

Draft Minutes of the
COUNTIES COUNCIL DISCUSSION
on
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Meeting of Thursday, October 25, 2007
9:00 a.m.

Board Room A
Counties Administration Building
25 Central Avenue West, Brockville

Members Present: Frank Kinsella, Bill Thake, Ron Holman, Larry Dishaw, Mel Campbell, John, Conley, Jim Pickard, Roger Haley, Bill Gooch, Doug Struthers

Staff Present: Steven Silver, CAO
Vince Germani, Economic Development Co-ordinator
Lisa Severson, CAO Support (Recorder)

Others Present: Stephen Fournier

1.0 Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Kinsella called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Kinsella noted that the purpose of this meeting was for the member municipalities to meet and discuss what they feel the role of regional economic development is from a Counties perspective.

2.0 Additions to the Agenda – Nil

3.0 Review of Minutes – June 28, 2007

The Minutes of the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting of June 28, 2007 were provided for informational purposes. In referring to the Regional Roundtable held on June 12, 200, Mr. Haley emphasized the importance of labour being present, which was not the case and noted the work which has and continues to be done by this group at other facilities including the Brockville Psychiatric Hospital, the Rideau Regional Hospital and Northern Cables. Mr. Haley's comments were noted and the reference to labour in the minutes will be removed.

4.0 Delegations – Nil

5.0 Correspondence - Nil

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4.0 Delegations – Nil

5.0 Correspondence - Nil

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Discussion on Regional Economic Development

Each member provided their input regarding regional economic development. Their input is as follows:

Township of Athens

Mr. Conley stated that Athens is a residential community and the immediate future for economic development for his area is to attract new residents.

Township of Augusta

Mr. Campbell stated that new large industry is no longer coming to this area. Invista is a major employer for this area and the Township of Augusta is working with them on different initiatives.

Mr. Campbell noted there may be more opportunity to work with two or three neighboring municipalities on economic development initiatives which would benefit the municipalities involved.

Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

Mr. Dishaw stated the South Grenville Economic Development Committee is now defunct. His municipality does not have the resources to hire an Economic Development Coordinator and with new initiatives on the forefront will need assistance to develop the new initiatives.

Mr. Dishaw inquired as to whether Mr. Germani could be “loaned” to Edwardsburgh-Cardinal for a specific time frame to assist them, with full compensation paid to the Counties for his work with Edwardsburgh-Cardinal. The response from fellow members indicated this was not possible and there are many qualified firms who offer these types of services.

Mr. Dishaw stated that at the Roundtable meeting held in June the consensus of that group was to choose Model 3 which would have an independent body coordinate regional economic development and request annual funding from the Counties.

Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley

Mr. Pickard stated that regional economic development does not impact the Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley. He stated there needs to be focus and a common element for all municipalities to support regional economic development.

Township of Front of Yonge

Mr. Haley asked the question “where do we go from here”. Mr. Haley remarked his municipality is now only residential. He would like to see results and to see good jobs come to the area through economic development.

Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

Mr. Kinsella stated that the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands is focusing on developing a distribution centre. They are in a key location as they are eight hours away from 85% of the population in Canada and the USA.

Mr. Kinsella stressed the importance of knowing what is going on in the other municipalities within the Counties. The flow of information is important and to be able to assist or support each other it is imperative to keep the lines of communication open and up to date.

Residential growth is also key for the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Island.

Village of Merrickville-Wolford

Mr. Struthers cautioned the group that there have been numerous discussions on economic development and there is a need to look forward. There needs to be a process in place and goals need to be set with tools to measure the performance of regional economic development.

Mr. Struthers stressed it is imperative for Mr. Germani to discover what the municipalities needs are and not what the Counties role is or should be until this is determined.

Municipality of North Grenville

Mr. Gooch stated three main corridors in Leeds and Grenville – the St. Lawrence Corridor, the Rideau River Corridor and the 416 (north and south) Corridor. The northern corridor of the 416 is not geared towards tourism like the south end of the 416. Mr. Gooch stated North Grenville would like to develop industry and is a bedroom community of Ottawa.

There are different needs throughout the County. North Grenville has an economic development plan and staff to implement. He feels the regional economic development model currently in place is not doing anything for North Grenville and feels there is no focus. There needs to be vision and the bar for this vision needs to be high.

Mr. Gooch referenced the City of Ottawa’s new OPA and stated that his community’s growth is being driven by Ottawa.

The need for trades' people in this area is high and maybe the Counties could play a key role in starting an apprenticeship program for new skilled trades' people.

Mr. Gooch suggested a role the Counties could play in economic development is a "banker" to provide financial leverage for infrastructure growth and maintenance which would ultimately assist in economic growth.

Township of Rideau Lakes

Mr. Holman stated that tourism is key to Rideau Lakes and their focus is on attracting tourists and residents to his Township. His Township's goal is to increase their residential base by 3% each year. How does he make this happen?

Mr. Holman questioned if there were common "role or thread" which all municipalities could build on for regional economic development. If there isn't, there is no value in a regional focus at this time. Guidance needs to be given to the economic development coordinator.

Mr. Holman remarked that the communities in Leeds and Grenville need to market themselves as a unit.

Village of Westport

Mr. Thake stated that if a model had to be chosen his preference would be for Model 2 – the Counties Option. Mr. Thake added that growth in one community will have a spin off effect on the other municipalities in Counties.

Further discussion ensued and by a show of hands staff were directed to complete the following items prior to the November 29th meeting:

- Mr. Silver to draft letters to the separated municipalities stating the Counties is reviewing their stance on regional economic development and will contact the partners at an appropriate time.
- Mr. Silver to draft a letter to the Counties Council members requesting input on their economic development priorities and/or barriers which require a county or regional response.

7.0 Reports – Nil

8.0 New Business – Nil

9.0 Other Business

Mr. Germani's contract ends December 31, 2007. The members agreed that this item will be discussed in greater detail at the Governance and Finance meeting on November 8, 2007.

10.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 29, 2007, at the Counties Administration Building, 25 Central Ave. West, Brockville.

11.0 Adjournment

Motion

Moved by Mr. Struthers and seconded by Mr. Thake that the meeting of the Economic Development Sub-Committee adjourn. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.