

**Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force
March 5, 2021 - Meeting Minutes**

Subject:	MINUTES OF MAYOR'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY TASK FORCE MEETING 19
Attendees:	Mayor Dan Carter, Chair Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Scott Henderson, Ivano Labricciosa, Keith Cowley, Jeff Robinson, Roger Bouma, Stacey Hawkins, Debbie McKee-Demczyk, Glen Posteraro, Nancy Shaw, Lucy Stocco
Staff:	Warren Munro, Paul Ralph
Regrets:	Peter Saturno, Ihor Lysyk, Peter Stoett, Daniel Stober, Dustin Kellow, Kyle Douglas
Meeting location:	Cisco Webex Meeting
Date & time:	March 5, 2021, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Agenda Item	Actions
1. Welcome	<p>Opening remarks by Mayor Carter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to reach out to businesses in different sector and ask them to bring their experiences throughout the pandemic and then about how we can serve them. <p>Opening remarks by Chair Marimpietri.</p>
2. February 19th Meeting Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes to the February 19th meeting minutes.
3. Review of the Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes to the existing agenda.
4. Deputation – Teresa Shaver	<p>Teresa Shaver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Advisory Centre Durham (B.A.C.D.) is a small business centre that is funded by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Region of Durham. B.A.C.D. has been around for 20 years. • Mandate is to help businesses start and grow successfully, which means business advisory service workshops and events to support business learning and development. • Work closely with different partner such as the Chambers of Commerce and Durham College and their entrepreneurship programs and membership services. • Businesses that are mature and looking for more funding are referred onto BDC.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A.C.D. works with businesses that are under five years in operation and businesses under 10 year and 10 employees. Mostly Main Street businesses or businesses that are not creating technology but using technology. • B.A.C.D. manages the Digital Main Street program for a number of areas and it is extended by the Ontario Business Improvement Association to June. In addition, the Region of Durham augmented the funding to continue the until about September. The continuation is not a grant but it is digital support services. • Also manage Starter Company Plus Program which is a grant up to \$5000, funded by the provincial Ministry. B.A.C.D. pivoted a portion of that program. • Additionally, run a women's entrepreneurship program, which is a coaching and mentoring program. It is a free program for start-up companies. • Small businesses are deferring their mortgages, rents, and car payments and using all the programs and grants to be able to stay afloat. • B.A.C.D. meets one on one with about 100 businesses a month. Centre had over 5000 people in the last year through workshops. Workshops are now virtual and participants are from all over the world. That could be a great opportunity for Durham Region because some entrepreneurs might look to relocate. • B.A.C.D.'s digital marketing team helps businesses with creating graphics, content, calendar and website. • Ivano Labricciosa inquired about businesses being busy with work and under staffed and not having time to fill out forms. What is the best way to support these businesses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teresa shared that individuals have reached their mental capacity. Navigating compliance and health and safety is very complex for small businesses. It requires a lot of coaching and assisting in understanding the requirements. B.A.C.D. also assists in connecting businesses with the correct agencies. • A concierge service would be beneficial with experts that know how to navigate the forms or with post-secondary students that are business minded and have the ability to centralize the support. It is also important to continuously adapt and know the changing guidelines. • Concierge services through Ontario and federal government are available but businesses end up many times back at our centres for help navigate to

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	<p>through forms and documents. Currently, businesses go where they are comfortable whether it is Chamber, B.A.C.D., or their municipalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Shaw inquired about B.A.C.D.'s funding. Also, mentioned that concierge service is available through other municipalities and the discussions have taken place with Region of Durham. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A.C.D.'s core funding is through Region of Durham and the Ministry. Over the years received funding from different places such as municipalities or federal government. B.A.C.D. is open to receiving funding from different sources to create and manage a specific grant. Also, raise their own funds by charging for events. • Working with all Ontario small business centres and 90% of them are inside of either a municipality or region and so they are able to offer concierge services. Durham Region is separate organizations but there is potential merge resource to create that service. Kitchener-Waterloo seconded their recreation teams to do outreach to businesses and followed up to create peer-to-peer groups. • Keith Cowley noted that concierge service is intriguing because one of the biggest challenges for business owners is navigation. How can the task force provide support to move forward in offering that and deal with onboarding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the Small Business Centre grant is for each centre to hire a virtual service advisor. B.A.C.D. hired an individual to work 20 hours a week to help the businesses navigate. It would include business continuity plans, grant applications, finding grants and funding. At this point, it is only 20 hours of the week, therefore, capacity could be a concern if it was marketed. • B.A.C.D. is open to the idea of one stop shop to assist businesses but the demand would increase exponentially if it was promoted. There is also the consideration whether it is for City of Oshawa or Region of Durham. To some degree it will have an uptake but then there is the concern of businesses being fatigued and not interested. • Onboarding process is two to three months to get an individual up to speed with all the support systems and keep them updated.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Carter indicated that there is discussion to create a process for potential one stop shop. Currently, efforts are coordinated through Chamber of Commerce and Development Services Department. The idea has great merit and transcends the pandemic. It would be very key it how Oshawa positions its businesses in the community. • The initiative would be in collaboration with Oshawa partners to get all the information for Oshawa-based businesses. The Region of Durham, Chamber of Commerce, B.A.C.D., and post-secondary partners will be key in developing that process. • Debbie McKee-Demczyk noted that college and universities are now offering micro-credentials. Is there information or resources that might be beneficial for small businesses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of information around pivoting to online, tax implications, and doing business with the United States and understanding the agreements. There is also questions around e-commerce businesses, navigating shipping, taxes and logistics of selling online. Expanding beyond local means identifying the right markets globally. Small business owners need to understand digital marketing and understand content creation tools. • B.A.C.D. offers workshops that are 90 minutes to 2 hours but there is not an opportunity to go into depth because there could be 80 people in a session. • Scott Henderson noted that Trent is focusing on micro-credentials to cater to digital needs. However, given the limited time available to businesses, should there be alternative formats, intensive versions, or hands-on assistance that would be a better fit? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A.C.D. works alongside businesses to map out the entire workflow of an organization and research systems, processes and software the business can adopt. B.A.C.D. also has access to an expert tech network to refer clients for services that they are not experts in. Through certain funding B.A.C.D. may even pay for a portion of that service on behalf of the client. • For business owners, time invested into courses is time and money savings down the road because they are not making mistakes or not having to try to learn on the fly.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, B.A.C.D. will offer a variety of workshops and encourage clients to take advantage of workshops from BDC, CRA, Region of Durham, etc. Certain services can get expensive such as one-on-one service with tax experts. • Nancy Shaw noted that the Chamber of Commerce is running a tax workshop on March 18th at 8:30 AM in collaboration with Baker Tilly.
5. Roundtable Update	<p>Mayor Carter discussed the possibility of creating an initiative related to mental health with industry experts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keith Cowley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of the initiative. BDC is also noticing increased concerns about mental health and have the resources to address it but small businesses might not. • Willing to reach out internally to find out successful methods of getting staff to participate. • Jeff Robinson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of the initiative. Offices are open and therefore there is first hand feedback. All staff are affected in some way and so open communication is key. Small businesses may not have that support and need help. • Nancy Shaw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Bell Let's Talk, Chamber had a speaker from Ontario Shores to speak to members. The session was very informative and well received. • Chamber's e-news column covered mental health. There is a lot of discussion with staff and local businesses around mental health issues. • Ivano Labricciosa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health support can be a marketing challenge because people might be too busy to make the time for or have difficult in recognizing that they need it. <p>Mayor Carter noted that task force will reach out to Ontario Shores to arrange a deputation.</p> <p>Member Roundtable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keith Cowley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is early discussion about an event regarding auto sector. The event will be regarding the benefits, support and challenges around GM's new

