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Council approves agreement for e-commerce funding

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of Shelburne has received a grant through Innovation Guelph to help local businesses with e-commerce stores.

Town Council approved an agreement with Innovation Guelph during their meeting on Monday (Feb. 8), and has received a grant of $7,184 to help local business struggling with e-commerce.

According to the report from Economic Development and Marketing Coordinator, Carol Maitland, the funding will support a one-year subscription to Shopify, additional add-on's that will improve the e-commerce sites functions, and cost associated with development of the site.

In July of 2020 the Town conducted an e-commerce survey which indicated barriers preventing business from opening an e-commerce store which included cost for setup, maintenance, and not having the time.

Based on the survey, the town made the decision to develop the e-commerce site using the Shopify platform, which allows multiple storefronts.

?Shopify has developed a strong relationship with BIA's and the provincial government, through their main street program, and has been determined to be the best and most cost-effective tool for the e-commerce site,? reads the report.

Coun. Lindsay Wegener after the report questioned which businesses would qualify, whether it would be for the downtown core or for all businesses.

?My understanding is that it's all Shelburne businesses, it's not simply downtown BIA,? said CAO Denyse Morrissey. ?I'll follow up with our EDC coordinator, I don't believe that it precludes any businesses that need that kind of support within the Town of Shelburne, as long as they're a registered business.?

Speaking to the funding and the e-commerce project Mayor Wade Mills said, ?I think the idea is let's try this for a year, we're lucky enough to get the grant funding so it's not costing us anything and we'll see if it works and if it does then we can assess that going forward.?

The grant is funding a test pilot for the first year, for subsequent years the projected cost is $2,300 to maintain the program.