired a new Executive Director last month and they are confident she will help them build bridges and offer value to businesses. The 2024 Guide is almost complete and will be launched on June 25, 2024. Invitations will be sent out for this event.

A thank you was sent out to all of the members who attended the District of Parry Sound Municipal Association meeting of May 17, 2024. The meeting was well attended and very informative.

Community Bus Partnership Report

The Director of Economic Development gave a breakdown of the Community Bus partnership Report. The report includes a lot of information which was collected based on the community bus which was run by the Village of Burk's Falls for many years. After some discussion, the Board passed a resolution receiving the report and recommending that municipalities support a pilot project.

Other Business

The Village of Sundridge is presently working on a strategic plan. They wish to keep it simple and show what they have accomplished, what they are presently working on and what they wish for the future, which includes supporting ACED.

ACED Meetings

The Board discussed the July and August meetings and decided that if there were no pressing matters needing the Board's decision, these two meetings could be cancelled. The Board would reconvene in September 2024.

Resolutions

1. 2024-09 – Moved by Justine Leveque; Seconded by Jennifer Farquhar;
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board approve the April 25, 2024 meeting minutes, as circulated. Carried

Resolutions cont'd

2. 2024-10 – Moved by Tim Bryson; Seconded by Margaret Ann MacPhail;
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic development Board have received and reviewed the draft Almaguin Community Bus Activities Report. Furthermore, that Board recommends that all municipalities review the report at their next council meeting and consider supporting the initiative in principle and/or participating in the service planning phase. Carried

Adjournment

3. 2024-08 – Moved by Chris Nicholson; Seconded by Justine Leveque;
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board adjourn the May 23, 2024, ACED meeting at 6:59 p.m. Carried

The next meeting will be Thursday, June 27, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. If this change, members will be advised.