

MARKDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November 20, 2008 –Markdale Golf & Curling Club

MINUTES – DRAFT

ATTENDING: Wayne & Dawna Fitzgerald, Don & Jan Kopplin, Doug Crawford, Patti Shaw, Janie Badgerow, Charmaine Peever, Kelly Leeson, Temi & Alfredo Dickson, Pat Palmer, Larry & Leslie McKee, Lynn Silverton, Stewart Halliday, Kate Russell.

GUESTS: Mark Kraemer, Duncan Atkinson.

REGRETS: JD Daly, Kelly Knapton, Darlee (TD), Tracy O’Neill, Colleen & Ed Boer, Jane Field, Steward Madill, and many other members whose RSVPs are too numerous to list here.

New Member Spotlights: As a couple of the new member representatives could not attend, Manager Kate Russell outlined the offerings of new members.

H. Devereaux (vintage store which renovated and occupied the southwest corner of downtown in Trafford block. Nominated for STARS award in 2008 for Entrepreneur of the Year – chosen as runner-up. Owner Diana Irwin’s background is in wardrobe for film, so does custom sewing.

GreenHawk Equestrian – new equestrian store in Trafford block (just south of H. Devereaux) which offers everything for the horse enthusiast from halters to riding helmets. Opened and immediately joined the Chamber. Indicator of the increase in area equestrian market.

Holly Hill Manor – Temi Dickson arrived to give a quick outline of Holly Hill Manor – a new bed and breakfast in Markdale, located in the old FT Hill house at 66 Toronto St. S. She said they have 4 rooms, have had steady bookings for local events and family occasions.

GUEST SPEAKER: Mark Kraemer, Former Mayor of Saugeen Shores was mayor when the towns of Port Elgin & Southampton were merged with the Township of Saugeen to form Saugeen Shores. He brought along with him Duncan Atkinson, who was the president of the Port Elgin Chamber of Commerce when it merged with the Southampton Chamber to form Saugeen Shores Chamber. They attended to discuss the importance of communities working together locally toward a strong region.

MARK KRAEMER:

Mark began his comments joking it took him only 354 days to get here 9as he was invited to speak to the 1007 AGM but couldn’t attend due to weather). He provided his background – he was elected as Mayor for three terms, including a term as the first Mayor of Saugeen Shores in 1998.

Amalgamation was never something sought by the communities, as there was always a fear present that people would lose the idea of “my community”. Community has a tremendous variety of definitions, depending on who you talk to, but is generally identified as the “town we live in.” This presented amalgamation challenges between Southampton, Port Elgin and the former Saugeen Township – which involved 12,500 people.

The challenge came when the majority of residents didn’t even want to be part of an amalgamated community. Many referenced generations for family who lived in the community. Others saw it as an exciting opportunity to craft something brand new. Many felt it was a chance for the new municipality to become stronger and more dynamic than any individual community could be. Some found they were better to consolidate than be on their own. Amalgamation really brought variety to the table.

Southampton is renowned for its marine heritage as the oldest fishing port on Lake Huron. The focus in that village is on heritage, arts and culture. They celebrate their history in many ways. This did not have to stop after amalgamation – the focus on the museum and archives, arts and culture were encouraged.

Port Elgin was affected early in 1959 when the first Bruce Power plant went up at Douglas Point. Into the 60s and 70s there was a population explosion there while workers moved into town to work at Bruce Power. Population grew from 1,600 in 1964 to 7,000 under 15 years later. The population explosion brought a different age/background demographic to Port Elgin. Even being only 5 miles from Southampton, that town did not experience the effect of the power plant that Pt. Elgin did (as there is a bus service to Bruce Power from Pt. Elgin – not Southampton). So, to entertain the demographics, Pt. Elgin was an is much more driven by events. It is event based and event driven – especially Pumpkin Fest. This event started in the corner of a parking lot with a bunch of people standing around some pumpkins. It has grown over the years to draw over 50,000 people a year to the community. It has grown so much it is now considered a “bulletproof” – with a snowy weekend still drawing 40,000 people. The Pt. Elgin Chamber drove these events and encouraged spin offs like the Big Band Weekend, Jazz Night, old car show etc. This event is held in a traditional “shoulder” season to help fill local accommodations – there is a great economic impact of the event.

