

SMITHS FALLS AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of Meeting – September 19th, 2018

Valley Heartland Board Room

7:30 a.m.

Present: Barbara Black, Eileen Crosbie, Mike Fletcher, Tracy Gallipeau-Nolan, Sean Lawrence, Crystal LeVatte, Chris Saumure, Jean Sherman, Cy Wells

Council: Dawn Quinn, Jeff Banks, Jay Brennan

Staff: Becky Allen, Ciara Atkinson

Regrets: Amber Beasley, Kristine Fair

Absent:

Guest: Jordan Hawn

Call to Order by President Barbara Black at 7:36 a.m.

Mission Statement Read by President, Barbara Black.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

- None.

New Business Added to Agenda

- Campground closing date for 2018.

Motion to Accept Minutes of August 8, 2018:

Moved: Sean Lawrence

Seconded: Tracy Gallipeau-Nolan

Motion Carried.

Council Report – Town of Smiths Falls

- Council had a training meeting to educate all on how to properly communicate cannabis promotion in Smiths Falls in a positive way.
- There was a fundraiser on the Cataraqui Trail on Sunday. Jean Sherman hosted a barbecue at Lombard Glen, a property that the trail runs right through. There was not a large turnout for the event but people are becoming more aware of the trail. Two first-time donors participated.
- Dawn Quinn is hoping that the town council will write a letter of support to Moose Consortium for a new rail system. The city of Ottawa has taken the track off of the

- Prince of Wales bridge, and now are looking to change zoning to put up new development in that area; this would mean a new rail system could not be rebuilt later.
- Dawn Quinn contacted Scott Reid's office, who has not gotten back to her yet. She asked that anyone who has a positive feeling around the campground do the same. Victoria Park Campground was opened in 1925 to help promote tourism, we need to voice our opinion around its closure in order for it to continue to do so.
 - Jeff Banks asked if the idea of the park's closure came from Parks Canada. Chris Saumure replied it is, supposedly.
 - There was a delegation from the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital at the council meeting. The hospital's chief of staff as well as the physician recruiter were there and gave a compelling presentation on progress and challenges going forward. It became clear that the town's support would be paying dividends. Jay Brennan would support a recruiter because they are very valuable when there is a sudden change in staff.
 - Council passed a motion allowing Novatek engineers to look at the signalisation on Abbott Street and implementing technology that allows the signalisation to better coordinate with traffic flow. Council is also looking at putting a right turning lane off of Abbott Street onto Lombard Street.
 - Doors Open was a great success and was very well attended.
 - This Saturday, October 22nd at 11 a.m., there will be an event on Evergreen Avenue where stones are placed in honour of seven civic leaders.
 - Jeff Banks asked for a letter to the Township of Rideau Lakes asking for their support for the Cataraqui Trail project.

Council Report – Township of Rideau Lakes

- Jeff Banks requested that the Chamber hold an All Candidates Debate for South Elmsley ward and the Rideau Lakes Council. All Chamber directors work out of Smiths Falls however many of them live in South Elmsley. Jeff said doing this would also promote the Chamber.
- Finding a venue would not be an issue, however a decision needs to be made quickly so that the planning can move forward.
- Rideau Lakes Council approved the purchase of the old Gallagher property in Portland. Jeff Banks found it problematic that council wanted to charge \$11 per square foot for commercial space plus add-ons. He later sent in numbers suggesting the cost should be closer to \$5 per square foot, which he find much more reasonable.
- The school has been given back to the board for resale as the township has decided not to go through with its purchase.
- Chris Saumure asked if the township plans on being a developer. Jeff Banks replied that that will be up to the next council to decide.
- The Gallagher property was purchased by council for \$365,000 while its MPAC value is \$262,000.
- The total cost of the three properties the township plans on developing, including the Gallagher house, Portland Hall, and a new beachfront development, is about \$15 million.
- Dawn Quinn received a call from someone asking who they could talk to about this plan.

- Jay Brennan clarified that the new property will be developed for commercial use. Jeff Banks said that the township would like the old Gallagher property to potentially serve as space for the town hall, library, and some retail space. Council would like to tear down Portland Hall and build condominiums on its property. Across from the hall are two houses they would like to remove to make space for a new beachfront with new docks etcetera.

Treasurer Report – Mike Fletcher

- The Chamber is completely up to date with the CRA and filings. Bev Hewitt and Ciara Atkinson have set up a schedule so that late filings do not become a problem again.
- Mike Fletcher has not yet met with Bev Hewitt but has spoken over the phone with her. One thing they have talked about is operations that ensure staff changeover does not affect anything in future.
- Financially the Chamber is in good shape, it is currently sitting at a loss of \$29,000.
- The Chamber has good control on salaries, and will come in under budget for the year.
- Ideally the Chamber will receive a gross revenue of \$150,000 from the campground. Mike Fletcher has not yet spoken to Gail Moore-Barrie about whether or not this number will be achieved.
- The Chamber has not yet received a hydro bill from the town for use at the campground.
- The Chamber is in reasonably good shape financially, slightly better than projected, but still some uncertainty exists.
- Jeff Banks asked Dawn Quinn and Jay Brennan why money always comes to the Chamber at the end of the camping season when revenue flows throughout the season. Everyone agreed that it is hard to receive payments from the town.

