

Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force – Meeting #2

MINUTES

Zoom Video Conference

May 7th, 2020 3pm – 4pm

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

Purpose

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.

- **3-3:10pm** **Summary of week/general updates** **Joani Gerber, investStratford (IS)**
 - J. Gerber offered summary of week activities including anticipation of work being done and the feedback form going live. Consolidated list of feedback to be distributed to the City weekly.
 - J. Gerber discussed the connection between this Task Force and the City Initiatives Team to support various initiatives. i.e. reopening the farmers market, supporting outdoor venues, etc. Asked the HRT Committee to consider as we go forward how we might use the Initiatives Team as support in regard to things like temporary bylaw amendments, permitting, etc. We will work with J. Thomson to help streamline the process with the City and City Council.
 - J. Gerber updated the Task Force about a current Fed Dev tourism grant that is going to be amended for use in tourism recovery. Amendment to propose 3 to 9 funded projects (\$45,000-\$125,000/project) by March 2021. Funds must be spent within grant guidelines, but a lot of opportunity to support various initiatives.
 - J. Gerber continued with update on Digital Accelerator Grant Program launched last week. Applications close Wednesday May 13. Program starts May 19. Currently have 21 applications for 30 spots.

- **3:10-3:45pm** **Committee Reports** **Chairs**
(membership & special advisors; activities; next steps; etc.)
 - Manufacturing, Agri-Food & Professional Services: Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce
 - E. Matthews circulated report with results of survey from Stratford and St. Marys completed by Leger and the Association for Canadian studies regarding COVID-19.
 - E. Matthews referenced looking at opportunities businesses might try. i.e. dinner in greenhouses, etc.
 - E. Matthews shared feedback regarding concern about free downtown parking and its effect on restaurant take-out orders.
 - E. Matthews reviewed current FanSaves gift certificate program to help local business owners.

- E. Matthews committed to J. Orr's request to have a list of sub-committee members by early next week.

Hospitality, Tourism & Retail: Stratford Tourism Alliance & City Centre Stratford (Co-Chair)

- L. DeGraw reviewed sub-committee to coordinate and plan approach. L. DeGraw continued to outline two areas of focus:
 - Business Intelligence including business planning for social distancing, outlining PPE needs, etc.
 - Destination Animation incorporating previously successful program supported by RTO4, STA, and BIA. Program to expand to include storytelling and content creation.
- L. DeGraw outlined plan to include advisory groups to feed into larger group. Follow Up meeting soon to finalize organizations for working groups with invitations to come from investStratford.

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

- J. Kastner reviewed subcommittee meeting to outline objectives and responsibilities. Met earlier this week to get grounded and determine responsibilities. J. Kastner continued to outline sub-committee approach:
 - 4-5 member working group
 - 4-5 topic experts for input on ideas and strategies
 Committee will start conversations with potential contributors and investStratford will follow up as requested.
- J. Kastner focus on "what the non-profit and charitable organizations can do to help the workforce."

• **3:45-4pm**

Ongoing Concerns & Next Steps

All

- J. Orr reiterated that committees should reach out with questions.
- J. Gerber suggested considering programming that could be done around what would have been the Stratford Festival Opening Week. L. DeGraw and R. Scott to think about current campaigns and other ideas that might dovetail together.
- J. Gerber encouraged sharing links and other info that could send people to the various organization websites for resources.
- J. Gerber outlined what would be on the Task Force Section of the investStratford website including meeting minutes, updates, and other project highlights. Task Force members will be listed on the website with links to their organizations.
- R. Russell identified that the current STA video is a great effort.
- J. Gerber asked for examples of previous Destination Animation projects and explained that it is important where the money comes from as Fed Dev money can't be stacked with other federal money.
- J. Orr requested that sub-committees come together by early next week finalizing sub-committee members.
- J. Gerber grateful for the work and support of this completely volunteer-based group.

Meeting ended at 3:45pm