During amalgamation it was overwhelming to many people who were terrified of losing their community identity. But “marriage” does not obligate the loss of identity. A business plan was developed to outline the opportunity to combine the heritage and culture of Southampton with the events and population of Pt. Elgin. The icing on the cake was the rural and agricultural component of the addition of Saugeen Township. The plan recognized the diversity of things to offer in a consolidated community.

Take it and grow it became the local mantra. Success draws on success, so the idea was taken to collect together good people and expand their horizons. They challenged people to “be a leader” and push the idea of Saugeen Shores so much that others would want to “be like Saugeen Shores.” People drove the mentality that they were stronger together. This grew into regional marketing and branding to bring the people of the amalgamated community together.

Chamber led this push. The Port Elgin Chamber was inordinately strong at this. Evolved into something where the managers and volunteers had a clear vision of where they needed to go. They approached Southampton Chamber, had some push back, but persevered for three years with the other group to finally merge in 2005.

The municipal process involved early collection of building blocks. Saw need to merge for “value added” products and efficiencies of scale. Took view as being better together than 3 on own. Compelled people to think beyond the box and partner with people with a regional vision.

This was a time when change was being thrust upon many communities in the province – especially a battle in 1998 between Chatham and Kent, which were fighting over amalgamation. The province sent someone in to make a county-size municipality called Kent. Then local people saw they needed to decide “who we want to dance with, rather than a forced dance.” Regionalism became a key work. Worked to brand Saugeen Shores on “shy stop and shop here.” We all want to be successful – we retained our identity, protected our history, found opportunity and promoted regional community.

Community worked together through the process. Duncan, who was president of the Pt. Elgin Chamber at the time assisted the Chambers in being enormously successful at merging. It was really a culmination of many local groups amalgamating. Minor hockey started the mergers – followed by soccer and minor ball. They knew it was really working when the figure skating groups merged as well (as they said that would “never happen). Minor sports mergers had added benefits of allowing sports teams to field teams in all age groups, and even bump up leagues due to the population. This grassroots ground swell led to a domino effect amongst other groups – and as Saugeen Shores was more recognizable beyond the municipal borders, more people knew where the new community is.

DUNCAN ATKINSON

Duncan was with the Port Elgin for years, and held a variety of positions – starting as a direction, later chairing the “merger committee”, then as VP (for 6 mos.) and then president.

The process of amalgamating the Chambers took years. It started early and took some four years to complete. Amalgamation was seen as a “bad word” so they used the term “merger” instead. Duncan spoke to many Markdale Chamber members before his talk, and suggested the local challenges are the same as faced in Saugeen Shores – so they are not insurmountable.

Merging Chambers started with casual meetings between four representatives from each Chamber. Each small group had a board member and regular members. Met in a neutral location, informally, with no notes. First meeting was simply an input session. They met again six months later with the same groups. In the time between meetings, there was some communication through the general managers of the two groups. It was important for it

to be the same people to keep consistency of message. Put together some notes from the second meeting – as it was more heated and dealt more with specifics than generalities. Due to the “heat” of the meeting, they had to take a break again and “back off” from discussions. It was another year before they got together to discuss the idea.

New members and younger people with new ideas came on board for the next meeting. The atmosphere had changed and people were more open to talk and hear each other’s ideas. There was a long list of “important issues” to discuss, including each town’s identity. It was recognized and reinforced that each community had its own identity and would not lose it in the merger – you can’t move the Chantry Bay lighthouse from Southampton to Pt. Elgin – there are some things that won’t ever change – but can still work and promote together.

Both Chambers had strong relationships with local councils. The municipal challenge was the same as the Chamber challenge – they were able to support each other through the process. Downtown cores were able to assess and compare their benefits – one had Xmas lights, one didn’t. Were able to then see what the needs were and how resources could be shared. There will always be a Port Elgin and Southampton, even if represented by Saugeen Sores Chamber. There will always be a “boundary line” it just needs to be accepted.

