

North Huron Economic Development Committee  
Minutes  
February 1, 2018

Attendees: Glen Manjin, Wingham BIA Representative  
Karen Stewart, Blyth BIA Representative  
Rebecca Rathwell, Centre for Employment and Learning  
Chris Watson, Economic Development Officer, Huron County  
Dave Tiffin  
Murray Simpson  
Grant Sparling  
Mark Woodward, Huron Chamber of Commerce  
Councillor Knott  
Dwayne Evans, CAO

Absent: Councillor Seip

CAO Evans welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. New members were introduced.

3.1 The minutes from the January 4, 2018 Economic Development meeting were reviewed.

Moved by: Glen Manjin  
Seconded by: Dave Tiffin

That the North Huron Economic Development Committee hereby approves the January 4, 2018 minutes; as presented.

CARRIED

3.2 The Huron County Economic Development Board Minutes dated December 11, 2017 were received.

4.0 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

5.0 Appointment of Committee Chair

To be discussed later in the meeting.

6.0 REPORTS

6.1 Vicki Lass, OMAFRA, information and discussion of the First Impressions Community Exchange Project

It is noted Vicki was unable to attend. Deferred to next meeting.

6.2 Update from Chris Watson on Huron County's various Economic Development initiatives

Chris reports the County has three initiatives underway. A Workforce Attraction and Retention Strategy has been completed and presented to County Council. The goal is to attract 500 workers to Huron's labour force. The strategy includes retaining youth; attracting youth back to the County; and attracting newcomers. The County is focusing their recruit efforts in adjacent urban areas such as London and Kitchener-Waterloo. A successful job fair was recently held in London. The County is now looking at organizing a similar job fair in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. The County's greatest need for labour is unskilled in the areas of manufacturing and production.

Councillor Knott reports that greenhouses in the Niagara and Leamington areas are being purchased and renovated into cannabis production facilities. These facilities require less labour than traditional greenhouses and as such, employees are being laid off. He suggests the County may wish to consider labour recruitment efforts in these areas.

The other two strategies underway at the County are agriculture and tourism. These strategies are being led by other County staff. Chris offers and the committee expresses an interest in reviewing the strategies in their entirety. Chris will send Dwayne the strategies for distribution to the Economic Development Committee members.

Another initiative the County has been involved with is the Airport Feasibility Study. The County partnered with the Town of Goderich and North Huron to commission a study regarding the sustainability of the airports. The report was presented to the County's Economic Development Board in December, 2017 and members of the public, including Goderich and North Huron staff and Council, were invited to attend. Several North Huron Councillors attended and heard the presentation. Dwayne reported the Study is available on the Township's website; would be discussed with North Huron Council in the very near future. Dwayne will forward the link of the report on the Township's website to the committee members.

Chris also reports that the County is hosting an Employer Roundtable in Hensall on February 13, 2018. He commented this may be an initiative the Committee may want to bring to North Huron. He extended an invitation for 1 or 2 members of the committee to attend February 13 Roundtable to observe. After a brief discussion;

Moved by: Karen Stewart

Seconded by: Councillor Knott

That the North Huron Economic Development Committee accepts the County's invitation to send representation to the February 13, 2018 Employer Roundtable event in Hensall and that Glen Manjin attend as the Committee's representative.

CARRIED

Chris highlights that the South Huron Chamber of Commerce is holding a job fair at the South Huron Recreation Centre on March 6, 2018 from 12:00-6:00 pm. Any employer wishing to attend is welcome to do so. Joan Brady, Executive Director, South Huron Chamber of Commerce is organizing this event. In response to a question, Chris believes there is a cost for employers to participate in this event.

### 6.3 Employer One 2017 Report

In advance of the February 1, 2018 agenda, CAO Evans distributed a copy of the 2017 Employer One Survey Results. It was noted the results of this survey confirm the previous comments made that unskilled labour is the greatest need. Rebecca noted and echoes Chris' earlier comments that unskilled labour is needed for manufacturing and production. She commented that locals are getting work quickly and very few jobs are getting posted. There was a discussion regarding where jobs are posted. Rebecca commented that the Indeed website is a good source for jobs and most employers with less than 20 employees are filling their vacancies by word-of-mouth. Chris commented that social media is a good tool to attract employees as well as the Huron County Job Board. He suggested the type of position to be filled is a factor when employers are deciding how to advertise vacancies.

Chris advises that he meets with employers regularly. Glen expresses an interest in joining and/or assisting Chris with employer visits. Glen is also interested in attending and learning more about the employer roundtable discussed earlier. It is suggested employers be encouraged to complete the Employer One 2018 Survey.

#### 6.4 Huron Manufacturing Awards Gala, 2018

CAO Evans reports the Huron Manufacturing Association has expressed an interest in holding the Huron Manufacturing Awards Gala, 2018 in North Huron. The event includes a formal, sit down dinner for approximately 300 attendees. Possible venue locations identified by staff are the Knights of Columbus Hall in Wingham and the Blyth Community Centre. One challenge with the Blyth Community Centre venue is that it cannot accommodate 300 attendees at round tables (the preferred layout by the organizers). Other venues are discussed. After a brief discussion:

Moved by: Glen Manjin  
Seconded by: Karen Stewart

That the North Huron Economic Development Committee recommends the Huron Manufacturing Awards Gala, 2018 be held on the apparatus floor at the Emergency Services Training Centre.

