



Minutes

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: July 17, 2018
Meeting Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: Committee Room
Prepared by: Sarah Merrifield, Administrative Assistant – Clerks & Community Services

A. Call to Order

- Steve Simon called the meeting to order.

Also in attendance were Deputy Mayor Gail Ardiel, Interim Chief Administrative Officer Shawn Everitt, Administrative Assistant Sarah Merrifield, Andrew Siegwart, Mylisa Henderson, Tony Poole, Sarah Fillion, Jim Uram, and from the Attainable Housing Committee Board, Bruce Taylor and Kristen Beachli.

Regrets were sent from Mayor John McKean, Gillian Fairley, Tim Newton, Ken Hale, and Andrew Hill.

- **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Gail Ardiel

Seconded by: Tony Poole

THAT the Agenda of July 17, 2018 be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda, Carried.

Previous Minutes

Moved by: Tony Poole

Seconded by: Gail Ardiel

THAT the Minutes of June 4, 2018 be approved as circulated, including any revisions to be made, Carried.

B. Updates

B.1 Bruce Taylor, Attainable Housing Corporation

Bruce Taylor of The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation (AHC) opened discussion by providing attendees with a document detailing the AHC's business model, along with tools and actions to aid in implementation of attainable housing programming.

Bruce confirmed the goal and business model of the AHC is to encourage and support a variety of housing types consisting of both Affordable Housing and Rental Units, which requires a meeting with Grey County to request funding for social housing initiatives, in addition to Attainable Ownership Housing and Rental Units (market value housing). Bruce added the objective in assisting with both affordable and attainable housing initiatives is to benefit various groups including, the full-time and seasonal workforce in The Blue Mountains, average income households struggling to obtain house ownership or viable rental options, and finally, retired seniors who wish to make The Blue Mountains their full-time residence.

Kristen Beachli and Bruce provided an overview of the various tools available and the actions underway. An example of a current attainable housing initiative is the Mountain House at Windfall development which has twelve units reserved for affordable housing, based on the development agreement. Kristen confirmed that covenants are a useful mechanism for ensuring that future home sales do not exceed the cost of living increases in affordable and attainable units. Bruce advised that at the last Attainable Housing Corporation meeting, Director of Planning and Development Services Michael Benner discussed the tools the Town can utilize to further attainable housing initiatives through the development process. To this point, Kristen commented that attainable housing negotiations must occur with developers during the approvals process; developers have to be aware of the consideration for attainable housing from the beginning. Bruce confirmed that the *Provincial Inclusionary Act* enables municipalities to implement zoning in favour of attainable housing in return for 'bonusing'. The Blue Mountains Official Plan does not currently include bonusing. Michael suggested in the prior Attainable Housing meeting that bonusing can be enacted for the purposes of attainable housing. Bruce further suggested the use of existing Town-owned lands to support attainable housing developments, or for the Town to engage private land owners as the opportunity arises. Finally, the Town can consider deferral of Development Charge (DC) payments as an incentive for developers to consider building to meet attainable housing needs.

Steve Simon iterated the need for candidates for Council to be aware of attainable housing needs, and the methods for implementing attainable housing programs. Steve questioned Bruce on how the programs are being implemented, either on a macro (Town-wide) or micro (per-developer) scale.

Andrew Siegwart addressed Bruce, stating that the document provided by AHC is modelled after the Attainable Housing Study that was conducted by the Labour Supply Task Force. Andrew cautioned that the study has not yet been presented to municipal Councils within Grey County, or to Grey County Council. Andrew has requested a Special Meeting of Council to have the results of the Attainable Housing Study made public. At the time of the EDAC meeting, no date had been set for the Special Meeting of Council, and discussion ensued regarding the presentation style in the event the consultant that prepared the Attainable Housing Study is unable to attend the Special Meeting of Council. If the consultant is unable to attend, Andrew advised he will provide a brief synopsis of the study findings to The Blue Mountains Council, and requested the Attainable Housing

Corporation and The Blue Mountains & District Chamber of Commerce speak following the presentation to voice their support.

