

## Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force – Meeting #5

### MINUTES

#### Zoom Video Conference

May 28, 2020 3pm – 4pm

**Attendees:** Joani Gerber, Michael Pullen, Janis Auster, Eddie Matthews, Joan Thomson, Rebecca Scott, Jeff Orr, Joelle Lewis, John Kastner, Ryan Erb

**Regrets:** Lori DeGraw, Rob Russell, Elke Bidner

#### 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)**
  - Phase 1 Al fresco going to Council on Friday 5/29/2020
  - Patio Extensions under consideration – SABA interested in helping to facilitate
  - City is accepting Patio Permits; fees currently being discussed. J. Thomson said Public Health also needs to inspect.

- **3:10-3:45pm**                      **Committee Reports**                      **Chairs**  
(membership & special advisors; activities; next steps; etc.)

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

R. Scott Reported:

- Working groups streamlining communication.
- Destination Development Group using private website for review and ranking of project ideas. Will work with investStratford to find home for community project form.
- Adding people to committees as needed: Leigh Cove, Amanda Hatton. John Kastner advising HRT:DD group on patio project.
- City Initiatives Group met Tuesday - Al fresco project was well received and inspired quick turnaround.
- STA and BIA will start sharing some staff resources and work on complementary marketing campaigns.
- Working with Mark Wilson, FedDev, on RRRF.
- Library donating staff member for research.
- Goal to only bring viable ideas/programs to council.

Additional Commentary:

- BIA/HRT:DD to gauge restaurants for interest in patio extension.

- First efforts of marketing will be civic based. Tap into different groups within our community to boost economy with people we have here. BIA/STA efforts, Chamber to possibly join in.
- J. Gerber reiterated that local piece is critical. Potential Federal funding for campaigns in fall and early winter if/when it is safe.
- J. Gerber informed that Google Canada is working on a digital main street project that will be offered in Stratford for businesses to have websites built for free.

Manufacturing, Agri-Food & Professional Services: Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce

E. Matthews Reported:

- Manufacturing starting to ramp up as well as construction and related jobs. M. Pullen added that most are in phases but moving ahead.
- Professional services still waiting for go ahead.
- Continued confusion around regulations and how to open safely. Uncertainty on how to offer clarity.
- Counter shields are sparse as is the ability to get them installed.
- Agri-food industries still can't get enough help, farmers anticipating a good crop, but need drivers and truckers, etc.
- Finding benefits from virtual town halls, ask an expert series. Suggested doing ones for retail, hospitality, etc.

Additional Commentary:

- M. Pullen added feedback from suppliers regarding of loss production based on restaurants not purchasing, but optimistic things getting back to normal.
- Continue to provide government links to safety on website as well as recommendation to check association websites and the HPPH Business line.

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

J. Kastner Reported:

- Discussion around coordination of subcommittees that are bringing up the same issues.
- Employers should use opportunityliveshere.ca to post jobs. Partners in Employment and Conestoga Career Centre both have people looking for work.
- Regarding Standards, GM has offered to provide safety standards. What distribution of that data?

Additional Commentary

- Possible place to keep recurring issues: virtual whiteboard, power noodle, etc.

• **3:45-4pm**                      **Ongoing Concerns & Next Steps**                      **All**

Discussion:

- J. Gerber asked if the current committee structure is working of if we need to revamp?
  - A lot of cross over i.e. workforce.
  - How do we manage communication so we're not doubling efforts? Suggestions:
    - Circulated Reports/Bullet lists
    - More participant cross over into other meetings
    - J. Auster attend all committee meetings
- Try new plan for two weeks. Stay as specific to sector as possible to avoid scope creep.
- R. Scott said we should align communication for investStratford website and get clear on messaging to media on what we are doing and where to find it.
- J. Lewis advised to be careful about liability. Use live government resource links.