Separate events are still planned for each community. They both have special Christmas shopping days. Tried combining but didn’t work, so now host on separate dates.

Duncan available as resource as he still works with the Chamber, sitting on the strategic planning committee. He said “once a Chamber member, always a Chamber member.” He is available as a resource regarding the merger issue.

MARK KRAEMER

Mark then spoke briefly about the importance of the Chamber and municipality working together toward mutual interests. The Saugeen Shores council has a “service level agreement” with the Chamber to provide tourist information office in both towns. The municipality pays the Chamber for this service but it is a “Chamber game” and the Chamber runs the program. This is a potential revenue stream for Chambers of Commerce.

QUESTION PERIOD:

Development charges:

Wayne asked Mark about development charges in Saugeen Shores.

Mark outlined there had previously been no development charges in the community. He is personally anti-development charges as he feels you shouldn’t charge people to expand business and bring economic benefit to town. The current mayor has supported development charges and brought them in 2008. Mark suggested they will now see a drop in local development. As an example, he offered figures showing 1999 had 16 new houses in the area; the following year development charges were dropped and 2000 saw 42 new homes in the area; in 2001 there were 78 and in 2002 there were over 100 new homes or the first time. Mark sees development charges as counter productive – with this “one time fee” discourages then loses the perpetual tax revenues.

Stewart Halliday & Lynn Silverton (Grey Highlands municipal councilors) mentioned they are also against development charges – though the municipality does have them There is also a development charge at the Grey County level so how do they deal with that?

Mark suggested developers know who does and does not have development charges. They will shop around for best or no rates. Mark maintained if no development charges (which are supposed to include costs for infrastructure upgrades to service new development) then there is more room for negotiation on secondary things like proper curbs, gutters etc. He said sometimes land is offered instead of charges (for parks or greenbelts) and he has seen Saugeen Shores negotiate new playground equipment for parks, rather than more land not needed by municipality. If no charges, these are more open to discussion.

Hydro funds:

Wayne mentioned the playground at the library park was paid for out of “Hydro funds” held over from municipal sale of utility.

Mark mentioned Saugeen Shores formed Westario Power, rather than sell its municipal utility infrastructure to Hydro One. The municipality has realized not only savings, but great profits from this move and has the ability to set power rates.

Walmart:

Doug Crawford asked about the ongoing discussion regarding Walmart coming to Port Elgin.

Mark suggested the Walmart question should not threaten local business, as smaller local stores still offer value and customer service unavailable at a big box store. He suggests people just maintain the services that Walmart won't offer customers. "Fear not the big guy" as they will market your area and draw in a whole new bunch of shoppers for your local stores as well.

Duncan offered that the Chamber did a telephone poll of membership to see who might actually be concerned about Walmart coming. Only two people were concerned – most supported the idea, notably Giant Tiger and a large grocery store that will be neighbors to Walmart. They recognize the benefit of competition and feel the draw of the store for shoppers will increase, not decrease their business.

Mark and Duncan were thanked for attending the AGM. They departed due to deteriorating weather conditions.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES – Minutes of the AGM of Nov. 29, 2007 were distributed and reviewed.

MOTION: moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Doug Crawford that the minutes of the AGM held on Nov. 29, 2007 be accepted as presented. Carried.

MOTION: Moved by Kelly Leeson, seconded by Cathy Gamblen that the membership approves, by omnibus motion, all executive meeting minutes of the Markdale Chamber of Commerce for 2008. Carried.

BUSINESS ARISING:

Manager outlined the only business arising was the change of Chamber name to Grey Highlands & Area Chamber of Commerce. Despite the majority support of the membership, the motion from the AGM directed an "investigation" only of the idea. As there was some animosity with the Flesherton Chamber and the Manager was very busy with the Trillium grant workplan this year, the name change investigation was deferred until a later, more appropriate time. There has been a leadership change at the Flesherton Chamber, so there may be more potential to meet and discuss this issue with the Flesherton Chamber in the coming year.

EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS:

Manager outlined the process wherein the Chamber sought new executive members. A letter was drafted and reviewed by executive committee members. The letter outlined the benefits of the Chamber and the importance of keeping a full executive committee. The committee now requires: a president, vice president, recording secretary, secretary/treasurer and seven directors. Currently there are four vacancies. In response to this letter, there were several people who stepped forward to come onto the executive.

NOMINEES FOR DIRECTOR: Shelley Lapointe (TD Canada Trust); JD Daly (Sidekicks); Rick/Cathy Gamblen (Grey Bruce Insurance); Kelly Knapton (My T Maid)

There was brief discussion of these nominees. Some were unable to attend, especially Kelly Knapton, who works Thursday nights and would not likely be able to attend regular Thursday night meetings. As such, it was suggested he be approached to assist with events and other opportunities within the Chamber, until he may commit to Thursday meetings.

Charmaine was originally to be a representative of RBA Financial (which just purchased Twin County Bookkeeping – though Don & Charmaine are staying on for three years). In discussions with her partner, she has decided to become a member in her own right, with her company At Your Service.

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Janie Badgerow, that the nominees Shelley Lapointe of TD Canada Trust, JD Daly of Sidekicks, Rick Gamblen of Grey Bruce Insurance and Charmaine Peever of At Your Service be accepted to fill the vacancies on the Markdale Chamber executive. Terms are two years, commencing on Jan. 1, 2009. Carried.

NOMINEES FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS/DIRECTORS:

There is a need to determine who will fill what positions on the executive. Doug Crawford has accepted the nomination to become the president. A vice president is still required. This will be discussed at an upcoming executive committee meeting. It is expected a director will step forward to become vice president. Slate of executive as it stands as of Jan. 1, 2008 is as follows:

President – Doug Crawford
Vice President – _____
Secretary/Treasurer – Don Kopplin
Directors standing again:
Past President/Director – Wayne Fitzgerald
Director – Patti Shaw
Director – Janie Badgerow
Director – Nereda Manion
Director – Shelley Lapointe
Director – Rick Gamblen
Director – Charmaine Peever
Recording Secretary – Kate Russell, Manager (non voting)
Municipal Liaison – Lynn Silverton (non voting)

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Don Kopplin that the nomination, accepted by nominee, for Doug Crawford to become president of the Markdale Chamber of Commerce be accepted. Carried.

CHAMBER INITIATIVES REPORT – Manager Kate Russell outlined initiatives for 2008.

Trillium Grant – Work plan is complete – final report is in the works

- Grey Highlands Event Network – promotion – brochures/radio campaign/interviews/press
- Toll-free number added – 888-986-4612
- Now have 5 non-profit memberships at \$50 per group – new in 2008
- Volunteer Resource Center is now part of information booth – fact sheets/advice/flyers/recruitment
- April Volunteer training/recognition night & October Entrepreneur & Skills development day
- Now have a variety of event equipment (tables/tents/easels/craft supplies) to lend to event groups

Membership – currently have 71 members, 5 non-profit members

Olde Firehall restoration project still seeking committee volunteers - copies of conceptual plans available

- 5-year lease obtained in 2008
- working with municipality to apply again for restoration capital grant (March 2009)
- Olde Firehall used for events such as: Lions Garage Sale; Alzheimers Coffee Break; local artist displays; Women’s House of Grey Bruce “Sisterhood of the Travelling Shoes” art/info installation.

Community/Tourism Info Booth Stats

- over 4,000 people visited in 2008 see attached report

MANAGER POSITION: Wayne Fitzgerald then interjected regarding the importance of keeping a manager on staff to man the tourist/community info booth. These numbers are important as we offer services to visitors, community and volunteers. The Chamber is faced with a dilemma as the Trillium grant is over, has leased the building, has plans for a capital (not operating) grant for the Olde Firehall, and may have nobody to man it if manager position is lost. Olde Firehall is often the first point of reference for visitors. Others spoke up to say we “need the manager.”