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	<p>announcement. BDC is in discussion with Oshawa Economic Development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lender support is still strong for growth and expansion projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If businesses had positive cash flow pre-COVID-19 it is taken into consideration. There is increased stress on due diligence. Businesses must also be able to demonstrate their adherence to regulations to customers and employees. Businesses must also show that management is adapting and seeking expertise to guide them. • Nancy Shaw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax webinar will be free for members and a small price for non-members. • Chamber will be hosting a free webinar with Mayor Carter and Durham Region Police regarding safety on April 1. • Continuing video series on rediscover your neighbourhood to provide businesses a platform. • Roger Bouma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Oshawa sold 366 homes in February; that is twice the amount sold in January. Listing inventory is beginning to increase. Price escalation in February from January was modest at a rate of 2.9%, whereas, the price increase in the prior month was 10%. • Lucy Stocco <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes industry continues to perform well. Tribute Communities is facing supply issues for low-rise unit but addressing the problem. • Increasing cost of supplies is on the radar. • Stacey Hawkins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of lumber and other materials continues to be an issue for homebuilders. Attaining certain materials is also becoming a problem. • D.R.H.B.A. will be hosting a seminar on March 17 with Ontario Homebuilders Association about going to net zero and green building. • Glen Posteraro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong demand for industrial, although there is an issue on the supply side. Small-scale industrial units is in demand currently.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail continues to show strong resilience and there is still demand to take up vacant space. • Office could face more vacancy in the future as businesses might lower their physical presence. • Business performance and continuity will be a concern when support programs officially end. • Jeff Robinson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Motors continues to ramp up very quickly. There is already two permits into the city and hope to add more soon. • Businesses are approaching to see if JJ Maguire has some industrial space available. • Going in for site plan approval on a project on Thornton Road North and Taunton Road West. It is a 10-acre site and 60,000 square foot build for office and warehouse space. There is a potential for a second phase expansion. • Scott Henderson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Tech and Trent University are planning to bring students back to campus in the fall. There will continue to be some remote learning to account for the great course investment some have undergone. • Mental health component is also a reason for bringing back students and allowing them to have social interactions and in-person learning. • Ontario Tech and Trent are working to offer a course in the summer through Teaching City. It will be a multi-disciplinary look at surveillance. • Interested in collaborating with local businesses to accommodate student's Trent card as a method of payment. • Ivano Labricciosa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reached a critical point in outstanding receivables at OPUC so there is active work taking place. • No issues in cost of material for OPUC. • Downtown businesses are happy that they are open and that City is promoting them. • City of Kingston is strongly messaging how well they are managing COVID-19 and reassuring that they are a safe community. The marketing technique is very intriguing to attract tourism.

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<p>6. #OshawaLovesLocal Campaign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brett Murphy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oshawa just wrapped Black History Month for the month of February in partnership with diversity and inclusion team. It highlighted 17 local black owned businesses. • Social media metrics should that the Oshawa Loves Local gained 86,000 impressions across all of social media platforms (YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook). The metrics also indicate that the videos are being watched in full. There is also a lot of positive sentiment from the community especially towards these local businesses that are that are being profiled. • Paid promotions are continuing for the month of March and currently there is paid promotions for White Feather Farms. • There is budget that is set aside to do a new series in the spring and summer towards recovery, reopening, economic recovery and optimism around the vaccine. • Businesses are reaching out and want to be involved, which is a testament to the campaign. Oshawa Farmers Market is scheduled to open on April 5th and have expressed interest in being involved.
<p>7. Update on Task Force Action Items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Trade Zone report is going to Development Services Committee on March 8th. • Mayor's Task Force on Safety, Security, and Well Being are bringing forward to Development Services Committee that the Community Improvement Plan allow costs around security for businesses. • Upcoming public announcement on the C.C.T.V. program for core downtown area. • Council passed that patio season begin April 1st. • Oshawa Farmer's Market is moving forward rapidly and they have over 15 businesses partnered with them. • Ongoing discussion with Durham Homebuilder Association to promote local businesses. City staff provided City and Chamber resources to the Homebuilders Association.
<p>8. Closing Remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing remarks by Mayor Carter and Chair Marimpietri. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Oshawa has a lot of jobs and investment pipeline. It will be very exciting news for the community when it is public. • Reminder April 2nd meeting has shifted to April 9th. • Next meeting will March 19 at 11:00 am.