



Southwold Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

**Thursday January 4th, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.
Council Chambers/Webex Meeting**

Voting Members

Present: Deputy Mayor Justin Pennings
Councillor John Adzija
Steve Bushell
Michelle Hoffsuemmer
Barry Harrison

Absent: Grayden Laing
Rod Rattray, Elgin Business Resource Centre
Lisa Higgs CAO/Clerk

Staff/Resource: Aaron Van Oorspronk, Director of Infrastructure and Development
Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives
June McLarty, Corporate Services Clerk

1. Call to order

Deputy Mayor Pennings called the meeting to order at 8:10 am.

2. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda for the January 4th meeting.

3. Approval of the November 9th Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as drafted from the November 9th, 2023 meeting.

4. Development and Infrastructure Updates

Director Aaron VanOorspronk reported that work is continuing on an agreement with Central Elgin for sanitary services. There has been some interest in the Township's industrial lands. The EA is moving forward. The Plan of Subdivision for Talbotville Meadows Phase 2 has been resubmitted for approval. The Turville property in north Port Stanley settlement area has been submitted for draft plan approval.

5. Rural Economic Development Funding

Director Aaron VanOorspronk reported that the Township received a notice advising the municipality that new intakes for the RED program will be opening in January 2024. Recommendations from the EDC Committee would be appreciated to take to Council. Carolyn suggested that we meet with OMAFRA to review suggested projects to see if they would fit the criteria. A suggestion for improving the streetscapes in Fingal and Shedden was made as a possible project submission or improving the parking lot behind the medical building in Shedden.

6. Commercial Plaza Tour Feedback

Some committee members toured the commercial plaza and determined the condition of the plaza was better than initially thought. Decisions on what to do with it will have to be made. The construction of sewers will benefit this property.

7. Municipal Auction/Market Planning

The Committee discussed what to do with the old maps, drawings and signs we have of the Township. Auctions at different events were suggested. The disposal of the name signs should be a separate event. A complete inventory will need to be completed for the next meeting and then plans can be made to determine the best way to auction off these artifacts.

8. Township Highway 401 Signage Opportunity

The cost of putting a sign on Highway 401 needs to be determined. A report on the cost will need to be brought back at the next meeting. This sign could be used as a project under the RED program. More decisions are needed on what is to be included on the sign.

9. 2024 Budget Development

Deferred to the next meeting.

10. Update from County on Business Retention and Expansion Program

Carolyn provided an update on the Business Retention and Expansion Program. So far, 35 businesses have been spoken to with a goal of speaking to 70 businesses to assist them with their marketing and HR. There is a webpage on the County's website. Once the data has been collected, a report will be brought

to County Council and it will be shared with local councils.

11. Redevelop of County Economic Development and Tourism Websites/2024 Total Eclipse

Carolyn reported that the County Website and the County Economic Development Committee will share the main website for the County. The County tourism website will continue to function as a separate website.

Carolyn also reported that the County Tourism Website will include the 2024 Total Eclipse. There will be information for people who want to experience the totality of the eclipse. County staff will also be working with local businesses to develop plans for visitors who want to experience the eclipse.

12. St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce Luncheon with the Mayors

An Invitation was presented to the EDC for the Luncheon with the Mayors.

13. New and Other Business

The EDC recommended that a report be presented to Council suggesting the parking lot behind the medical building in Shedden be turned into a municipal parking lot.

14. Next Meeting date, time and location

February 8th, 2024 at 8:00 am in Council Chambers

15. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 am.

Chairperson, Justin Pennings

Staff Resource, Lisa Higgs