



Staff Report

Report Title: March 2021 Project Update

Prepared By: Taralyn Cronin

Department: BED

Date: Apr. 7, 2021

Report Number: BED-2021-04-16

File Number: D02

Attachments:

Recommendation:

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report Number BED-2021-04-16 prepared by Taralyn Cronin, Business and Economic Officer.

Background:

March 2021 project updates.

Discussion:

New Businesses

We are thrilled to welcome the Lucknow and District Co-operative to Huron-Kinloss. They recently purchased the former Pine River Cheese facility, and we are looking forward to seeing what the future holds for that property. We are also excited to welcome Shoreline Chic to downtown Ripley and Precision Cabinetry and Conscious Creations Art to downtown Lucknow.

Business Recruitment

Earlier this month, window dressings were installed in the windows of vacant commercial storefronts in Ripley. The purpose of the window dressings is to connect entrepreneurs with available business



supports. These are similar to the ones that were created for vacancies in Lucknow in 2012/2013; however, these designs align with our recently developed Business to Bruce brand guidelines.

Community Mural Project

We are waiting to hear about the status of our Rural Economic Development Fund application before moving forward with community engagement on this project.

Downtown Improvement Program/Spruce the Bruce

So far this year, we have received three applications to our Downtown Improvement Program. Two applications have been for façade improvements and are currently being processed through Spruce the Bruce and one was for our Community Energy Efficiency Grant. Huron-Kinloss business owners are encouraged to apply early. A temporary maximum of \$30,000 is available for projects within each municipality until July 1st. Spruce the Bruce is covering 100% of project costs up to \$4,000 for façade improvements and \$1,000 for signage improvements.

Tourism and Marketing

We are planning on opening the Lucknow Tourism Office in May and are in the process of setting up student interviews. In addition to manning the Lucknow Tourism Office and handling visitor inquiries this summer, the tourism office student will be assisting us with our shop local promotions; tourism website updates; and website and social media content development. We will be limiting the number of visitors in the tourism office this summer to one person/family at a time. There will be safeguards in place to protect our staff.

We partnered with the County of Bruce on a photoshoot at the beginning of March. The purpose of the photoshoot was to capture images of outdoor winter activities that can be used for marketing purposes next winter. We also got pictures of people safely shopping in downtown Lucknow and Ripley that can be used for our shop local campaigns (Explore H-K and general Do Business in Huron-Kinloss social media posts).

Social Media

Social media, in particular Facebook, continues to be very effective for getting information out to a wide audience, quickly. As of March 30th, the Township of Huron-Kinloss Facebook Page has 2,367 followers. An average post will reach between 800 and 1,000 people. The number of people a post reaches depends on several factors, such as the number of times it has been shared, audience engagement, how much money you spend to advertise it (we rarely advertise), and level of importance (as determined by Facebook). Below are a few recent examples to demonstrate Facebook's effectiveness.

1. By-Law Enforcement shared a photo of dog on March 1st on our Facebook Page to try and find its owner. Within two days, the post had been shared over 1,000 times and had reached an estimated 52,000+ people!
2. We posted a link for the public to provide feedback on the Ripley Plaza project on March 17th. Within one day, of the 312 people who visited www.haveyoursayhk to provide feedback, 200 of them (56%) were directed from social media. On March 18th, 229 additional views were from social media (out of a total of 264 views).
3. On March 17th, we posted a link for the public to provide feedback to the Ministry of Transportation regarding the golf cart pilot project in the Township. That post has reached almost 4,000 people and close to 800 people clicked the link for more information or to provide feedback to the Ministry.

Facebook is just one of the communication channels that we use. We recognize that not everyone uses social media and therefore we continue to utilize more traditional channels, such as newspaper and radio to promote programs and relay information.

Financial Impacts:

All project costs are included in the 2021 Budget.

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:

Taralyn Cronin, Business and Economic Officer

Approved By:

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer