



Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force February 11, 2022 - Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Mayor Dan Carter, Margaret Spiegelman, Debbie McKee Demczyk, Dustin Kellow, Ivano Labricciosa, Jason King, Jeff Robinson, Peter Stoett, Roger Bouma, Scott Henderson, Stacey Hawkins

Staff: Economic Development branch staff, Warren Munro, Paul Ralph

Regrets: Sali Fitzpatrick, Glen Posteraro, Ihor Lysyk, Kyle Douglas, Lucy Stocco, Peter Saturno

Meeting Location: Cisco Webex Meeting

Time: 11:30 AM- 12:30 PM

1. Updates

Mayor Dan Carter

Welcomed the taskforce with the vision of brighter days ahead, with the economy opening up, following the transition from the provinces' modified stage 2. Recently comments were collected to be submitted jointly with partners in business within Oshawa to the provincial government. Several meetings have taken place with the province and there is an optimistic sentiment for the second stage of funding. This commitment makes a big difference in our community and there is hope that this continues to take positive direction. A letter has been sent off to support long-lasting business support, and receipt of this letter has been confirmed by the province.

The City of Oshawa continues to make a case for healthcare investment within Durham Region, showcasing of unique value that Oshawa brings.

A positive success story for Oshawa, GM continues to grow its workforce, with 22, 000 employees, 55% of which are women. The amount of jobs and investment coming to Oshawa is unprecedented and shows the growing future we are advocating for.

The City is pleased to work with partners in business including the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce and recently formed Downtown Oshawa Business Alliance

(DOBA) to see new initiatives and growing feedback to create positive change in the business community.

Chair Tito-Dante Marimpietri

Expressed that with access to three post-secondary institutions in Oshawa, we have a real opportunity on our hands to partner with the college and universities. Oshawa has shifted over time, with strong beginnings in the industrial sector and growing commercial success, the acceleration in these sectors in recent years has been a leading factor in the growth of great local employment. Many big players are coming to the Northwood Business Park, which will be a successful page in the story of Oshawa. The continued efforts of this taskforce continues to drive that story forward.

Warren Munro, Commissioner, Development Services

Shared that \$53 million in building permits were issued in the month of January. Expectation that February will reflect the same, even given that it is a short month, which is a great start to 2022.

Hailey Wright, Director, Economic Development Services

Expressed that Plan 20Thirty, Oshawa's downtown action plan for revitalization, is well underway. The action items framework is being developed and reworked by the committee, led by Hailey. An external consultant came in to do a visioning exercise in early January which helped to streamline the scope and edge that the committee could provide. Public consultation will begin in the upcoming weeks that will support and enhance the work proposed by the committee, to be ready in time to be approved by council in the spring.

A new campaign has been created by the Economic Development Services department as a result of recent conversations within this group highlighting opportunities for further business support, we are referring to as the Oshawa Business Supports campaign. Weekly outreach is happening three times a week to highlight supports available for businesses at all levels of government and within community centric organizations. We have only received one inquiry so far in response to this campaign, but hope to see more interest as messaging continues to be circulated on social media and email newsletters.

The Downtown Oshawa Instagram has relaunched. There has been very positive engagement on the channel amongst businesses and the public. A Public Service Announcement went out this week to share news of the relaunch. The department, with the support of local champions, are looking to encourage engagement with the account to have great user-generated content to represent the positive stories of Downtown Oshawa.

Last week a monthly Downtown Oshawa newsletter was circulated to provide updates and upcoming dates for downtown activities. This newsletter began as an additional

stream of communication to support with the gaps found in the results of a survey organized through DOBA. This newsletter will be distributed in the first week of the month to downtown business owners and other stakeholders and the department will evaluate the success of the newsletter.

Events that will continue this year that are being led by the City include Kars on King and Summer in the City.. We are working with internal departments to have updates with organizers along the way to ensure that we are informed of what is going on to spread the word to businesses. The department is working closely with DOBA and event organizers to support with the navigation in planning these events.

Walkability has been an ongoing topic with snow clearing being a difficult job this year, given the harsh snowfalls. The operations team has done a fantastic job in dealing with the circumstances. Issues surrounding parking were dealt with on a one-to-one basis and were addressed as quickly as possible. A recommendation will likely come through Plan 20Thirty to look at the times that Downtown Oshawa is serviced due to the street parking element that the retail environment relies on for successful business.

