

Minutes of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE
to the
Joint Services Committee of Leeds and Grenville

Meeting of Monday, January 29, 2007
9:00 a.m.

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

Members Present: Bill Thake, Ron Holman, Frank Kinsella, Larry Dishaw, Mel Campbell, Members of Counties Council, Warden Doug Struthers, Mayor Henderson, City of Brockville, Mayor Garrah, Town of Gananoque, Mayor Dodge, Town of Prescott

Members Absent: Chuck Street, Town of Prescott

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

Others Present: Heather Lawless, Executive Director, Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation
Julie Salter-Keane, Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands
Dave Paul, Economic Development Director, City of Brockville,
Bob Casselman, Manager, City of Brockville
Mayor Jim Pickard

1.0 Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Mr. Fournier stated the first order of business was to elect the 2007 Chair of the Economic Development Sub-Committee. Mr. Fournier called for nominations a first time.

Mr. Kinsella nominated Mr. Henderson and Mrs. Dodge seconded the nomination.

Mr. Fournier asked for nominations a second and third time.

There were no other nominations received.

Mr. Henderson declined the nomination.

Mr. Fournier called for nominations a first time.

Mr. Holman nominated Mr. Kinsella and Mr. Thake seconded the nomination.

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Mr. Fournier asked for nominations a second and third time.

Motion

Moved by Mr. Thake and seconded by Mr. Campbell that nominations be closed. Carried.

Mr. Kinsella accepted the nomination and took the Chair.

Mr. Kinsella called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair a first time.

Mr. Thake nominated Mr. Campbell and Mr. Struthers seconded the nomination.

Mr. Kinsella asked for nominations a second and third time.

Motion

Moved by Mr. Thake and seconded by Mr. Holman that nominations be closed. Carried.

Mr. Campbell accepted the nomination.

2.0 Review and Approval of Minutes – November 30, 2006

Mr. Kinsella gave a brief overview of the Minutes of the November 30, 2006 meeting explaining the various reasons for the review of the Regional Economic Development Program for Leeds and Grenville and referenced the summaries from both the November 7th and November 30th meeting as well as the Regional Economic Development Structure proposal.

Mr. Germani provided the Committee with an explanation of the make-up of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) group and its role in the current model of regional economic development. The TAG group was comprised of representation from the ten member municipalities (municipal staff and/or community representatives), the City of Brockville, the Towns of Prescott and Gananoque as well as representation from the Community Futures Development Corporations. The mandate of the TAG group was to provide initiatives and ideas to the Economic Development Sub-Committee to review. Attendance at the meetings was affected by staffing limitations from the smaller municipalities. In addition, those members that did attend on a regular basis felt that ideas generated from the TAG group were not being supported by the Economic Development Sub-Committee, therefore, attendance at the TAG meetings declined and eventually the TAG group was suspended.

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Struthers and seconded by Mr. Holman that the minutes of November 30, 2006, as circulated be accepted. Carried.

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3.0 Delegations – Nil

4.0 Correspondence – Nil.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Regional Economic Development Priorities – Summary of November 7, 2006 Meeting Discussion

Mr. Germani outlined the priorities set at the November 7, 2006 meeting and provided the Committee with a hard copy of the detailed summary of these priorities.

Mr. Dishaw asked what tourism structure is in place for tourism for areas such as Edwardsburgh/Cardinal who do not have a designated position for tourism promotion. Mr. Germani responded that Prescott Tourism had worked with Brockville Tourism on a strategic plan in order to attract visitors to this area. As well there is the South Grenville Economic Development Committee which has worked on initiatives such as promoting the bicycle trails.

Mr. Germani went on to say that the priorities for regional economic development were discussed at the November 7 meeting and the model or structure for economic development was discussed at the November 30, 2006 meeting. However, there was no quorum at the November 30 meeting and no specific recommendation could be made.

Mr. Germani continued in stating that there is a new Council and a new Economic Development Sub-Committee in place and it is their decision on how to proceed with regional economic development. The priorities and roles for regional economic development must meet the needs of all of the partners. If the needs of all the partners are not met, a recommendation should be made to the Joint Services Committee for changes to the program, including the possible disbandment of the Regional Partnership.

Members present agreed that the priorities and roles set at the November 30, 2006 meeting were satisfactory and Mr. Germani expressed his desire to reach an agreement on the model/structure for the Regional Economic Development Program at today's meeting.

Mr. Garrah questioned the practicality of choosing a model at this time as he felt the Terms of Reference were loose. The Agreement is to be reviewed and renewed every three years and the current Agreement is due October 2007. This is a short timeframe and is it enough time to assess a new model. Mr. Garrah feels that there needs to be a commitment beyond the October 2007 deadline.

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Mr. Kinsella asked the members if they had designated staff for economic development in their municipalities. The responses are as follows:

Municipality	# of Full Time Staff	# of Part Time/Contract Staff
Athens		
Augusta		1 (CAO/Planner)
Edwardsburgh/Cardinal	0	0
Elizabethtown/Kitley	1	1
Front of Yonge	0	0
Leeds and the Thousand Islands	1	
North Grenville	1 (position vacant)	
Rideau Lakes		
Westport		
Brockville	3	
Prescott		1 (CAO/Planner)
Gananoque	1	
UCLG	1	

Mr. Kinsella stated that there are approximately ten individuals currently involved in economic development in Leeds and Grenville. He questioned how these individuals might work together as a team. Mr. Kinsella stated that the TAG group was comprised of many of these individuals, but this groups initiative was slowed by the political will as they were tied to closely to it.

Mr. Germani stated the vision of an effective working group would include members from industry, agriculture, chambers of commerce and economic development coordinators. Mr. Germani stated that Model Three – a stand alone entity, would not be viable at this time as there would not be the financial backing needed to operate this model. Model One – the current mode – could be continued with “tweaking” such as changes to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or the program could move to Model Two – which has the Regional Economic Program operated solely by the Counties, with informal partnerships created among interested parties. In addition, meetings would not necessarily need to be held on a monthly basis and Mr. Germani suggested quarterly meetings to keep the members abreast of projects.

Mr. Thake commented that the Terms of Reference is what flowed from the initial concept of regional economic development in Leeds and Grenville; that is, all partners working together to promote development throughout the region.

Mr. Struthers stated that the expectations from the November 30th meeting were that there would be a form of regional economic development. It is important to recognize the local autonomy of the municipalities and that duplication should be avoided.

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Mr. Struthers said not every partner has to be involved in all initiatives and because of the diversity within Leeds and Grenville it is important that members understand that it is okay to work with core partners on projects and not every municipality needs to be involved in every project/initiative, although moral support from the entire group is appreciated. Mr. Struthers suggested that areas or projects could be identified at the beginning of the year and meetings could be held quarterly to keep all members up to date on the initiatives underway. Efficiencies of staff, resources and finances could be recognized (i.e. tradeshow – a common theme showcasing the entire region).

Mr. Garrah stated there is a need to eliminate the “silos” within the current system. There are too many elected individuals involved and that staff need to do the work.

Mr. Henderson stated that there will be potential for overlap by the various municipal economic development programs and the regional economic development program. If everyone is involved with every project focus will be lost and nothing will get accomplished. He supports Model Two as it will foster cooperative action on projects when needed. Mr. Holman agreed with Mr. Henderson that there is a need for local economic development and that regional economic development should not be disbanded completely. Goal setting as a group is important and should be promoted.

Mr. Dishaw stated that the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal will be seeking the Counties support in the endeavor of obtaining infrastructure to support Edwardsburgh/Cardinal's industrial park. Mr. Dishaw stated that with the Ethanol Plant there will be 200 construction jobs and they will need supports (i.e. accommodations etc.) as well residential issues which may arise will need to be managed and his township will be looking to the regional economic development office for support and guidance. Mr. Germani stated that the IPM has a publication on accommodations throughout Leeds and Grenville and this information could be made available to the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. In addition to Bliss Baker as the lead contact for the Greenfield Ethanol Plant, they have a website which potential employment seekers could use. Mr. Germani will forward this information to Mr. Dishaw.

Mrs. Dodge stated that when she was a member of the Ontario East Economic Development Commission, she realized that few people outside of Eastern Ontario knew about or where this region was. There needs to be one or two key products for the regional economic development coordinator to focus on and clear direction needs to be given to that office to be successful.

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Mrs. Dodge further commented how effective Lanark County has been in marketing their region to potential businesses as well as to tourist industry. Lanark County has been showcased on Canada AM and in the Ottawa Business News. They have a brand and an identity and Mrs. Dodge stated that Leeds and Grenville needs to promote themselves in this manner. Mr. Campbell added that there is a perception in the agricultural sector that Ontario stops at Oshawa and we need to put Eastern Ontario and Leeds and Grenville on the map.

Mr. Germani stated that Lanark's economic development program is sub-contracted to the Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation and they have a substantial budget and resources to work with. Mr. Fournier added that originally within the Lanark County, the "glue" that held the entire program together was the existing regional tourism desk.

Mr. Pickard stated that M.P.P. Runciman has promoted Eastern Ontario at the provincial level very well. Mr. Garrah added there is no perfect model and any model chosen will need to allow for flexibility.

Mr. Pickard stated that there have been some excellent suggestions and ideas brought forward. He stated that regional economic development must take a macro view point and not a micro view point. He supports regional economic development, but feels there is a need for local/municipal economic development initiatives as well.

Mr. Thake stated that it is important to promote our area as being cooperative. CAOs in business communicate with one another and "word of mouth" is often times the best form of advertisement. We need to work on this.

Mr. Kinsella stated the need to pool resources of the economic development office throughout Leeds and Grenville and there could be a potential budget of \$700,000. This would ensure no duplication and the fostering of working cohesively as one body. There would need to be a political understanding that the municipalities would not compete with one another. Meetings would be set on a quarterly basis. Mr. Kinsella requested that staff provide them with an outline of a model, its functionality and funding of the model. Mr. Germani commented that the funding formula would be similar to the current model and fewer meetings would occur. The final approval body would still be the Joint Services Committee.

Mr. Garrah had concerns that staff would be reporting to a committee and felt there was more strength when staff report to senior staff. Mr. Germani stated he currently reports to the CAO and that this process would continue. Mr. Garrah stated that Gananoque has working partnerships with Brockville and Kingston and potentially with Leeds and the Thousand Islands, but not with the remainder of the municipalities. He stated there is merit in the current system and that Gananoque will continue their own economic development programs as they have strong local needs.

Mr. Fournier requested Mrs. Lawless' opinion on regional economic development. Mrs. Lawless stated that a desired outcome or priorities which the partners agree to needs to be established first and the design of the governance structure will follow.

5.2 Regional Economic Development Structure – Group Discussion Facilitated by Brian Ritchie, Economic Development Consultant, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

This item was discussed in section 5.1.

6.0 Reports - Nil

7.0 New Business

7.1 Discussion of Next Steps for the Regional Economic Development Program

Mr. Henderson recommended that the CAOs, and the Economic Development Coordinators (or staff responsible for this function) from the Counties and the separated municipalities come together and prepare a report outlining a plan which would be effective for all partners. Mr. Fournier stated that this report would be completed by the next meeting. The report focus will be the comparison of Models One and Two.

Mr. Fournier asked for comments from each member.

Mr. Kinsella reiterated the need to work together as a team and eliminate duplication by the municipal and regional economic development programs. Resources could be pooled and sub-office situated across the Counties. Good relationship building with neighboring counties would also be beneficial.

Mr. Thake stated he is interested in reviewing the report completed by staff.

Mr. Henderson stated that there should be a simple process in place in which to achieve the objectives.

Mr. Garrah stated he will be interested in viewing the report which staff will complete.

Mrs. Dodge stated that there needs to be a regional focus and focus on the objectives needs to be maintained.

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Mr. Pickard stated that the macro elements of regional economic development needs to be the focus.

Mr. Dishaw stated that there is a need to be aware of the municipal economic needs and how they fit into regional economic development.

Mr. Campbell stated that the Township of Augusta has a new focus on development and that they support the regional economic development program.

Mr. Holman and Mr. Struthers had no further comments.

8.0 Other Business

8.1 MPAC Information Centre

Mr. Fournier reminded the members of the MPAC Information Session which will be held on February 7, 2007 at the Joshua Bates Centre in Athens. This session is open to all members of municipal councils and their municipal senior staff.

9.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 1, 2007 at the Counties Administration Building, 25 Central Ave. West, Brockville.

10.0 Adjournment

Motion

*It was moved by Mr. Struthers and seconded by Mr. Campbell that the meeting be adjourned. **Carried***

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.