

Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force

MINUTES

June 25, 2020

Zoom Video Conference

Present: Janis Auster, Elke Bidner, Lori DeGraw, Joani Gerber, Joelle Lewis, Eddie Matthews, Mike Pullen, Joan Thomson, Jeff Orr

Regrets: Ryan Erb, Rob Russell, Rebecca Scott, John Kastner

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)
*include summary of weeks meetings – areas of overlap, etc. Janis Auster (IS)

Joani:

- Council approved boardwalks, SSM Barge, StreetSide live
- 1-2 other patio options to consider, currently in the works then take to City Initiatives
- JobsStratford up and running, try and start tracking SEO

Janis, et al.:

- Discussion re: future of BIC group – general comments: maybe move to ad hoc, or transition interested members to other subcommittees. Don't want to lose sight of the value of those committee members.

- 3:10-3:45pm Committee Reports Chairs
(membership & special advisors; activities; next steps; etc.)
Manufacturing, Agri-Food & Professional Services: Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce

Eddie:

- Busy week with promotions - be a tourist in your own backyard, videos, promotional materials, etc.

Elke:

- Press release went out regarding workforce site, working on socials

Eddie:

- CTV London and Kitchener news piece re: Perth County working with Ag society, etc.
- Workplace Safety - retail and restaurants moving to next phase

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

Lori:

- Next phase of al fresco including Tom Patterson island concrete pads Full implementation is expected by July 3
- Marketing Grant for STA public today. Approx. \$385,000 to be present on major marketing initiatives and make up lost revenue. STA expected to take on more marketing muscle behind the initiatives and the task force. Start rolling out as soon as next week. Contribution will allow some other funds to be freed up for task force initiatives.

Workforce, Non-Profit & Charitable up other resources from marketing: United Way Perth-Huron & Stratford/Perth Museum (Co-Chair)

Joelle:

- Childcare – Survey being conducted to gauge what is needed.
- Volatility in the charitable sector – urgent needs are being addressed with individuals and vulnerable populations, but not for profits are starting to expose more vulnerabilities
- Workforce tool kit complete and being released. Continue to try to assist workers are displaced
- Trying to innovate how we match skill sets with existing knowledge and expertise, so people are ready to return to work.
- Community foundation has some funds to support that work.
- Pillar not for profit conducted social enterprise search. Exploring what that could look like for us in Stratford. Importance of utilizing skill set

Joani, et al.:

- Any one able to navigate paid volunteers' program? – Not yet, still being released. There is a lot of fear around going to work. Organizations not able to screen people effectively

Joan:

- Municipalities don't qualify for student subsidies
- City partnering with YMCA to run summer day camps as they have the resources and can use the student subsidy. Anne Hathaway daycare reopening and has capacity because parents not ready to send their kids back to day care.
- Council looking for programming for the community equity lens
- Interest in vulnerable population plus women and families.
- Joani – Mike is it possibly to gather info and needs from manufacturers and report back?
- Nonprofit daycares choosing not to operate because of the fear creating emphasis on municipalities to fill in the gap. Funding model doesn't work in pandemic mode.
- City Deficit growing.
- Thanks for all the work and identified Stratford as a resilient community

• 3:45-4pm

Ongoing Concerns & Next Steps

All

- Mayor's Office to host roundtable to get feedback regarding whether we are on track.
- Release survey to collect feedback, as well.
- Spread out focus beyond downtown core
- Switch to bi-weekly meetings.