

# **ALMAGUIN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ACED)**

## **MINUTES April 20, 2020**

A virtual meeting based at the Armour Municipal Office on April 20, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

Present: Wendy Whitwell, Township of Armour  
Kelly Elik, Township of Strong  
Jennifer Farquhar, AHCC Representative  
Brenda Scott, Village of South River  
Celia Finley, Township of Ryerson  
Margaret Ann MacPhail, Township of Perry  
Melanie Atkins, MENDM  
Tim Brunton, Township of Magnetawan  
Peter McIsaac, Municipality of Powassan

Regrets: Tim Bryson, Township of Joly  
Barb Belrose, Village of Sundridge  
Ron Begin, FedNor  
Lewis Hodgson, Village of Burk's Falls

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

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

### **Minutes**

That the minutes of Monday March 16, 2020 meeting were adopted as circulated.

### **Director of Economic Development (DED) Report**

#### **Core Activity Tracking**

The DED updated the Board on the visits and contacts he has had over the past month. There has been less contact with businesses because of the pandemic.

### **Director of Economic Development Report (DED) cont'd**

### Communications & Marketing Officer (CMO) Update

The DED gave an update on the work the CMO has been doing, including designing and updates of the COVID-19 web page, updating all business listings, updating contacts page, supporting the web development team and creating backup directories for site information.

### Industry & Supply Chain Mapping

Operators are willing to participate when the pandemic is over.

### Broadband Support - Blue Sky

A letter of support was sent to Lakeland Networks to support their application to the CRTC Broadband fund.

### Accommodation Guide Publication

A draft print guide was presented to the Board for review. The guide will not be printed until the pandemic is over.

### Asset Inventory Update

Presently creating the directory. A finalized inventory is expected by mid-may.

### Business Support Events

At this time events are either cancelled or on hold until the pandemic is over.

### Regional Brand Strategy

Second phase of the NOHFC application has been submitted. Awaiting a decision.

### Web Strategy & Enhancement

The Almaguin Highlands Tourism website was hacked. The hack was resolved and significant improvements to the website have been performed. The Board will discuss a yearly fee for website support at its next meeting.

### Visitor Guide

A full-page ad has been recreated and was reviewed by the Board. The Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce is considering a later release date for the guide and may not be able to include certain components, such as an events directory, this year.

### Digital Main Street

The grant for this program has been used and the final report accepted. The program will continue and at a time when all businesses are required to use online business it is needed more than ever.

### Almaguin Highlands Secondary School In-Roads

All projects are on hold until the schools open up again.

## **Director of Economic Development Report cont'd**

### Almaguin Harvest Spin Project

FedNor has approved our funding application. Still waiting on a decision from NOHFC. Next step is to put out an RFP for the Almaguin Agriculture and Culinary Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. We will move forward with what can be done and we will have to wait and see if this project can be brought to fruition.

### Mobile Support Forum Project

This project has been postponed because of the pandemic.

### Taste of Almaguin Partnership Request

Our contribution to the project has not been issued. The project is on hold indefinitely.

## **New Business & Developments**

### COVID-19 Response Activities

The Economic Development Department has been working on finding ways to support our businesses during the pandemic. These include:

1. Creating a COVID-19 information and resource page on our website.
2. Initiating a stay at home & support local social media campaign.
3. Sending out an Almaguin business outreach COVID-19 survey.
4. Bringing a proposal to the Board for an Almaguin delivery & subsidy program.

### Almaguin Delivery & Subsidy Program

The Director of Economic Development brought forward a proposal to work with local partners to provide delivery services to businesses and residents in our region. After some discussion, the Board passed a resolution supporting the program, allocating a \$1,500 donation to it and requesting that each of the ACED partners approve a \$500 donation to the program.

## **Updates**

### NOHFC

NOHFC is presently reviewing the Almaguin Harvest Spin Project application, a decision on the funding is pending. Again, NOHFC is here to help, even during the pandemic, please reach out if you need help.

## **Resolutions**

1. 2020-011 - Moved by Kelly Elik; Seconded by Margaret-Ann MacPhail;  
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board approve the minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as circulated. Carried

## **Resolutions cont'd**

2. 2020-012 - Moved by Peter McIsaac; Seconded by Kelly Elik;  
Be it resolved that the Almaguin Community Economic Development Board supports the proposed Almaguin Delivery & Subsidy Program as presented by the Director of Economic Development, approves a donation, in the amount of \$1,500, to the program and requests that each of the ACED partners donate \$500 to the program.  
Carried

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

The next meeting will be May 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. If this changes, members will be advised.