

**SOUTH ALMAGUIN HIGHLANDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER COMMITTEE**

JOINT MEETING MINUTES August 10, 2015

The regular meeting of the South Almaguin Highlands Economic Development Committee (SAHEDC) and the Community Economic Development Officer Committee (CDO) was held at the Burk's Falls Municipal Office on Monday August 10, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

In attendance: Councillor Rosalind Hall, Councillor Lewis Hodgson, Councillor Rod Blakelock, Dave Gray, Willy Hollett, Randy Cox, Denis Sabourin, Nicky Kunkel, Wendy Whitwell, Andrew Farnsworth.

Guests: Gerry Spooner – FedNor; Wilma Robert – Armour, Ryerson and Burk's Falls Agricultural Society

Introductions

The Committee members made introductions for the benefit of guests.

Welcome from Gerry Spooner - FedNor

Gerry Spooner, FedNor Community Economic Development Officer, attended as an observer. Gerry plans to attend meetings in the future, subject to his availability, to help the Committee remain focussed on the CIINO workplan. Gerry advised that any Federal project funding approvals may be delayed until December due to the election, though they will still accept applications.

Delegation – Armour, Ryerson and Burk's Falls Agricultural Society

Wilma Robert attended on behalf of the Agricultural Society. Wilma read a letter from the Agricultural Society requesting clarification regarding a denied request for Farmer's Market signage funding. Dave clarified that under the current terms of reference, SAHEDC is not currently in a position to offer direct funding to organizations. The Committee recommended that organizations such as the Agricultural Society pursue requests for funding or donations through the individual municipalities or through the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce (AHCC). The Committee also recommended that requests for funding be made in the fall or early winter, as this is the time that the municipalities prepare their annual budgets. Dave will follow up with Wilma if there are any relevant funding opportunities that he discovers.

CDO Update

Dave provided SAHEDC with an overview of his monthly report:

Workshop – Campaigns to Attract Investment:

Dave discussed a recent workshop he attended and information he gathered on attracting investment to the area. Dave welcomed SAHEDC members to follow up with him if they would like more information.

Investment Readiness:

Dave is working with Armour and Burk's Falls on several applications for funding to assist with infrastructure related projects related to a future industrial park. Dave will continue to update SAHEDC on the status of the applications.

Business Retention and Expansion:

The AHCC held their first executive committee meeting for the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) project. The AHCC is looking for volunteers to assist with business interviews, and training will be provided to volunteers. Dave will follow up with information regarding the time commitments and volunteer requirements in the next week. Training sessions are scheduled for September 24 and October 6 during the day, with the business interviews to be scheduled to follow.

Funders Forum:

Dave is preparing to host a Funders Forum in the community, similar to a 2013 event. This year's Forum would ideally be held in partnership with the Nipissing Parry Sound Business Centre and other partners during small business week and would focus on preparing business plans and being ready to apply for funding. The tentative budget for the event is \$750, for which there is sufficient room in the budget. Dave will follow up with more details.

Terms of Reference – draft changes:

The current SAHEDC Terms of Reference (TOR) allows voting members to be added as required. The Committee agreed that the maximum number of voting members should be seven, with future members added in a non-voting capacity only.

Moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Randy Cox, the above noted changes shall be made to the SAHEDC TOR – carried.

Website Development:

Dave has added a page to the Economic Development portion of the Burk's Falls website to list funding opportunities. The Committee discussed adding an interactive map for commercial and industrial opportunities. Dave will gather more information on adding this functionality to the existing municipal GIS mapping.

Hunter's Bay Radio:

There are now two more co-hosts for the Celebrate Almaguin radio show who are trained and already hosting shows, hailing from the Central Almaguin and Powassan areas. The time slot for the radio show has been moved from 3:00 p.m. to 11:05 a.m. on Mondays. Unfortunately, Hunter's Bay Radio is not capable of tracking numbers of listeners at this time, so it is difficult to know how many people are listening to the show each week.

Fibre Optic Extension:

Several businesses in Armour Township may be interested in funding an extension of the fibre optic line in Burk's Falls from the Health Centre out to Commercial Drive. Dave will follow up with more information as the project develops. Andrew will review the budget to determine what funds are available for this project.

Community Guide:

The AHCC Community Guide has been very well received to date with overwhelmingly positive comments. Dave presented an opportunity to submit the Community guide for an Economic Development Association of Canada award. Willy will follow up with the AHCC regarding covering the \$75 application cost for the award.

FedNor 150 Grant:

Armour and Burk's Falls are preparing applications with Dave's assistance for recreation funding under the Canada 150 Grants. Gerry recommends that funding requests be kept to a reasonable amount, since the total funding pool for all of Northern Ontario is only \$5.2 million.

Branding Exercise:

SAHEDC continued its branding exercise for economic development in the three communities.

Following discussions, Dave will begin planning for a community consultation evening, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday September 23, to obtain feedback and ideas regarding branding and tag lines. The goal will be to have the tag lines completed by December.

In discussing signage, the Committee identified the LED information sign(s) as a priority. Dave will work on information regarding the types and costs of such signage.

Other/New Business

Dave presented a letter and petition from residents of the area addressed to Giant Tiger Corporation. The letter addressed interest in having a Giant Tiger store located in Burk's Falls. Included petition pages.

Denis raised a concern with misinformation on the internet regarding businesses that are no longer operating. The Committee discussed posting Dave's business directory to the website. Willy will discuss the matter with the AHCC to determine whether or not there is any potential conflict between this directory and that maintained by the AHCC.

Next Meeting

The next regular joint meeting of the SAHED-CDO Committees will be held on September 14, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Burk's Falls Offices.

Adjournment

Moved by Denis Sabourin, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.