



County of Simcoe
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MINUTES

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2012

MEETING TIME: 9:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE: Douglas, L. (LIP, recording secretary); Gavarre, N. (City of Barrie); Laycock, S. (SMWDB); Lee, S. (LIP); Muenz, D. (North Simcoe Community Futures Development Corp); Oosterbaan, C. (County of Simcoe); Ryan, V. (Nottawasaga Futures); Wisken, R. (LIP)
Regrets: Benedetti, C. (Orillia Area Community Development Corp); Landy, D. (City of Orillia); Terrance, M. (Social Enterprise for Canada)

SUBJECT: Business Development Sub-Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

S. Lee welcomed members to the first meeting of the Business Development Sub-council, and members introduced themselves.

2. Introductions to LIP & Sub-councils

S. Lee provided a quick overview of the LIP Sub-councils and their priorities:

Welcoming Communities – development of an Immigrant Directory (working group in effect); use of libraries (30) as community hubs; and the development of a framework for a public education strategy to reduce racism;

Education - Educational services map; cultural competency; language services for secondary school students

Employment – Establishment of an Immigrant Employment Council (working group in effect); employer education; newcomer education; and professional development (working groups underway)

Human Services – translation and interpretation; and best practices conference

Settlement Services – joint marketing initiatives; development activities; information sharing.

A 4-page advertorial on LIP will appear in free local newspapers throughout Simcoe County this weekend. Among the articles featured are the Bayanihan Club of Simcoe County, a Collingwood couple who emigrated from Kenya, and the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care as well as LIP and two local ethnic restaurants.

It is expected that the oversight of LIP is changing to the national level. There has been restructuring of CIC in the last budget, including the closure of offices in Barrie and the York Region.

OMAFRA congratulated the County on the establishment of a Business Development sub-council, the only LIP in the Province to have one. S. Lee noted that the OMAFRA *Community Attractiveness Indicators for Newcomers tool* is a very useful benchmarking tool.

3. Online Portals

S. Lee reported that the LIP application for an Immigrant Online Portal was approved with small budget adjustments. S. Lee demonstrated the link to the Ontario website which houses the links to existing portals, i.e. Brant, Durham. Job descriptions for 2 associated positions will be written in early July and work on the portal is expected to begin in August.

There was some discussion on the benefits and opportunities that the portal could provide for the local business development community. It was suggested that the sub-council could develop the core content for the business piece of the portal.

S. Lee referenced the Provincial Nominee Program which is an immigration program that helps attract jobs, investment and growth to each province by helping employers and investors. The program has had many successes and a few failures, including PEI which faced many challenges. Members can contact S. Lee if they are interested in further information on the PEI program.

4. Role and Scope of the Business Development Sub-council

S. Lee briefly discussed the standard terms of reference, including conflict of interest on a personal basis, and the need for the sub-council to develop its own role and scope.

Comments included:

- Policy and actuality at conflicts (in health care) – hiring freezes; need for more staff.
- Focus on attraction piece to bring in immigrants in area, including investor class
- Small numbers coming in
- current labour shortages
- lack of employment opportunities
- Make connection with larger associations in GTA, such as the Toronto Chinese Business Association who are linked to the Asian community here
- Challenges of bringing investor classes here
- Portal – must be responsive & competitive
- Determine where investors are going
- Connecting with business associations through presentations.

5. Identification of emerging issues in economic and business development

Emerging Issues

- Diversifying economic base
- South Simcoe - manufacturing #1 economic driver – 83% related to automotive – looking at other sectors, such as food processing, plastics, large development, corporate agriculture, tourism
- Business retention (BRE)
- Not getting consensus to develop an economic development strategy → more collaborative effort → improved linkages in business community
- Exploring small market business incubator
- Improved linkages in business community
- Shortages of skilled trade workers – health care field, journeyman level
- Short-term contract work = less retention in area
- No jobs for current unemployed → focus on unemployment numbers
- Employer education on hiring practices → welcoming community
- Diversity training within customer service experience

- Show long term benefits of hiring immigrants
- Support partners through marketing initiatives
- The need for a balanced survey.

Missing players

- Political presence
- Greater Barrie Enterprise Centre
- Business librarian → business development workshops
- Economic Development Officers
- Self-employment agencies
- Sector associations
- Chambers of Commerce

6. Where do we go from here?

Meeting Frequency:

It was recommended that meetings adjoin the Regional Economic Development Group meetings to reduce meeting fatigue. C. Oosterbaan will confirm the next meeting date of the EDO group which is tentatively scheduled in late August. These meetings typically are held on a bi-monthly basis.

Champion:

At the recommendation of V. Ryan and D. Muenz, C. Oosterbaan agreed to serve as champion of this sub-council.

The Gateway – York Region’s IEP Conference – October 23, 2012

The desire for presence of Simcoe County as an exhibitor at the conference was discussed with the following suggestions:

- investment piece – new business start-ups;
- Agriculture succession planning – Charles Kourassi (CCO);
- Health Sector Recruitment – RVH;
- Excellence in manufacturing;
- County of Simcoe.

7. Wrap Up

1. Appointment of C. Oosterbaan as champion of the Business Development Sub-council.
2. Schedule the next meeting to coincide with the next Regional Economic Development group meeting.
3. Make a brief presentation at the next meeting of the Regional Economic Development group meeting on the sub-council and on what’s happening in other communities, i.e. Sarnia-Lambton initiatives.
4. Simcoe County presence as an exhibitor at the upcoming York Region Gateway IEP Conference.