The discussion returned to bonusing and Gail Ardiel advised that in the past, developers have received bonusing however, it became a unit density issue (bonusing supports higher density) and as a result, this incentive has been cut from the Official Plan. Shawn reiterated that bonusing is key for getting developers onboard with attainable housing. In the past, bonusing could be given out as incentive for a number of reasons. Moving forward, there needs to be a distinct connection between bonusing and building attainable housing units. Andrew commented on the possibility of public/private partnerships wherein the employment community, along with the Town, partners with developers for the purposes of building attainable units. Steve conceded that the immediate need for workforce housing is important, but the group must also consider long-term housing goals and the sustainability of the community given that existing, developable land is so expensive. Shawn further noted that existing, developable land is also constrained (i.e. Niagara Escarpment Commission).

The group discussed an example of an attainable housing model used in Whistler, British Columbia. Kristen noted the Whistler example is a fully-developed housing authority. Establishment of a housing authority is a very complex process which is why the Attainable Housing Corporation presently focuses its efforts on market-based approaches.

Jim Uram advised the group that Ryerson University came to The Blue Mountains approximately 10 years ago and determined the problem with attainable housing goes beyond employment-based. He stressed the need for the Official Plan to support attainable housing objectives. Andrew expressed concern over the direction the attainable housing narrative has taken during the meeting. He reiterated the Labour Supply Task Force has recently conducted a study based in the tourism sector and first and foremost, the conclusions from the study must be prioritized by Council and the business community. Tony Poole questioned how the results of the study will be received by Council and the public. Andrew commented that in the past when exploring attainable housing constraints, Members of Council were not fully aware of the difficulties faced by the business community and by the community. With the Task Force study, there is case study, compelling research and the need for attainable housing in The Blue Mountains is well known and well-articulated. Andrew expects the document to be well-received. Jim requested that Andrew set up time for the Council candidates to ask questions once the study document is made public following the Special Meeting of Council.

Bruce advised the group that the Attainable Housing Corporation will go to the various candidates meetings prior to the election and pose questions to the candidates regarding attainable housing. Andrew requested that Bruce co-ordinate with him on this matter.

Shawn confirmed he will work with the Town Clerk and Members of Council to schedule a Special Meeting of Council or a workshop open to the public so the findings of the Labour Task Force Study can be made public.

B.2 Update on Communications & Economic Development Coordinator Recruitment Process

Shawn advised the group that the Economic Development and Communications Coordinator (EDCC) position was posted the week of July 9 to close August 3. Interviews are currently scheduled for the week of August 13. Shawn assured the group the recruitment process is well underway.

The group discussed the unique needs of the community (tourism sector, agri-business) and agreed that the sooner the EDCC position is filled, the better.

B.3 Next Steps for Economic Development Advisory Committee Discussions

Shawn advised that the budget currently shows an Economic Development Strategic Plan being developed in 2019 with a Communications Plan following. Shawn stressed that the EDAC group is the champion and driver of Economic Development in The Blue Mountains. Shawn provided the group with the 2010 Red Hot and Blue Economic Development Strategy which was received in 2010 by Council but not approved. Shawn requested that the group review the Red Hot and Blue document to gain an understanding of where the Town was ten (10) years ago, versus where the Town is now.

For the next meeting, Shawn will obtain the EDAC Terms of Reference document and circulate to group members prior to the August 7 meeting. The group will consider the Terms of Reference and advise if anything needs to be updated. Shawn confirmed this is the ideal time to understand this group's primary focus and set a timeline to revisit/refresh the Terms of Reference as necessary.

C. Upcoming Meeting Dates

The next meeting date will take place August 7, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. in the Committee Meeting Room at Town Hall.

D. Adjournment

Steve Simon adjourned the Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting at 4:08 p.m.