Chamber Update – Becky Allen

- There was a realtor open house hosted by Economic Development yesterday that the Chamber participated in.
- The Visitor Centre also had a free Pilates class with Alexis Officer on Monday which was really well attended. If anyone has any interesting initiatives for that space let Becky Allen know.
- Becky Allen would like to sell Chamber merchandise out of the office. If anyone has anyone ideas for this, please let her know. Jay Brennan suggested selling license plate holders since they promote the town while people are traveling.
- Dawn Quinn said that we have mugs and water bottles for sale already. Becky said that this merchandise would be sold separately from the town and not necessarily backed by the town.
- Barbara Black asked if the merchandise would be branded with the Chamber's logo as opposed to the town's. Becky Allen said these items would preferable be brand-free and only serve to promote the town through fun quotes, etc.
- Businesses could either have these items for sale on consignment or buy them from the Chamber then sell them at their own profit.

- Becky Allen had some six t-shirts made for Chamber staff, but a lot of people have asked if they are available for purchase.
- The Chamber would potentially need to attain a sales permit.

- The Chamber has received multiple inquiries about the impact of cannabis on Smiths Falls, mostly from media sources.
- Specifically, Becky Allen has had questions from a gentleman who is opening a storefront in the old bridal store on Beckwith Street. He is looking for support from the Chamber and the town in the marketing of cannabis. He has asked the Chamber to write a letter of support to the town for Smiths Falls to participate in the trials of cannabis sales in new places such as restaurants, etc.
- There should be a discussion around what the Chamber should publicly support in terms of cannabis sales and consumption. Barbara Black asked Becky Allen to look into how the Ontario Chamber of Commerce handles this.
- Jay Brennan said there is a lot of discussion around cannabis among council members right now as well. Economic Development especially has received a lot of questions. The town should have some parameters around cannabis sales and should be progressive, but not careless.
- Sean Lawrence said there will be some towns that will not want to support cannabis sales in their community. Becky Allen said that in some ways, Smiths Falls is a bit of an experiment on this front.

- Cy Wells asked if anyone has welcome packages for new businesses in town. Becky Allen replied that she goes to new businesses to meet the owners and offers the Chamber's support for a grand opening as well as a free six-month membership.
- Cy Wells said that we need to be careful about not letting Tweed overshadow new local business.

- There will be a Business Breakfast next Tuesday. Tickets are being sold on Eventbrite, which has been great for sales without having to remind people to attend.
- The event will be a sort of funders forum. We will have speakers from the Small Business Advisory, Valley Heartland, Ontrac, and Jason from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce who will talk about their new launch.
- Speakers will be available at tables after the presentation for questions, or people can just leave.
- Jason is coming the night before the event and Becky Allen asked if any board members would like to have dinner with him. If so, they should send Becky Allen an email.

- The Chamber should have a recruitment committee to find new businesses to add to our membership. Barbara Black said three or four people should be sufficient.

- The Canadian Chamber of Commerce sent out an email yesterday, which Becky Allen will forward to everyone, inviting them to watch a webcast on cannabis and economic development.
- Chris Saumure said everyone should be informed of laws around cannabis sales and use in the workplace.

- Economic Development Coordinator Ingrid Bron has taken a job as coordinator in Revelstoke, British Columbia, so she will be leaving Smiths Falls soon.

2018 Election and All Candidates Debate – October 4th

- Questions people submit for the debate will go straight to the moderator, Paul Howard, because of Becky Allen's conflict with Lorraine Allen as her mother in law.
- Becky Allen said we should have a subcommittee to meet with Paul Howard to help decide what questions should be included.
- Chris Saumure said people should be able to submit questions the night of the debate.
- With the event's timeline there will only be time for five or six questions, so they need to be decided ahead of time so they are good questions.
- Jay Brennan said not every councillor has to answer every question, questions can be answered by as few as three or four candidates.
- Dawn Quinn said we might even get some questions directed to only one person.
- Chris Saumure said that questions get vetted so that there are no offensive ones.
- The committee to liaison with Paul Howard directly was decided to be Chris Saumure, Sean Lawrence, Cy Wells, and Barbara Black.
- Mike Fletcher suggested sending questions to councillors ahead of time if there is only opportunity for a couple of questions, or at least an opportunity for candidates to speak to questions they did not get to answer.
- Jay Brennan said there should be a rule sheet sent out to the candidates ahead of time with the timeframe for questions so they know in advance.

2019 Chamber Gala & AGM

- Let Becky Allen know about any specific ideas for gala sponsorship.
- An AGM planning committee will need to form and be planning soon.
- Headshots will be taken in November; anybody that has special requirements please inform Becky Allen early.

- The DBA's annual Girls' Night Out event will take place on Thursday.
- The DBA gala is happening the week before ours on October 20th. It is a medieval themed event and therefore is more of a dress-up event than a formal one.

New Business Added to Agenda

- Barbara Black's husband was at the golf course yesterday and was approached by a camper with a brochure that says the campground will be open until October 31st. Barbara said we need to get rid of those brochures and give Gail Moore-Barrie some sort of guidance for talking about the closing date with campers.
- Becky has had some requests from campers asking if they can stay until October 10th so that they can be here visiting family for Thanksgiving.

- Chris Saumure suggested keeping the campground open until October 14th. Everyone agreed. Chris asked Becky Allen to inform Art Manhire that we will be open until then.

In Camera

Next meeting is on Wednesday, October 10th, 2018, 7:30 a.m. at Valley Heartland Board Room.