

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

Meeting of Thursday, March 1, 2007
9:00 a.m.

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

Members Present: Bill Thake, Ron Holman, Frank Kinsella (Chair), Larry Dishaw, Mel Campbell (Vice-Chair), Members of Counties Council, Warden Doug Struthers, Mayor Dave Henderson, City of Brockville, Mayor Jim Garrah, Town of Gananoque, Chuck Street Town of Prescott

Members Absent: Mel Campbell, Member of Counties Council

Staff Present: Steve Fournier, CAO, Vince Germani, Economic Development Co-ordinator

Others Present: Bob Casselman, Manager, City of Brockville
Mayor Jim Pickard
Mayor Suzanne Dodge

1.0 Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Kinsella called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

2.0 Review and Approval of Minutes – January 29, 2006

Motion

*It was moved by Mr. Struthers and seconded by Mr. Thake that the minutes of January 29, 2007, as circulated be accepted. **Carried.***

3.0 Delegations – Nil

4.0 Correspondence – Nil

5.0 Unfinished Business – Nil

6.0 Reports

6.1 Governance Model for Regional Economic Development

Mr. Kinsella referred to the Staff Report attached and suggested that the three recommendations be dealt with separately.

6.1.1 Dissolution of Regional Economic Development

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Garrah and seconded by Mr. Thake
That the present regional economic development partnership between the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and the separated municipalities of Brockville, Gananoque and Prescott be dissolved. Carried.

There was no discussion prior to the approval of the motion.

6.1.2 Continuance of Economic Development Desk at the Counties

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Struthers and seconded by Mrs. Dodge
That the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville maintain an economic development desk function for the remainder of 2007 and focus its attention on the successful completion of the IPM 2007. Carried.

There was no discussion prior to the approval of the motion.

6.1.3 Development of Alternative Regional Partnership Model

Mr. Kinsella read the motion regarding the development of an alternative partnership model and opened the floor for discussion. The following comments were received:

Noting that the Staff Report recommended that the Counties Project Committee direct economic development in the short term, Mr. Pickard asked if the partners were interested in pursuing a new model?

There was general agreement among the members present that they were interested in exploring the option of a revised model for regional economic development.

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Item 6.0 Reports – Item 6.1 Governance Model for Regional Economic Development Continued...

Mr. Garrah suggested that the Sub-Committee continue to meet to discuss the various options.

Mr. Henderson agreed to discuss a new model with the partners.

Mr. Struthers emphasized that the new model be developed by all of the stakeholders in the region.

Mr. Holman interpreted the term stakeholders to mean the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and the three separated municipalities of Brockville, Gananoque and Prescott.

Mr. Kinsella emphasized that it is important to find a way to work together collectively as a united front in order to spend resources more effectively.

Mr. Struthers noted that it would be helpful to have a model available for a structured discussion in order to avoid the regurgitation of old information.

Mrs. Dodge inquired as to the timetable required to implement the changes to regional economic development?

Mr. Germani suggested that he work with local individuals involved in economic development and have a proposal ready for the June 28 Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting.

Mr. Kinsella requested supplemental comments from the members present.

Mr. Dishaw noted that economic development may exist at the local, sub-regional (e.g. the South Grenville Economic Development Committee) and regional level and that it should be made clear who is doing what. He also noted that this Sub-Committee is a good place to discuss issues, make the most input and take advantage of government funding programs

Mr. Struthers suggested that we look at the program changes as a renewed initiative to develop a good road map for the future. Dollars flow to regions and Smiths Falls is an example where regions need to co-operate; the Rideau Regional Centre being a prime example. Some opportunities for regional partnership exist now and the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus is another example of regional stakeholders dealing with important issues. In addition, we should make it clear that we recognize that the regional economic development program is not working to expectations and thus we will make an effort to improve it.

Item 6.0 Reports – Item 6.1 Governance Model for Regional Economic Development Continued...

Having a clear direction is important and it makes sense that the economic development desk continue to operate under the supervision of the Counties while we revisit the partnership model to improve it and make it stronger. A working partnership is important for the benefit of all communities in the region.

Mr. Holman agreed that this is an opportunity to look at the present model and provide a report card per se, recognizing that the arrangement needs to be changed. We need to find common or core issues so let's continue to work together

Mr. Pickard noted that specific projects may be available for all to share in such as the former Brockville Psychiatric Centre property. This is an opportunity at the County or regional level to work together and we are starting to see results. There are areas where co-operation is needed and taking the next few months to discuss opportunities is good.

Mrs. Dodge stated that Prescott has a small tax base and that there are local initiatives to deal with. Here, at the regional level, we need to lobby as a group and focus on where we can make a difference. Coming together and promoting partnerships is the key.

Mr. Garrah agreed with the members around the table but emphasized that the economic development staff are the key individuals in the process and that the number of political meetings should be minimized to let staff get on with the work. He asked if we should include other economic development people outside of Leeds and Grenville in the process as well.

Mr. Germani responded that the development of a revised model will include other economic development stakeholders such as agricultural, industry, tourism and education representatives. A general meeting to obtain input from all stakeholders will be held in late April or early May. It may be a good idea to include representatives from the Smiths Falls area as they are integrated into the Leeds and Grenville economy

Mr. Henderson agreed that this is the way to go; to plan ahead for future needs and to improve the existing model so as to increase the opportunities to participate.

Mr. Thake emphasized that a new economic development model should not be a concern to existing municipal employees' job security, but rather be seen as a way to enhance decision-making.

Item 6.0 Reports – Item 6.1 Governance Model for Regional Economic Development Continued...

Mr. Struthers added that the goal will not be to impinge on local autonomy or override local initiatives, but to work on common issues.

Mr. Kinsella noted that this Sub-Committee is a good clearinghouse of information. We can create an identity for the region and should not stand silently by. Organizations like the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus help to establish an identity for the region and a sense of place on the map. In situations like the Johnstown Ethanol Plant investment, it is important to avoid direct competition and support other municipalities that have the greater opportunity for success.

Mrs. Dodge noted that a strong web site is important to economic development as it is necessary to get the message out and be easy to access. Prescott used to have more involvement in events like Loyalist Days and they would like to get back to supporting activities that promote local heritage.

Mr. Fournier advised that we need a model that recognizes that we have different economic development functions across the region taking place and that we want to support what is being done well and partner where possible. We want to use the regional program as a larger vehicle for obtaining government funding. Any new system needs to be flexible in its implementation.

Mr. Garrah further emphasized that the revised model should go beyond Leeds and Grenville and expand area links and partnerships where appropriate, keeping in mind that any increases in funding will be vetted by the municipal partners.

Mr. Casselman pointed out that partnerships do exist now as we sell Eastern Ontario in different forums such as the Ontario East Economic Development Commission which supports regional marketing initiatives. It is important to have a regional desk in Leeds and Grenville while the individual municipalities continue to sell themselves.

The members of the Sub-Committee present agreed that today's recommendations do not constitute a blank commitment to a new model or a particular funding arrangement.

Motion

**It was moved by Mr. Garrah and seconded by Mr. Struthers
That an alternate economic development partnership model be developed
by the stakeholders in the Leeds and Grenville region, for approval at the
option of each stakeholder, prior to implementation in 2008. Carried**

7.0 New Business

7.1 General Discussion of Regional Economic Development Program and Budget

No additional discussion regarding the 2007 Budget was deemed necessary at this time.

8.0 Other Business

8.1 Additional Development Control Powers for Local Conservation Authorities

Mr. Dishaw expressed a concern that the South Nation Conservation Authority may be taking over approval of permits from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Pickard and Mr. Garrah noted that some authority has been delegate to local Conservation Authorities but not everything.

Mr. Holman added that in his experience with Rideau Valley and Cataraqui Region, there is some variation in how each Conservation Authority implements their delegated powers. Permits are now needed for some development applications and this is causing concerns; however, the legislation is now in place and would be difficult to change.

Mr. Garrah added that the increased fees are a concern for his municipality and Minister Ramsey has been made aware through the various complaints submitted.

Mr. Dishaw asked if the economic desk could look into the issue; however, Mr. Holman suggested that it is probably more appropriate to have the local planning departments deal with the issue.

8.2 Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus (EOWC)

Mr. Struthers informed the Sub-Committee that the EOWC will launch its Prosperity Action Plan on March 22, 2007. It is important to have input to the Provincial government and an ongoing relationship with the Eastern Ontario ministerial representatives. The EOWC can take the lead in providing advice on rural policy, while highlighting existing barriers and needs. The Prosperity Plan is a significant document for Eastern Ontario. Funding support for the Plan had been obtained from the Provincial Government, the federal Eastern Ontario Development Program and the organization Municipalities for a New Deal (MUND).

Item 8.0 Other Business – Item 8.2 Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus Continued...

In response to a question by Mr. Henderson, Mr. Struthers provided a general overview of the EOWC and its objectives.

While at the Ontario Good Roads conference, Mr. Dishaw noted that the Rural Municipal Fund had received 328 applications for a total value of \$418 million while only \$70 million in program funding was available

Mr. Struthers added that in a recent presentation to Ministers Gerretsen and Dombrowsky, the Provincial Government was encouraged to match the Federal Eastern Ontario Development Program with a similar initiative, but not necessarily the same amount of dollars. It was felt that existing Provincial programs like the Rural Economic Development (RED) were insufficient.

The EOWC had also met with the Eastern Ontario Federal Conservatives' Caucus where the federal gas tax rebate was discussed as well as a COMRIF 4 for previously unsuccessful applicants.

8.3 Edwardsburgh/Cardinal Announcement

Mr. Dishaw informed the Sub-Committee that Pilot, which operates 250 truck rest stops in the United States, may be setting up at the 730 Truck Stop in Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. The service may include a fine dining facility. Travel Lodge has also expressed an interest in a future development.

8.4 Leeds and the Thousand Islands

Mr. Kinsella stated that his Township has included a letter in the tax bill urging local employers to contact the Township if they have some opportunities for employment in order to promote local job creation.

Mr. Kinsella noted that approximately 30,000 visitors come to the Rockport / Ivy Lea area each year and this is an opportunity to encourage repeat visits. Through the use of language ambassadors and bus tour guides, visitors can be informed of the local eco-tourism sites and also provided with general knowledge.

Mrs. Dodge agreed that in her experience, visitors are very appreciative of this personalized type of service and knowledge.

8.5 Brockville Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade

Mr. Henderson stated that the City of Brockville will pursue the funding recently announced for their sewage plant upgrade. The upgrade, to be completed in 2011, will have short term economic benefits during construction and long term benefits as the increased capacity will allow for more industrial, commercial and residential development.

In response to Mr. Pickard's question, Mr. Henderson confirmed that the ability to handle regional septage needs is being considered.

9.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday, June 28, 2007, or at the call of the Chair if required earlier, at the Counties Administration Building, 25 Central Ave. West, Brockville.

10.0 Adjournment

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Holman and seconded by Mr. Henderson that the meeting be adjourned. Carried

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.