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Mulmur?s new ED Task Force gathers input

Mulmur Township's new Economic Development Task Force is gathering citizen input to assist in the development of a potential five to ten year strategic plan to deal with the challenge of sustaining services while embracing future demands. Their goal is to complete the task within 15 months.

The seven person volunteer task force was formed earlier this year with the inaugural meeting June 5th. Members include MaryAnn Lowry (Chair), Katharin Cowan (Vice-Chair), Paul Giusto, Martin Ingham, Suzanne Lawrence, Emerson Pendleton and Deborah Rowat. The members ?bring demonstrated backgrounds and experience in agriculture, business, economics, entrepreneurship, finance, law, real estate, education and social services,? says Vice Chair Katharin Cowan.

Economic committees have a primary focus to monitor and make recommendations to strengthen local economy with a sensitive eye to the nature and fabric of the community and the mandated vision of Council. According to Katharin Cowan and Mary Ann Lowry, Mulmur Council has identified economic development as a focus for this term? and formed the task force ?to ensure there is a broad based plan for the development that ensures community awareness and participation.?

The new Mulmur Committee has been working to achieve those goals by undertaking thorough research, ?committed from the onset,? says Cowan, ?to fact-based analysis and highly interactive community involvement.? She reports, ?Over the summer and into the early fall the Task Force dug into statistical information about rural economic development, Mulmur's current profile, and potential partners for initiatives. They reached out to experts on issues and opportunities that communities face in building their economic future. At the same time, they interviewed dozens of individuals in the Mulmur community and beyond its borders to seek insights into their experiences, concerns and ideas.?

Similarly, in the town of Shelburne, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) is working towards a stronger presence, developing a new strategic plan which includes, potentially hiring a co-ordinator and assistant to meet the goals of assisting businesses and encouraging development in one of Ontario's ?fastest growing towns.? Recent discussions on a broader level have included the importance of the townships working together through their EDC's to share data and resources.

The Mulmur Economic Development Task Force will be providing Mulmur Council with an update report on December 9th. The Vice Chair says, ?A substantive report with focus group and interview findings, Mulmur profile and SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) will be presented to the Planning Advisory, Economic Development, Promotion and Heritage Committee for discussion at its January meeting.? The Task Force will continue to engage public feedback and recommendations for consideration during 2016.

By Marni Walsh