Wayne suggested the idea of providing health benefits to manager as token, as salary funds are not available. Rick Gamblen confirmed a plan for about \$200 a month would be possible. There was some discussion, including the

idea that commission from group insurance is providing income enough to cover this cost. Kate has agreed this could be negotiated as a trade-off for doing Chamber work.

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Janie Badgerow that executive committee members meet with Rick Gamblen to discuss the options and negotiate a fee for the manager to obtain health benefits through the Chamber and come back to the table for approval. Carried.

New Hospital Build fund – less than \$2,000 away from \$15,000 pledge.

- would like to closure in 2008 with 2008 surplus to focus on Olde Firehall grant/fundraising
- potential to partner with Centre Grey Health Services Foundation on annual charity golf tournament (Chamber tournament cancelled this year due to lack of interest/lateness of organization)

STARS Awards – four area winners nominated by Chamber/Ice Cream Festival

- Markdale Foodland – Customer Service Excellence Award (nominated by Ice Cream Festival)
- Sidekicks Café - Corporate Citizen of the Year
- Top o' The Rock (Eugenia) – Company of the Year (under 15 employees)
- GrassRoots Organics (Desboro) – Young Entrepreneur of the Year
- Also nominated:
 - H. Devereaux – Entrepreneur of the Year – selected as runner-up
 - Four Seasons Party Rental – Company of the Year (over 15 employees)

MOTION: Moved by omnibus motion by Janie Badgerow, seconded by Doug Crawford that the membership ratifies the initiatives of the Chamber for 2008. Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Treasurer Don Kopplin reviewed the 2007 year end statement dated Dec. 31, 2007. Copies available at Chamber office.

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Doug Crawford that the 2007 year-end financial statement be accepted as presented. Carried.

The treasurer then reviewed the current financial statement, dated as of Nov. 19, 2008. (copies available at Chamber office). He explained several line items and had questions regarding the difference in expenses for advertising, capital, firehall and insurance. Most variances were attributed to the Trillium grant funds (ie. more funds spent on ads as Trillium grant required it; same for capital which was purchased through grant). A higher apparent insurance cost included cost for “interim” time between when insurance over and new insurer found and negotiated. It is also a mid-year renewal. It was also noted there is still monies outstanding to close hospital pledge – see liability sheet.

MOTION: Moved by Dawna Fitzgerald, seconded by Janie Badgerow that the financial statement for Nov. 19, 2008 be accepted as presented. Carried.

The manager then presented a list of payable for consideration (see attachment 1). The hospital pledge amount was not correct, so will be calculated as current and paid out to a maximum of \$2000 to close the pledge. Rick and Cathy Gamblen wondered about a payment to support their attendance at Farmers' Week to promote the Chamber's group insurance plan. Manager explained this was motioned at the Oct. 16th meeting of the executive and approved up to \$100. Rick and Cathy simply need to inform the manager what amount is required.

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Rick Gamblen that the payables as presented be approved for payments and that the Centre Grey Health Services Foundation pledge payout amount be no more than \$2000. Carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adopt-a-family for Christmas: Member Dawna Fitzgerald suggested the Chamber could adopt a local family in need for Christmas sponsorship. She has done this before through her business, and found it fun and rewarding. Contact person is Dale Armstrong at Markdale Cable. The Chamber could sponsor a family, and members could then donate merchandise as gifts and the Chamber would fill in with purchases anything not donated.

MOTION: Moved by Dawna Fitzgerald, seconded by Charmaine Peever, that the Markdale Chamber get involved with the adopt-a-family for Christmas campaign locally by adopting one family. Donations will be welcomed and there may be some cost to support the family – not to exceed discretionary \$200 limit. Carried.

Christmas dinner: Dawna also mentioned there used to be a program in town to serve a Christmas supper to those who might not otherwise get one. In past years the Optimist Club did this. And perhaps the Lions might be doing it. Janie and Kate will investigate if there is anything to see if we could contribute somehow.

