

BDAPAC report to Haldimand County Council

Originally formed in 2017 the BDAPAC serves two functions as an advisory committee to Council. In support of business and economic development within Haldimand County it works with the Economic Development and Tourism Division and as a secondary function works with the Planning and Development Division as a statutory Advisory Committee (Smart Growth for our Communities Act 2015).

The BDAPAC members are approved by Council at the start of the Council term and is a volunteer committee. The current BDAPAC consists of business leaders and stakeholders from Haldimand County. Decades of knowledge and experience in business and thought leadership are at the table. Current committee members represent a cross section of the Haldimand economy representing businesses in Retail, Consulting, Agriculture, Service, Industrial, Manufacturing, and Financial sectors. The committee sits with considerable Entrepreneurial spirit, vision, and dedication. Every member at our table has contributed to making Haldimand County better through their work on this committee and in their professional life.

As this is the committees first report to Council since inception the report is divided into several sections with supplements

- Overview and Purpose
- Accomplishments and contributions
- Direction of future work
- Recommendations and Requests
- Attachments and Appendixes

Overview

The current Committee consists of :

- Phil Hauser (Hauser's Pharmacy) – Chair
- Mike Lessard (Jeff's Outdoor) – Vice Chair
- Tauri Caputo (Grand Erie Business Centre)
- Trudy Parsons (MDB Insight)
- John Vanderzanden (Retired Farmer?)
- John Edelman (Haldimand Motors)
- Chris Hibbs (Haldimand Insurance)
- Adam Peet (Rituul Inc.)
- Art Bluhm (Thrive Cannabis)
- Kellie Stephan (Formerly Stephans V&S)
- Mayor Ken Hewitt
- Councillor Rob Shirton

Haldimand County Staff Liaisons are:

- Lidy Romanuk, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism
- Mike Evers, General Manager, Community and Development Services
- Breanna Beauchamp, Division Support, Economic Development and Tourism

BDAPAC currently meets every 2 months and held its first elections in November of 2020 following a change to the committee's terms of reference as approved by Council. BDAPAC meetings are typically 2-4 hours in length covering a variety of topics. While there is no remuneration for committee members it is estimated that the current committee members time and value contributed to the committee is an estimated \$15,000-30,000 per meeting. The BDAPAC operates by the guidance of its Terms of Reference (See Attachment 1). From those Terms of Reference a summary of our Mandate is to

1. To provide local perspective, guidance and expert strategic direction to assist in the
2. Implementation of Haldimand County's Economic Development and Tourism strategies.
3. To serve with a focus on provision of advice, community input and recommendations for the direction of the Economic Development and Tourism agenda.
4. Work with staff to promote the County to prospective clients to demonstrate alignment between local government and the business community.
5. Function as the statutory Planning Advisory Committee and will provide advice/input into major strategic planning initiatives that will have an impact on economic development within the County such as land supply and servicing strategies and Official Plan updates.

Accomplishments and Contributions

For a complete list of project highlights please see Attachment 2: BDAPAC Project Highlights which summarizes some of the 59 separate points of discussion and accomplishments to date.

Notable highlights are

- Education and Training – Committee members have begun to develop a more detailed knowledge and understanding of the planning process mandated by the Province and employed by Haldimand County and the structure and function of the Planning and Development division. Developing this understanding was important to be able to relate concepts across different perspectives.
- Development of Business Concierge Team – The BDAPAC contributed significantly to the development and relaunch of this team. This was seen a significant contribution of the committee to alleviate a considerable barrier for small and medium business in developing Commercial, Residential, and Industrial lands within Haldimand County.
- Addressing Workforce Issues – The committee continues to examine local workforce challenges faced by the business community. This includes identifying skills gaps, labour issues, and other challenges faced by local businesses looking to grow within Haldimand County.
- Recommendations for Official Plan updates. The committee continues to present opinions, ideas, and recommendations to Planning staff regarding the updating to the Official Plan currently underway. This has provided a sounding board for establishment of growth expectations, infrastructure needs to support growth targets, and the allocation and designation of Haldimand County employment lands.
- Developing stronger ties within the Haldimand County business community and related groups. The committee has initiated the development of pipelines for information and communication through the Haldimand Business Network and the Agricultural Advisory Committee of Council .

This included coordinating and relaying of information with the Agricultural Committee and the various Chambers of Commerce and BIAs within Haldimand County.