Tourism is an ongoing discussion. The department continues to meet with partners in business and the Region of Durham that leads tourism initiatives for the region, to showcase Oshawa as a sought after destination. Campaigns will be coming up over the next few months highlighting culinary and experiences through marketing activities.

Convocation celebrations are currently being coordinated with the post-secondary institutions to coordinate communications that highlight the unique places and spaces to explore in Downtown Oshawa. Conversations are also underway to explore options for festivities and celebrations that bring vibrancy to these celebratory days.

Patio season will be upon us soon and the department will be doing outreach to businesses considering outdoor dining.

Ivano Labricciosa

Expressed that there is a need to market Downtown Oshawa as the place to go, lining up messaging with patio season.

Chair Tito-Dante Marimpietri

Highlighted that Fiesta Week is perhaps the largest event in Oshawa, which will make a shift in the future to come outdoor as a smaller event that will be hosted over a weekend.

2. Roundtable – Members' Updates

Debbie McKee Demczyk, Durham College

As of January 31, 2022, Durham College is back to campus. This is the busiest the campus has been in the past two years, which has been great to see. The experience has been very positive so far and students glad to be back on campus and see each other. International student population continues to grow and more students are living in the community. Durham College has had conversations with Spark Centre and their Launchpad program, and noted that it might be a great presentation to bring to this group.

Scott Henderson, Trent University Durham

The campus is feeling more lively students returning to campus. 6.6 million raised through a fundraising campaign to support experiential learning. The grand opening of the new residence and academic building will be April 7, 2022. On April 22, 2022 an event in collaboration with Ontario Tech University will take place to commemorate the date that the Rolling Stones played on the property. Enrolment continues to grow. Over 2,800 students are taking classes on campus. Housing continues to be a challenge on top of the campus space issue that has been mentioned previously.

Peter Saturno, Ontario Tech University

Faculty strike is currently happening, and they are hoping that there will be a resolution soon. Some students have been placed with Downtown Oshawa Business Alliance, working on marketing efforts as the organization launches. Applications for next year are up an impressive 30%. The university is looking forward to offering convocation for students this upcoming spring.

Jason King, Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce

A budget pre-consultation joint letter was sent to the province with DOBA, addressing system issues for well-being. The Chamber is excited for the collaboration amongst groups to work on shared initiatives.

Dustin Kellow, Durham Recruiting

There have been challenges with talent and skilled trades shortages. There is a need to promote awareness for what is available coming out of academic institutions. Missed opportunity at times, which would benefit from greater connections.

Margaret Spiegelman, TD

Things continue to be busy, and continued efforts made to connect with clients in very flexible ways. The Economic Outlook event will be hosted virtually on April 21st, 2022.

Stacey Hawkins, Durham Home Builders Association

The Housing Affordability Task Force Report was released from the province this week. There have been many conflicting opinions. The continued issue of skilled trade shortages has become apparent. Discussions with the Region of Durham and Durham College continue to see what can be done to overcome obstacles with shortages.

Roger Bouma, Durham Region Association of Realtors

Looking forward to conversation around provincial taskforce discussion. Issue of student housing will continue to be a challenge after students departed the area to study remotely given the pandemic. Normal spaces that students would occupy are being occupied by others in university and college cluster communities. Value of homes continues to climb in Oshawa.

Jeff Robinson, J.J. McGuire General Contractors

Skilled trades and supply chain continues to be a problem. They are seeing more industrial projects and school board projects picking up as usual this time of year. The demand is high and a number of projects underway.

Ivano Labricciosa, Oshawa Power

Rebates for property taxes was shared with the group, which is available for small businesses <https://www.ontario.ca/page/businesses-get-help-covid-19-costs>. Durham Broadband is growing, and the demand is apparent in the community.

3. Closing Remarks

Chair Tito-Dante Marimpietri

Expressed that there is a need to be cognizant of the effects of the pandemic on small businesses, and provide long-lasting supports that help with the root cause of issues that have been experienced over the past two years. The agenda for the next meeting will include a discussion of the tabled report and the direction of legislation that creates real change. This conversation will direct how the province is approached.

4. Action Items

- Hailey to coordinate speaker to join the next taskforce meeting to speak about the Ontario government's Housing Affordability Task Force Report

5. Next Meeting

Friday, March 11, 2022