

Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force

AGENDA

September 17, 2020

Zoom Video Conference

Present: Joani Gerber, Janis Auster, Joelle Lewis, Jeff Orr, Mike Pullen, Rob Russell, Joan Thomson, Zac Gribble, Julia Merritt, 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.

- 1) Z. Gribble reported on HRT:
 - a) All HRT projects wrapped up, except Lights On Stratford
 - b) Cycle Stratford was success despite iffy weather. Sold out at 100 participants. Looking towards making this a bigger annual event.
 - c) Lights On Stratford moving forward with much support and interest.
 - i) Almost \$300,000 funding committed prior to embarking on corporate sponsorship. Seeking approximately \$150,000 in corporate sponsorship.
 - ii) City Initiatives group has been given report providing more details for the project including outlining potential asks. Proposal to also go to Council.
 - iii) Looking at additional grants, including application to Ontario Cultural Attractions fund (\$40,000).
 - iv) Festival coordinator working well. Malt Management will also help manage especially around volunteers.
 - v) Janet Sellery engaged for health and safety report.

Comments:

- J. Gerber suggested connecting with BIA and City Beautification to coordinate efforts.
- R. Russell said that BIA owns 100 of the 130 snowflake lights and is working on repairs, etc. for use this winter.

- 2) J. Merritt reported on Business Intelligence:
 - a) Committee leadership has applied for a Trillium Grant for strategic planning including hiring staff to gather information, make an action plan, and begin implementation around communication and mid-long term community support during extended periods of disruption. Expected to hear in November in time to reapply if grant unsuccessful
 - b) Funds secured from Conestoga College Program in connection with Stratford Perth Community Foundation to match money from investStratford to support a 2 month contract to begin information gathering process. Community consultation will take place to enable task force decision making around needs that need to be addressed. Interviews to be held the week of September 21 for October hire.

Comments:

- J. Gerber confirmed late-summer identification that longer term response exceeds the capacity of volunteer group.
- J. Gerber also indicated that we have been fortunate that FedDev has stepped up to help spread funds in 2020, but this work will hopefully help us be prepared for 2021 requests and identifying what we need to ask for from government and municipality.
- J. Gerber reminded that there remains a cold, long winter ahead of us.

3) J. Gerber reported on STAT program:

- a) Still in holding pattern for official announcement, but slowly moving forward.
- b) First round had 27 applications submitted for review.
- c) Plan not to close next round of applications before program is officially announced in hopes of providing more opportunity.

4) J. Gerber reported on FedDev Economic Recovery Projects:

- a) Al Fresco program:
 - i) Met last week with City to start looking at the future planning
 - ii) Currently plan to host Town Hall and/or Survey for general feedback on boardwalks
 - iii) Feedback from patio recipients and How structure for the future. Look for funds for the future
- b) Other Projects:
 - i) Compiling economic impact survey results for patios and other supported projects.

5) J. Thomson reported from City:

- a) A lot going on at the city including a lot of retirements and resignations.
- b) Reminder that the City is subject to the difficulties the community is facing in that this period has been a long haul and there is a long fall and winter to get through. Important to share that there is a lot going on at the city, a lot of retirements and resignations.
- c) Continue to pay attention to public health.

Comments:

- Z. Gribble thanked the City for their continued work and collaboration.
- J. Gerber reminded of need to pay attention to mental health. To that end, the City will top up funds to support the mental wellness program through the end of the year.
- R. Thomas confirmed that we have all been moving at “light speed” and remains appreciative of everyone’s work. As a retailer he has felt supported.