

ALMAGUIN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ACED)

MINUTES March 16, 2020

The meeting was held at the Strong Municipal Office on March 16, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

Present: Tim Bryson, Township of Joly (Chair)
Lewis Hodgson, Village of Burk's Falls
Tim Brunton, Township of Magnetawan
Kelly Elik, Township of Strong
Bob McPhail, Township of Armour
Jennifer Farquhar, AHCC Representative
Joe Lumley, Township of Perry

Regrets: Brenda Scott, Village of South River
Melanie Alkins, MENDM
Wendy Whitwell, Township of Armour
Celia Finley, Township of Ryerson
Margaret Ann McPhail, Township of Perry
Barb Belrose, Village of Sundridge
Peter Mclsaac, Municipality of Powassan
Ron Begin, FedNor

Staff: Dave Gray, Director of Economic Development
John Theriault, Township of Armour
Courtney Metcalf, Economic Development Officer
Nicky Kunkel, Village of Burk's Falls
Nicole Gourlay, Municipality of Magnetawan

Guests: Rod Blakelock, Township of Armour

Call to Order

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

Minutes

That the minutes of Monday February 10, 2020 meeting were adopted as circulated.

Delegation

Stephen Wallis, President of Indie North Studios, could not attend the meeting. The Director of Economic Development advised the Board that a cinema company had purchased the Hwy 520 industrial park in Armour and are looking at making movies in this area. He indicated that Stephen Wallis will attend a future meeting.

Director of Economic Development Report

Core Activity Tracking

The CEDO updated the Board on the visits and contacts he has had over the past month.

Communications & Marketing Officer Update

The CEDO gave an update on the work the CMO has been doing, including print marketing, social media posts, website enhancements and continuation of the digital main street program.

Industry & Supply Chain Mapping

The operator information package has been created and is awaiting review from a partnering business operator before interviews are scheduled.

Broadband Support - Blue Sky

A letter of support was sent on behalf of the Board to Blue Sky for the broadband project. All municipalities are asked to pass supporting resolutions and send them to Blue Sky.

Accommodation Guide Publication

Accommodations inventory is complete, a draft of "Stay in Almaguin" publication is currently being finalized and will be provided to the board for their review prior to printing.

Asset Inventory Update

All assets have been logged. ACED staff are planning to meet with Real Estate agents to gather information on remaining properties. ACED Staff are working to identify non-listed opportunities via community visitation efforts.

Business Support Events

Discussing with the Chamber the possibility of holding monthly events at different locations to connect with current and potential businesses.

Regional Brand Strategy

Strategy currently being drafted and should be ready by the middle of March.

Web Strategy & Enhancement

Presently merging the CAEDA website with ACED. Working on enhancement to the ACED website. The Almaguin Highlands Tourism website is being reviewed for necessary changes and updates.

Visitor Guide

The Aced team is providing content, directories and ads for this publication.

Digital Main Street

This program is on schedule with visits to businesses continuing and businesses signing up for the program.

Director of Economic Development Report cont'd

Almaquin Highlands Secondary School In-Roads

The Summer Company presentation set for March 25, 2020 has been postponed. The ACED team will be meeting with AHSS representatives to discuss further programming for student engagement.

Almaquin Harvest Spin

Waiting for decisions on funding applications. A meeting will be set up with the event team to continue planning this event.

First Impression Community Exchange Update

After-action report has been discussed and ACED has offered to work with the participating municipalities to establish the next steps for this project.

Discovery Routes Mapping Update

Map has been completed and distributed. Copies are available for the Board's review.

Explorer's Edge Content Marketing Update

The project came in under budget, there was no need to access the extra \$1,500 approved by the Board. Photos were taken and added to ACED's database for future use.

2020 Draft ACED Workplan and Timeline

Final workplan has been drafted with some timelines in it.

New Business & Developments

Transportation Strategy Planning

The ACED Director is investigating transportation strategies and potential funding for the area. At this time there is no funding available, but ACED is continuing their investigation.

Housing Strategy Preliminary Information Gathering

ACED is looking into current and future housing projects. Housing is a concern in this area and ACED is investigating if there is anything, we can do to promote new housing.

Mobile Support Forum Project

The ACED team is taking the lead on organizing a mobile support forum to connect local support organizations and their programs with local employers.

Taste of Almaquin Partnership Request

A request for financial support was received from Near North Enviro Education Centre for this event. A resolution was passed to approve a donation.

Hemp Agricultural Opportunity

ACED is working on helping with land sourcing for a large-scale hemp operation. When information is available, the Director will keep the Board updated.

Unfinished Business

2020 Draft Budget

The Board reviewed the draft amended 2020 budget and the reason for the changes requested in the new draft budget. The Board discussed the changes and asked if some of the expenses could be reduced. There is a concern that some partners may not be able to continue with Economic Development when the grants cease. The majority of the members present did not wish to reduce the expenditures and were in favor of approving the budget as presented. The Board passed a resolution to support the budget and request that each partner approve it.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is negatively affecting businesses. People are asked to stay away from other people, stay home and do a minimum of travelling. The Economic Development Department will do its best to help businesses. They will be issuing a best practice bulletin and advising businesses on what they can do to help themselves and what help is available from the Federal and Provincial Governments.

Other Business

We may have to hold our next meeting through a teleconference. If this happens, the Director of Economic Development will setup the conference call and advise all members on how to connect to the meeting.

Resolutions

1. 2020-008 - Moved by Lewis Hodgson; Seconded by Joe Lumley;
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board approve the minutes of February 10, 2020, as circulated. Carried
2. 2020-009 - Moved by Tim Brunton; Seconded by Joe Lumley;
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board approve a \$500 contribution to support the Taste of Almaguin Event on March 28th, 2020 in partnership with the Near North Enviro Education Centre. Carried
3. 2020-010 - Moved by Kelly Elik; Seconded by Joe Lumley;
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board accept the amended 2020 ACED budget, as presented. Further, the ACED Board recommends that each member municipality and the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce accept the budget at their next regular meeting Council/Board meeting. Carried

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

The next meeting will be Monday April 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Strong Municipal Office. If this changes, members will be advised.