



**MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH GRENVILLE
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Monday, November 4, 2024, 3:30 p.m.
Suite A
Held in Suite A, Main Floor, 285 County Road 44**

MEMBERS PRESENT Co-Chair Councillor Deb Wilson
Co-Chair Cholly Boland
James McNeil
Rick Tachuk
Mayor Nancy Peckford
Tracy McDonald
Wendy Embleton
Andre Rancourt
Shawn Carnegie
Greg Lane
Deputy Mayor John Barclay
Wayne Brown

STAFF PRESENT Amy Martin, Director of Planning & Development
Matt Gilmer, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism
Chloe Preston, Municipal Clerk
Karen Dunlop, CAO

A. Open Meeting

Co-Chair Cholly Boland called the meeting to order at 3:36p.m.

B. Land Acknowledgment

The land acknowledgement was read by Cholly Boland.

C. Approval of the Agenda

#CEDAC-2024- 33

Moved by James McNeil

Seconded by Tracy McDonald

Be it resolved that:

The Committee agenda for November 4, 2024 be approved as presented.

CARRIED

D. Disclosure of Interests

None.

E. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings

#CEDAC-2024- 34

Moved by John Barclay

Seconded by James McNeil

Be it resolved that:

The following meeting minutes be approved as circulated:

1. October 7, 2024

CARRIED

1. Committee Meeting Minutes - October 7, 2024

F. Delegations

None.

G. Decision Items

H. Correspondence/Information Items/Reports

1. Ferguson Forest, Land Discussion and Nursery Operations

Maureen Jacques and Wes Herring provided an overview of the operations and structure of Ferguson Forest Centre (FFC), highlighting recent challenges with financing, labor issues, and the impact of the County Road 43 expansion. FFC estimates 65,000 visits annually to its free recreational activities, which have cost \$1.7 million to develop. They have requested bridge financing and the sale of land from the Municipality of North Grenville (MNG), and are also seeking additional funding from Community Futures, with a decision expected soon.

Wes explained that FFC operates under a zero-dollar lease for Crown land, but must pay MNG for services like road maintenance and seasonal work at certain sites. FFC employs around 20 full-time workers, with 7 migrant workers, and spends \$85K annually on

property maintenance, which is now managed by volunteers or contractors instead of nursery staff.

Rick Tachuk asked about future financing plans. Wes mentioned ongoing issues with the greenhouse's water supply, costing \$300K to fix, and the need to transition to other crops to reduce losses. They are investigating potential contamination of the water source and hope for a solution by spring 2024. FFC's insurance costs are also high due to the public nature of the space. Total gross revenue for FFC is \$1.5 million.

Nancy Peckford referenced a previous \$500K loan to Oxford on Rideau, and noted that no payments have been made by FFC for the last four years, despite being viewed as a community partner. John Barclay added that the reserve account was emptied in 2022.

FFC has faced challenges with changes to provincial funding cycles and a lack of seed supply after the closure of the Angus Seed Plant. They are now growing their own seeds. FFC is also struggling with grant applications due to limited staffing capacity. While they've considered charging for recreation access, the many entry points make it difficult to manage.

Greg Lane suggested a proposal from the University of Ottawa might be helpful and offered to send it to FFC. Wes explained that FFC's greenhouse was built on poor-quality sandy soil, making agriculture difficult. Shawn Carnegie requested soil samples from land that has not been successful for farming.

2. Competitive Analysis, Rick Tachuk

Rick Tachuk presented a competitive analysis report, noting that Kemptville is similar in size to Almonte. John Barclay asked if Rick had considered Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs, and many members of the group had visited other towns to examine local facilities, with a focus on tourism and recreation. Tracy McDonald suggested Kemptville could use Perth as a model for branding. Cholly Bolland asked if the group had engaged with local residents for input.

Successful communities have focused on developing industrial parks and ensuring they own and control land, though this is challenging due to the high cost of land. There are concerns that surplus land from the proposed jail in North Grenville could drive up prices, as available land is limited. A strong focus on creating a vibrant downtown core and encouraging shopping downtown is needed. Other successful areas often have dedicated tourism teams.

Comparing Kemptville to cities like Orillia, Kingston, and Cornwall, there are many opportunities for change. Kingston and Cornwall are also acquiring land and discussing land-sharing agreements. North

Grenville could benefit from stronger connections with Ottawa-area transportation.

Matt Gilmer, Manager of Economic Development outlined three key focuses of the Economic Strategy:

- Tourism
- Green Technology
- Agri-Innovation

3. Working Groups Update

Moved to next meeting.

I. Other Business

1. Items for Next Meeting

1. Kemptville Campus- Annie Hillis, Executive Director

2. Working Groups Update

- Competitive Analysis
- Workforce Challenges
- Serviceable Lands and Rural Development
- Clean Tech Development Sustainability
- Heritage, Arts and Culture

3. Question to member to discuss at upcoming meeting:

J. Public Questions

None.

K. Adjournment

#CEDAC-2024- 35

Moved by James McNeil

Seconded by Shawn Carnegie

Be it resolved that:

The meeting be adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

CARRIED