Manager position – Trillium contract is completed, final report in preparation for filing to Ontario Trillium Foundation. Manager currently owes the Chamber 62.5 hours, which will be used up by the end of the year. She is interested in exploring potential to combine volunteering/sharing business space to start her own business to run out of the office. There was some discussion earlier (above) about potential options for income to ultimately pay the manager.

Business directory – The municipality has expressed it will be pulling out of this idea – it has been publishing a directory of municipal businesses only over the past few years. This is a potential revenue generator and will be brought before the board at a future meeting.

S.Co.B.E. Awards – nominations from West Grey members pending. Manager plans to nominate Field & Range Sportshooting Supplies. Other nominee ideas should be forwarded to the manager.

Discussions with Flesherton Chamber: Discussions are pending with Flesherton Chamber re: forming working relationship to benefit municipality.

Primary Care Facility: Past President and Director of Special Project Wayne Fitzgerald updated the members present on the Chamber initiative (through Wayne) to support the business case for a primary care facility (doctors offices) in Markdale. Wayne was asked to chair a committee of the Centre Grey Health Services Foundation, looking into this opportunity. Wayne, with developers and potential investors, started looking at two sites in the village, and they are now looking at two sites – the county lands where the new hospital would be situated (not replacing the hospital – but adjunct to it) and the Bluewater District School Board Building on Victoria Ave. (scheduled to be “surplus” March 09). This building has potential and would still be close to the new hospital site. Both sites have challenges. There is a potential to partner with Abbeyfield housing on the BWDSB site – Wayne’s committee will meet with them next Friday. The Rotary Club of Markdale is also interested in getting involved from a fundraising standpoint, for interior furnishings etc. for the facility. Wayne will keep the executive apprised.

New President Elect: Doug Crawford took a few minutes to thank everyone for their support and welcome new members to the board. He said he is “pro development” so will be looking at gearing the Chamber towards creative ways to get development going in Markdale during his term as Chamber president.

Upcoming event – Santa Parade: Doug then mentioned the upcoming Santa weekend and asked for volunteers. We need to stuff candy bags for Santa to give out at the library after the parade. Bag stuffing was scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 27 at 7 p.m. at the library. Volunteering to assist were Patti, Dawna, Janie, Doug, Rick and Cathy. Marshalls for the parade will be Don, Wayne, Mark and Rick. Helping to register the floats will be Kate and Patti.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was then adjourned by consensus at 10:15 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1:

PAYABLES – Nov/Dec 2008

| Payable | Chamber | Trillium |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Automatic withdrawal: | | |
| Bell Canada | 112.55 | |
| Hydro One | 166.81 | |
| SUBTOTAL | 279.36 | |
| For payment: | | |
| Bayshore Broadcasting (Madness Ad) | \$315.00 | |
| Union Gas | \$27.95 | |
| Osprey Media (Standard – AGM ad) | \$18.26 | |
| Royal Canadian Legion (wreath) | \$40.97 | |
| Bell Canada (toll free line) | \$16.80 | |
| Mun. Grey Highlands (water) | \$40.62 | |
| Mount Forest Confederate (event ad) | | 15.23 |
| Dundalk Herald (event ad) | | 105.00 |
| Bayshore Broadcasting (Trillium event) | | 672.00 |
| Mun. Grey Highlands (event venue) | | 81.25 |
| Leesons (office supplies) | 30.59 | |
| The Sun Times (Trillium event ads) | | 77.29 |
| Dragonfly Designs (website) | 139.13 | |
| George Lorenz (honorarium) | 100.00 | |
| Mark Kraemer (AGM speaker – mileage) | 50.00 | |
| SUBTOTAL | 779.32 | 950.77 |
| For Approval: | | |
| Grey Highlands (2009 Lease payment) | 600.00 | |
| Centre Grey Health Services Fdntn. (complete and close out pledge) | 1,766.37 | (up to \$2000) once calculated. |
| SUBTOTAL | 2,366.37 | |
| TOTAL | 3,425.05 | 950.77 |

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Rick Gamblen that the payables as presented be approved for payments and that the Centre Grey Health Services Foundation pledge payout amount be no more than \$2000. Carried.