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Council asked to invest in new municipal tourism program

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Council met Monday evening with a new agenda format and a new time. Meetings will now start at 6:30 p.m. as opposed to 7 p.m., and the new agenda format is designed to make procedures more rapid and smoothly functioning.

First up were two delegations, one from Chuck Thibeault from Central Counties Tourism and the second from NDACT, concerning the provincial government's review of its official growth plan and their intentions to promote the aggregate industry for economic growth.

Chuck's, presentation was primarily to make Council aware of the organization and of the economic benefits of promoting Tourism. He also provided a new definition of a tourist, as not someone looking to vacation in an area, but rather any individual, who neither lives nor works in a municipality, but is spending their disposable income in the Town.

He noted that in Headwaters, there were more than two million visitors annually, who spent $225 million dollars in the area. Promoting tourism, he says, attracts new businesses, new residents and supports existing businesses, which in turn makes the community a vibrant place to live, work and visit.

His presentation highlighted the hierarchy of Tourism in the region starting with Destination Canada, through the Provincial Ministry of Tourism. Central Counties Tourism, Headwaters Tourism, the local tourism organization, (The Town of Shelburne) ending with Municipal Tourism Businesses and Public Assets. Tourism. He pointed out, the organizations are only as good as the businesses that support them.

Chuck urged Council to take advantage of municipal resources and build tourism in the Town. Both Headwaters and Central Counties Tourism, offer many resources to aid in building a program for the Town.

NDACT presentation

The NDACT presentation was primarily their response and concerns over the direction the PC Government is taking towards expanding development in the Greenbelt areas, and the breaking down of barriers to the aggregate industry.

The Government is clearly favouring developers and their push for more land to develop, as shown by their recent plans to reduce density targets in the province. They pointed out, that they are not against aggregate, but rather the use of good farmland for development and aggregate collection.

It was noted that agriculture is the number one contributor to Ontario's economy, contributing $39.5 billion and supporting 822,483 jobs in 2017, according to the OFA. Within 100 years, at the current rate of loss, slated at 150 acres per day, there will be no prime farmland left in Ontario.

In their rush to pave over the province, developers and real estate professionals are going to be asking their grandchildren, to pay to bring in all of their food from elsewhere. Perhaps, it is time for towns and cities to take a long hard look at how they wish to expand in light of the availability of prime farmland.

Shelburne's Strategic Plan

Following the delegations, CAO Denyse Morrissey presented her report on Council's Strategic Plan, developed recently over two private meetings of Council.

A promise of Mayor Wade Mills, this plan, in essence, lays out everything that Council is planning to accomplish in the current term, thus giving the public, a report card with which to evaluate the performance of Council. During the planning, a quote from Peter Drucker was used by the facilitator to exemplify the importance of a strategic plan,

? There is nothing so useless, as doing, efficiently, that which should not be done at all.?

A draft of the goals and targets that were developed, will be presented to the community on March 20, at the CRDC from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. At that time, the public will be asked for their thoughts and input.

In short, the plan has three parts. First is the Council's Vision to guide the Town. Second is their Mission, highlighting what they will do and finally, their Values, which touches on the core beliefs that underpin their activities.

The Vision, is to be an engaged, connected and innovative community. The Mission is to build a strong, vibrant community, that honours it's heritage and celebrates it's diversities. The Values, which are in no particular order, are Innovative, Respect, Integrity, Engaged and Community. In addition, Council developed Goals, by which they want Shelburne to be known for and a group of Targets for these goals. The Goals are to be, Sustainable, Engaged and Livable.

The Sustainable Goals:

Targets:

> Develop a long term financial plan (10-15 years)

> Infrastructure plan evaluation

> Invest in critical infrastructure

> Promote balanced growth

> Protect and conserve the natural environment

> Municipal services review and evaluation

Engaged Goals:

Targets:

> Improve technology

> Promote more open communication

> Promote partnerships and collaboration

> Enhance marketing and education

Livable Goals:

Targets:

> Promote an age friendly, multicultural community

> Improve and enhance parks and recreational services

> Improve community connections

> Support and celebrate arts and culture

Blue Mountain Plastics deal renewed

In other business, Council renewed the Agreement with Blue Mountain Plastics, concerning the surcharge for dealing with the extra water discharge into the sewer system, coming from their cleaning of used containers prior to recycling.

Director of Development and Operations Jim Moss, outlined the agreement to Council and responded to enquiries, prior to the acceptance of his report.

A discussion followed, regarding the waiving of rental fees for the Shelburne Soccer Club and the overall waiving of fees by the Town. It was pointed out by Town Clerk Jennifer Willoughby, that there is a policy in place for waiving fees, which is not being routinely followed. Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson pointed out that last year the Town lost $10,000 by waiving fees and that he agreed with Councillor Walter Benotto, that the policy should be followed. Councillor Lindsay Wegener concurred and Council voted to not waive the fees, as the Soccer Club did not meet the requirements of the existing policy and had previously paid rental fees on the fields they used.

Council also will notify the Club, that the Municipal Grant Funding Programme can be used for this purpose and that the Club should apply for a Grant.