CARRIED

#### 7.0 Correspondence

##### 7.1 Starting a Business & Start Company Plus Info Session, February 8, 2018 from 10:00-12:00 Alice Munro Public Library in North Huron, Wingham

The committee receives this email for information purposes.

##### 7.2 Jan McKague-Weishar, Recruitment Officer, Wingham & Area Health Professionals Recruitment

Jan McKague-Weishar has expressed an interest in attending and presenting at a future North Huron Economic Development Committee meeting.

CAO Evans is asked to invite Ms. McKague-Weishar to the March meeting.

7.3 Rebecca Rathwell, The Centre for Employment & Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board re: Job Fairs

After the January Committee meeting, Councillor Knott shared information regarding a job fair being held by the University of Windsor. CAO Evans approached Rebecca to see if coordinating a job fair on behalf of North Huron was within the mandate of The Centre for Employment & Learning. In her email response and as shared with the committee members, Rebecca explains that job fairs are a great way for employers to showcase the employment opportunities that they have and also for job seekers to see what is available in their community and/or other communities.

She notes there have been 3 - multi employer job fairs in HC in recent years, 2 in South Huron (2016\2017) and 1 in Wingham (2016). The Wingham Centre for Employment and Learning also participated in a job fair in Lucknow this fall. Rebecca explains that often if one employer is wanting to have a job fair they approach the Centre for Employment and Learning to provide the location. This month (January, 2018) the Huron County Ec. Dev. dept. organized and hosted a Job Fair in London. The majority of businesses participating are from Huron Park and/or the south end of the County. This is due to the close proximity of London to the Exeter area where there are currently several employers actively recruiting for vacant positions.

If local employers are expressing an interest in participating in job fairs such as the one hosted by St. Clair College/U of Windsor, that would be a good opportunity for employers to recruit future graduates, especially if there is a particular program offered there, that provides the type of training for the skills that the employer is looking for. From past experience Rebecca explains that it is best to have someone representing that employer at the job fair, they are best suited to talk about the opportunities available, and even take resumes and/or conduct informal interviews.

The Wingham Centre for Employment & Learning would happily be involved in planning a future job fair, or attending a future job fair along with other stakeholders, i.e. the County Economic Development department, the Township of North Huron, and any local Employers who have expressed interest in participating. The Centre would also would be happy to help promote and assist individual employers if they are participating in a job fair and or wanting to host their own.

At this time Chris suggests the committee review the County's Workforce Retention and Attraction Strategy. This leads to discussions regarding home ownership. Karen suggests the scope of Workforce Retention and Attraction extends to quality of life. The committee generally agrees. Chris notes the County is going to be hosting a development roundtable meeting in March as a means to facilitate development in the County.

At this time there is a discussion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the County and local municipalities regarding economic development. Chris advises that the County takes on projects which benefit the entire County. County staff follow the County's Economic Strategic Plan.

Glen suggests this committee focus on listening to local employers and business owners. He suggests each committee member could take different task(s) and bring the findings or outcome of the tasks to this committee. Rebecca suggests the committee, as a whole, needs to determine its mandate organizations like the County and The Centre for Employment & Learning can be partners.

Chris explains that each lower tier municipality in the County has an Economic Development Strategic Plan and the County's Plan is derived, in large part, from the lower tier plans. He suggests the committee not feel they are restricted by the contents of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

At this time, Councillor Knott speaks to an article he read in the Windsor Star. It was reported that the City of Windsor provided an \$800,000 tax incentive for the establishment of a turkey product processing facility. The article caught his interest because the product is being raised on farms outside of Wingham. He questioned how the City of Windsor was able to offer this incentive given the Municipal Act. He also questioned how we (North Huron) missed this opportunity. Councillor Knott commented and wondered if North Huron could put a freeze on property taxes as a means to promote residential development in a vacant building.

#### 7.4 OMAFRA's Municipal Youth Engagement Initiative

The committee received the email for information purposes, noting Vicki Lass was not present to provide more details.

#### 7.5 University of Guelph School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, in partnership with OMAFRA is hosting the 3rd annual Rural Study Symposium, February 28, 2018, Conference Centre at 1 Stone Road, Guelph. Registration closes February 9, 2018.

The committee received this email for information purposes.

#### 8.0 Discussion

Glen asks about the status of Economic Development Officer position.

Councillor Knott explains that the position has been eliminated and the available funds are being re-allocated within the Economic Development budget. The committee's role is to advise Council as to how the funds available for economic development should be used.

There is a discussion regarding committee membership. CAO Evans reports he has reached out to local real estate agents who have requested more information regarding the committee. He will provide the information in hopes a local agent expresses an interest to join the committee. Mark Woodward advises that Roland Archer is an agent to the new area. He suggests Roland be invited to join the committee.

Moved by: Karen Stewart  
Seconded by: Councillor Knott

CARRIED

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 1, 2018  
12:00 pm  
221 Josephine St., Wingham

#### 10.0 Adjournment

That the North Huron Economic Development Committee agree that there being no further business before the Committee; the meeting be hereby adjourned at 2:00 pm.