



## **Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force June 14, 2022 - Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Mayor Dan Carter, Chair Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Margaret Spiegelman, Jason King, Jeff Robinson, Stacey Hawkins, Roger Bouma, Scott Henderson

**Staff:** Paul Ralph, Warren Munro, Economic Development Services staff

**Regrets:** Dustin Kellow, Glen Posteraro, Peter Saturno, Peter Stoett, Debbie McKee Demczyk, Ivano Labricciosa, Kyle Douglas, Lucy Stocco, Sali Fitzpatrick

**Meeting Location:** Cisco Webex Meeting

**Time:** 2:30PM - 4:00PM

### **1. Welcome and Updates**

#### **Chair Tito-Dante Marimpietri**

Recognized the value this group brings to create impactful and tangible work that supports our community. The group was asked to weigh-in on the components that add value in this taskforce and what would benefit the future of this group. The general consensus was that roundtable discussions were beneficial to foster collaboration and awareness for what is happening within our community. Pivoting away from the word "recovery" can provide long-term benefit to future impactful issues.

#### **Mayor Dan Carter**

Welcomed all members of the taskforce with excitement for hearing industry updates in today's meeting. Great numbers are out regarding employment, building permits and post-secondary expansions, proving to support the economy in a very positive way. More business openings are coming to Downtown and great real estate opportunities are having a positive impact within the core of the city. Shared that phase two funding has been approved for the GO transit expansion. Events are also in full swing, bringing thousands of guests to Oshawa. Construction by highway 401 is underway and will likely take place over the next decade. There is lots of great news to look forward to, bringing positive impact to the economy.

## **2. Roundtable**

### **Scott Henderson, Trent University**

Convocation was an overwhelming success this year. Parents and graduates felt welcomed and celebrated on this special occasion, at Tribute Communities Centre. Orientation planning is underway, collaborating with the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce to have students exploring local businesses. Enrolment is up +50%, with growth in international population and increase of families relocating to Oshawa. There is a joint group focusing on great housing options for students, particularly international students. Creating great housing options for students while they are students is a great benefit to the economy, as students begin their careers and select Oshawa as their home post-graduation. With the expansion of co-op programs, there are many opportunities to connect students with local networks and support local organizations.

### **Stacey Hawkins, Durham Home Builders Association**

Looking towards the municipal election to focus on affordable housing and wrapping up from provincial election priorities. Construction has been busy with the summer and warm weather upon us, while still areas struggling with skilled trade shortages. An awards ceremony was held and brought many partners together for a great evening to connect in person for the first time since the pandemic. The President's Ball will be taking place this fall.

### **Margaret Spiegelman, TD**

Still quite busy and lending market has lots of activity. Costs are rising, but most businesses are managing well on that front. Rates are on the rise. A quarterly update was put together in May that can be shared with this group, that contains topical questions and issues that have come up recently.

### **Roger Bouma, Durham Region Association of Realtors**

We currently have market conditions that have slowed demand for a period of time, but the reality is that the bulk of homes being listed are being sold and we're still seeing them in a reasonable market. What we were experiencing back in January and February felt a little bit unreal, but values have dropped down further towards a level playing field. A fairly significant adjustment has happened over a short period of time. Hopeful to see even better value in July and August, and following typical trends, those looking for deals are going to jump into the market in the fall and level things off.

### **Jason King, Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce**

Collaboration amongst community partners is a tremendous focus, to feed roots of local businesses. A tour of HOPA is happening on Friday. Significant investment is anticipated at the port to create further opportunity for supply-chain. Learning material is being released this week for credential gaps between new arrival to the country and localization of skills. This is a topic that stemmed from a conversation that took place in this group. In a recent conversation with Ontario Tech, the priority for student

connection to the community was raised. A letter to City Council is coming today to engage the City to support a celebration for new post-secondary students to the community. Funding of the Shop Local campaign continues and an event is taking place to teach businesses on how to engage with social media.

**Brett Murphy, Manager of Marketing and Investment Attraction**

2022 Convocation celebrations have been happening over the span of three weeks, in collaboration with the three post-secondary institutions. Various communications has gone out to graduating students, accommodated for each institution, celebrating their achievements and creating awareness for ways to celebrate through dining and local shopping during this celebratory season with friends and family. Dozens of ambassadors have been hired to welcome families and graduates, and to support with wayfinding on their convocation day. Plan 20Thirty, the Downtown Oshawa revitalization plan, will be going to City Council next week. Sixty different action items are included. A new visual brand identity will also be presented to City Council next week.

**Ivano Labricciosa, Oshawa Power (through Brett Murphy)**

*In Mr. Labricciosa's absence, Brett Murphy shared updates and questions sent in via email.* What is the current state of the sidewalk patio program? Brett addressed that the patio uptake has been a bit slower this year. The program was in place and promoted earlier than usual this year, starting April 15 (as opposed to the typical May-start). The Biltmore and Top Corner have opened patios, King's Corner is in progress of getting necessary materials together for their application. The patio bylaw is in effect until October 31 of this year. Another question asked by Mr. Labricciosa surrounding Oshawa vacancy rates. Brett addressed that vacancy rates are quite low across the city at less than 2% from the data that we are collecting. We are continuing to observe the impact that the hybrid work week is having for vacancies for office space. We are in discussions with Durham Region to enhance their annual Business Count survey, in an effort to track any vacancy metrics. A final question posed from Mr. Labricciosa called for more details on a job fair taking place at the Oshawa Convention Centre. Brett shared that this event is being run by Jobs Canada on June 16, with over 20 employers represented. The group running the event has been contacted for more details, but local employers seem to have been taking great advantage of this opportunity.

**Lucy Stocco, Tribute Communities (through Brett Murphy)**

*In Mrs. Stocco's absence, Brett Murphy shared updates sent in via email.* The industry is being severely challenged with strikes, delays in supply chain, and significantly higher costs. Sales have also softened in the past couple months.

### **3. Closing Remarks**

**Mayor Dan Carter**

Expressed appreciation for the detailed updates provided today from the taskforce. Shared news story discussing affordable housing, with Oshawa amongst 29 other

communities being discussed. Pleased to see convocation celebrations as one of many connections to strengthening the post-secondary collaboration to foster further connection and support available to students in their time here in Oshawa. We continue to see investment in the downtown core. The property at Athol Street and Centre Street has been purchased, and testing is being done on site. 1,000 new residents will be living downtown with the opening of 80 Bond.

#### **4. Meeting Adjourned**

Meeting was concluded at 4:13PM.

#### **5. Next Meeting**

September 9, 2022 at 11AM.