



Staff Report

Report Title: Business and Economic Development 2022 Year End Report

Prepared By: Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer

Department: BED

Date: Jan. 16, 2023

Report Number: BED-2023-01-4

File Number: C11 BED 21

Attachments:

Recommendation:

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report Number BED-2023-01-4 prepared by Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer.

Background:

2022 Year End Report

Discussion:

2022 was an exciting year for the Business and Economic Development team, focusing on "Celebrating Success in Huron-Kinloss" and 2 major projects initiated: Secrets of the Back Forty and the Point Clark Lighthouse Museum Revitalization project.

Economic Development

Business Support and Outreach

- I attended Lucknow and District Chamber of Commerce and Ripley Business Community meetings and provided regular news and information updates from the Township pertinent to our business community.
- Business community was kept updated through regular Business Banner e-newsletters with 189 subscribers and posts on "Do Business in Huron-Kinloss" which has 2300 followers.

- A professional photo shoot and profiles on local women in business was featured on our Facebook page for International Women's Day. Feature on local agricultural businesses was profiled for Agricultural week.
- The year ended with "Celebrate Sweet Success" business event on December 8, with refreshment, entertainment and complimentary headshots to celebrate doing business in Huron-Kinloss. Over 40 people attended.
- Individual support to businesses provided on an ongoing and as needed basis.

Spruce the Bruce and Downtown Improvement program grants

Spruce the Bruce was delayed in launching their grant program this year, resulting in fewer than usual applications from Huron-Kinloss.

- Assistance provided to the Lucknow Chamber of Commerce with a Spruce the Bruce grant for new seasonal lighting.
- Huron-Kinloss Downtown Improvement grants were provided to: Lake Range Realty and Ripley Pharmacy & Variety for marketing support and Huron-Bruce Mixed Martial Arts and Conscious Creations for signage.

Business Recruitment & Expansion

Despite continued economic uncertainty again in 2022, we had several new businesses open in the Township. West 81 Food Co. opened in early spring in Point Clark, Mercato & Pizzeria by Pine River Cheese opened in early fall and Huron-Bruce Mixed Martial Arts in Ripley in late fall. Village Pizzeria rebranded to Flame N'Bricks Pizza and For the Love of Lashes in Ripley closed its doors. We currently have three available move-in ready commercial storefronts in downtown Lucknow and two in Ripley.

Successful Grant applications

- Support given to Lucknow's Music in the Fields by assisting with a Reconnect Ontario 2022 grant application, resulting \$185,000 in funding for the event.
- \$23,000 grant from Heritage Canada under the "Canada Cultural Spaces Fund Program, Making Cultural Spaces Safe during COVID-19" initiative for the Point Clark Lighthouse Museum.
- \$117,100 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for revitalizing the Point Clark Lighthouse Museum
- \$3,689 Summer Experience Program grant to help with Lighthouse Coordinator wages
- \$100,000 in funding for Secrets of the Back Forty tourism initiative.
- \$2,000 from Bruce Power for the Children's Program at the Point Clark Lighthouse.

Tourism

Secrets of the Back Forty

Secrets of the Back Forty was identified in January by BC Hughes Tourism consultants as a key tourism initiative to expand on in Huron-Kinloss. The Tourism

Action Plan was presented and approved at Council in February. \$100,000 in grant funding was secured to build this project out which connects tourism assets throughout Huron-Kinloss and includes:

- Creation of gravel cycling routes, itineraries and blogs
- Branding of Secrets of the Back Forty
- Development of a new tourism website
- Purchasing branded infrastructure (bike racks, flags, sandwich boards, window decals, trail markers and bike repair stations)
- Creating marketing assets including images and videos
- Purchasing and installing water fountains

Secrets of the Back Forty will be ready to be promoted in Spring 2023.

Point Clark Lighthouse

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and the revitalization plans, we did not open the Point Clark Lighthouse again this year. However, it was a very busy year for progress at the Point Clark Lighthouse!

- Heritage Coordinator position was created and Katie Worthen was contracted with us from May-December, to research new exhibits for the revitalization project. She also hosted two paint nights, four children's' craft afternoons and two public engagement sessions this summer.
- Continued to work with Blue Rhino Design and Performance Solutions on new interpretive panels, interactives, and display cases.
- Inventory of artifacts taken, current artifacts catalogued and preserved and items returned to Bruce County Museum or auctioned off at our fundraising auction held on October 8.
- Launched "Shine Bright" Point Clark Lighthouse Revitalization fundraising campaign, resulting in over \$45,000 in private and corporate donations, meeting our fundraising goal of \$200,000 (combined with grants).
- Repaired and painted the interior of the Lighthouse Museum, installed new track lighting and new vinyl plank flooring.
- Audio tour and digital supplemental material has been recorded and will be available as bonus features and to increase accessibility.

We are on track to install new interpretive panels, display cases and exhibits to re-open for the 2023 summer season.

Lucknow Tourism Office

The tourism student's job was rebranded as "Events and Marketing Coordinator" with the goal of providing more interactive opportunities for visitors. She staffed the Lucknow Tourism office with regular hours and hosted multiple yard games days and a summer carnival. Support was provided to the Lucknow Chamber with the creation of coupon booklets and a downtown Lucknow shopping brochure.

Lucknow's Music in the Fields

I provide support to this committee as Secretary. The event was the first one back since 2019 and was well attended with 5583 attendees.

Ripley and Lucknow Holiday Shopping Pass

The Holiday Shopping Pass runs from Nov. 12 – Dec. 24/22 with 32 businesses participating. Customers receive one sticker for every \$10 spend at these business and once a card is filled with \$150, it can be entered to win \$150 in Huron-Kinloss dollars (1 of 3 grand prizes) and \$100 in Huron-Kinloss dollars (1 of 2 early bird prizes).

This year 1113 completed passes were submitted, representing \$166,950 recorded as spent in Huron-Kinloss between Nov. 12-Dec. 24.

Early bird winners were Shelley Speers and Ron Doerr. Grand prize winners were Wilda McLelland, Tessa Walden and Tracy Hallam.

In 2021 - 948 completed passes were submitted.

2020 – 1081 passes submitted.

We are looking forward to a prosperous 2023 and are excited to see what new opportunities the revamped Secrets of the Back Forty initiative and the re-opening of the Point Clark Lighthouse Museum will bring to our municipality.

Financial Impacts:

None.

Strategic Alignment / Link:

The information provided in this report is consistent with and in keeping with the Municipality's Vision and Mission. The recommendations contribute to our goals in achieving a prosperous community, a vibrant community, and a spirited community.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer

Approved By:

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer