

Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force – Meeting #3

MINUTES

Zoom Video Conference

May 14th, 2020 3:30pm – 4:30pm

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

Regrets: Ryan Erb

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.

- **3:30-3:40pm** **Summary of week/general updates** **Joani Gerber, investStratford (IS)**
 - J. Gerber recognized BIA efforts to purchase 20,000+ Masks to distribute to any Stratford small business at no cost in bundles of 20 up to a total of 60 masks. Mask are available at no cost to any business who registers on the Eventbrite site set up by investStratford. Masks will be distributed by investStratford and BIA team members at Stratford Mall. MJ Thomson will prepare safe, clean mall space for distribution Tuesday, May 19 and Thursday, May 21.
 - J. Gerber acknowledged that we are not set up as retailers and we need to find easy ways to connect businesses to acquire PPE directly.
 - J. Gerber updated that all working group invitations have been distributed based on provided lists. Majority have responded positively and agreed to join the efforts. Participants have provided contact info on google spreadsheet that was shared with group. She continued to emphasize that getting these groups working is of utmost importance.
 - J. Gerber followed up on feedback form comments that were distributed earlier today to group. Recognizing that these comments would go to the group and the city as updates and for consideration.
 - J. Auster confirmed the following triage for comments/suggestions:
 - All comments/suggestions should be directed to the feedback form on the investStratford Task Force web page to collect all data in one location.
 - An auto-response is set to confirm message delivery.
 - Commenters that request response will receive acknowledgement email from investStratford within 2-3 business days.
 - All comments will be shared with Task Force (as detailed above). Specific comments/suggestions will be forwarded to appropriate sub-committee chairs for group consideration.
 - Sub-committees to respond directly to comments/suggestions to close transparency loop.

- 3:40-3:55pm Business arising from minutes Joani Gerber, IS**

 - Date and Process for Working Group Meetings

 - All working groups have had initial check ins and will be meeting again before next Thursday's meeting.
 - Julia Merritt and Zac Gribble from HRT team will be appointed to the City Initiatives Team to liaison between groups. R. Scott will send contact info to Joan Thomson.
 - Protocol for Volunteer Management

 - J. Kastner – what's the decision-making process?
 - J. Auster responded that similar to the comments/suggestions protocol, people recommended for working group/volunteers will be sent to the appropriate Working Group for consideration based on group size and group needs. Working Groups to respond to recommendation directly.
 - HRT Destination Animation Project Assessment

 - R. Scott responded that how to assess projects has been discussed, but specific criteria has not been laid out as of yet due to prioritizing getting businesses up and running.

- 3:55-4:20pm Committee Reports & Discussion Chairs**
(membership & special advisors; activities; next steps; etc.)

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

 - R. Scott outlined that focus this past week has been on the PPE/Mask project.
 - R. Scott updated that their sub-committee has met and discussed plan for workflow with the heads of their working groups, Zac Gribble and Julia Merritt. Meeting again next Tuesday with expectation of really getting things ready to go.
 - L. DeGraw reiterated the first focus will be for the Business Intelligence Group highlighting that "How do you open your business in a COVID1-19 environment" is critical and urgent.
 - R. Russell added that he expects the Destination Animation group to get going quickly and simultaneously to the Business Intelligence projects, but getting businesses open safely is a priority.
 - Group consensus led by J. Orr to get things moving forward quickly, but safely. How can we "get things out the front door?" R. Russell reiterated that all three sections of Task Force will involve safety measures.

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

 - J. Kastner updated that co-chairs met and finalized working group asks. He has reached out to connect with all working group invitees post-invitations going out.
 - J. Kastner recognized the uniqueness wayfinding in this environment and determination to identify "how we can be most helpful". Reiterated that goal is on how "nonprofits can support the economic recovery."
 - J. Gerber led discussion around how we might begin to think about the childcare piece. She reminded that work needs look very different without childcare in place.
 - J. Thomson updated that there is emergency daycare required for essential staff. It is complicated because childcare is provided by a mix of city and private organizations. In addition, no solution for older children not usually covered by day care. City is also on hiring freeze for seasonal employees who would normally be day camp employees.
 - Recommendation to connect with Kim McElroy at social services and Jeff Wilson.

- **MAP: Manufacturing, Agri-Food & Professional Services: Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce**
 - E. Matthews advised of many conversations around restaurant requirement needs and rules around alcohol. Many questions on what we can do with Market Square. Additional ongoing conversations with B&B owners and retailers regarding what they require.
 - E. Matthews continued that there is an ongoing conversation with B&B owners and retailers to detail what they require.
 - E. Matthews said sub-committee is working on connections with the agri-food sector.
 - More work continuing next week.

- **City of Stratford, Joan Thomson**
 - J. Thomson updated that council approved farmers market opening this weekend following health guidelines. May need to advise that this is not meant to be a social event, but to get food and leave.
 - J. Thomson advised that community need to abide by rules for access to continue.
 - J. Thomson advised of discussions around the opening of lake side drive and concerns from police, city, and health. Currently working on a recommendation.
 - J. Thomson looking forward to recommendations from the HRT around plans for cafes, restaurants, etc. City initiatives committee stands ready to assist where they can.
 - J. Thompson recommended moving forward with proposals and ideas to be able to activate as quickly as possible as the restrictions lift. How can we be as nimble as possible?

- **4:20-4:30pm Ongoing Concerns & Next Steps All**
 - Group discussion around how to manage expectations, particularly as every community is different. We want to act quickly, but efficiently and with caution. J. Orr to talk to mayor about sharing events and expectations on social media.
 - L. DeGraw led conversation around letters of support. E. Matthews with other Task Force signed letters of support of small business and the Stratford Festival.
 - Agreement to share this letter publicly. J. Gerber said it will be posted on Task Force web page. J. Kastner to share the Museum's letter, also to be posted.
 - What can we do to promote positive energy and activity? Acknowledgement that "planning is not sexy" and there is a lot of invisible work that goes on in the background.
 - J. Auster asked Task Force Members to complete Contact Sheet form. She will re-distribute the form link.

Meeting ended at 4:35pm