

Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force – Meeting #1

MINUTES

Zoom Video Conference

April 29, 2020 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Present: Janis Auster, Elke Bidner, Lori DeGraw, Ryan Erb, Joani Gerber, John Kastner, Joelle Lewis, Eddie Matthews, Jeff Orr, Mike Pullen, Rob Russell, Rebecca Scott, Joan Thomson

1. Welcome & Introductions Joani Gerber, investStratford (IS)
2. Review of Purpose: JG
Incorporating immediate and long-term actions to support local industry, small business and the workforce across all sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic response and eventual recovery.
3. Review of Draft Frame of Reference JG & Feedback (All)
 - Task Force as a whole agreed with the terms laid out in the Frame of Reference.
 - J. Gerber pointed out that the city has a separate committee set up to address social needs of the community.
 - E. Matthews asked about expected timeline. J. Gerber said we expected to do work through the fall and into 2021 with the expectation of meeting weekly for the time being. Projects may dictate meeting needs.
 - Jeff Orr, Chair of the Board of Directors, investStratford offered background for the selection of this group. He highlighted that this crisis is a huge hit to this community and that we need to focus on coming together as one team.
4. Review Committee Structure
5. Task Force Chair– investStratford
 - At the request of the City, investStratford (IS) will lead this initiative.
 - IS will establish a website landing page to host the public documents for this task force as well as create an online feedback form for the general public to submit comments and suggestions
 - IS will manage the administrative and financial aspects of this project including taking on a leadership role for grant applications (with possible assistance from CAOs office)
 - L. DeGraw asked about aligning communication efforts with the City. J. Gerber and J. Thomson agreed that there needed to be more discussion around communication. J. Thomson advised that Mike Beitz's (Corporate Communications for the City) time is limited, but agreed that the messages should be meaningful. E. Matthews agreed that messages should be helpful. R. Scott noted that organizations should look to pool resources and work together.
6. Sub-Committees: Our initial thoughts for committees and lead organization are as follows:
 - Manufacturing, Agri-Food & Professional Services: Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce
 - Hospitality, Tourism & Retail: Stratford Tourism Alliance & City Centre Stratford (Co-Chair)

- Workforce, Non-Profit & Charitable: United Way Perth-Huron & Stratford/Perth Museum (Co-Chair)

- J. Gerber reviewed the sub-committee breakdown indicating that each sector has lead organizations. These organizations are representative of their sector and will connect and draw from other organizations and businesses in the community to facilitate their initiatives.
- Task Force agreed to sub-committee breakdown and leadership roles.
- L. DeGraw asked if their organizations' individual boards should add input. J. Gerber said that they should.
- J. Lewis asked if this task force is meant to be more strategic or action oriented. J. Gerber confirmed that it is action oriented.

7. Membership – Business Facing Organizations

- J. Kastner asked about including representation from the Stratford Festival. J. Gerber indicated that they should be included as part of the sub-committees. It is up to the sub-committees to identify who should contribute to their individual sub-committees, but the organizations on the Task Force will lead these sub-committees.
- R. Erb asked if there was any expectation around co-chairs and J. Gerber confirmed that there was no pre-design set as of right now.

8. Special Advisors

- J. Gerber and J. Orr articulated that special advisors are individuals who aren't a member of one particular sector, but, could be a valuable resource. i.e. experts and advocates

9. Participant Comments and Next Steps All

- Doodle to be distributed to find a weekly meeting time
- Sub-Committees leads to connect – J. Orr reiterated that committees should think outside the box in considering who to include.
- L. DeGraw asked about reporting to the City. J. Gerber expects this to be biweekly to monthly.
- R. Erb asked about overlap within the region. J. Gerber indicated that we will focus on what we can do for the time being and are happy to share what we have as we go along.

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