- Reviewed and helped shaped priorities on the 2021 Work Plan for the Economic Development and Tourism division.
- Business recovery strategy. The committee has been able to make a significant contribution in Haldimand County's marketing strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included reviewing and contributing to marketing strategies, support of the tourism sector, recommendations for the dispersal of Fed Dev RRRF funding.
- The committee continues to, on a meeting-to-meeting basis, provide diverse and creative recommendations on requirements, barriers, and recommendations on the attraction of new businesses to Haldimand County.
- The committee and its members significantly participated in the marketing and branding of new Haldimand county brand and "real opportunity" campaign, along with the re-branding of the Haldimand County.

Direction of Future work

The committee continues its advisory work over several projects although it faces limitations in its ability to complete these tasks in a timely manner. These limitations are primarily, but not limited to, financial capabilities and the human resources of the Economic Development and Tourism Division.

Current projects and discussions that are directing future work:

- Development of an Economic dashboard. The committee feels considerable value is derived in being able to present as complete as possible picture to council of the economy of Haldimand County. This dashboard would include KPI's and markers deemed significant and that could be tracked over time. It is hoped that this would give future committees and councils the insight to understand the "pulse" of our economy. This could include metrics such as the total economic activity of the county to KPIs on the number of empty storefronts in trading areas
- Support of new businesses within Haldimand County. The committee continues to work on removing barriers and providing support for businesses to start, relocate, or expand in Haldimand County.

Recommendations and Requests

- Financial Support – The committee provides considerable insight and input for Haldimand County. Currently the Economic Development and Tourism Division has a full work-plan and therefore does not always have the ability to take on new projects discussed by the Committee. Further investigation of the appropriate financial or human resources may be required to allow staff to implement many of the committee's recommendations or take on the necessary work to complete the larger scale development projects required to achieve economic growth. It is fully acknowledged that any recommendation for committee funding or additional human resources in EDT would require the following:
 - A clear and fully formulated business case to be considered as part of a New Initiative in the County's structured annual budget review process;
 - Consideration against other New Initiatives, budget obligations and funding challenges to determine financial feasibility;

- Approval by Senior Management Team to incorporate into the draft budget; and
- Consideration by Council in the context of the larger annual (operating) and/or 10 year (capital) financial plan for the County.
- Transportation infrastructure – the committee feels a more comprehensive project list with a focus on improved transportation for business growth is required to support the planning division growth projections. Transportation projects such as
 - removing the unused train bridge on Hwy 54 which currently prevents some sizes of transport trucks from efficiently accessing commercial zones as identified in the 2028 capital budget
 - Hagersville bypass of Hwy 6
 - North south access from Grimsby to Dunnville
 - Easy access to the QEW and 403 for commercial and industrial transportation
- Develop marketing education opportunities for local businesses
- Completion of a business case for the 2022 Operating budget to investigate the hiring of additional economic development staff to support the current compliment of staff.
- Agri-business support – The committee would encourage council to support the development of economic viability of local farmers by continuing to look for opportunities to support on farm processing of commodities
- Gap analysis on missing infrastructure and economic outputs within Haldimand communities
- Development of the economic potential of the Grand River
- The BDAPAC recommends the council encourage diversity of uses within the agricultural sector of the Haldimand economy. Encouraging labour intensive and high net worth crops can encourage market growth and maximize economic outputs. The committee looks forward to having the opportunity to help shape Official Plan (OP) policy in this regard as part of upcoming work on the County's OP Update Phase 2.
- Development and support of lifestyle projects that provide ancillary benefits and points of attraction for businesses to relocate. Projects could include the development of a trail or path system that links to neighbouring regions or counties.
- The committee recommends encouraging and building stronger economic links between the communities of Haldimand County, making local businesses a better choice.
- Encouraging new residents of the County to shop local and contribute to the Haldimand economy.
- Continue to develop shovel ready industrial and commercial lands across the County
- Encourage high density residential developments

Financial Request

The committee has identified two matters that have financial implications. The first is a request for a \$50,000 annual budget to implement their priority initiatives and second is to consider additional staff resources in the EDT area. Both matters needs to be evaluated through the 2022 operating budget process including whether there is opportunity for off-setting grants. A breakdown of the \$50,000 annual budget is provided below:

Incidentals / Travel / meeting costs Conference/Tradeshows, travel, offsite meetings, networking , subscriptions, membership fees	7000
Program implementation / Initiatives / May include consultant costs to complete key studies , educational resources, content development, marketing, promotional items, expertise / consultant requirements	40, 000
Assets Computers, hard assets	3000
Total Budgetary Ask	50,000

Closing

The committee remains dedicated to improvement and support of Haldimand County's economic opportunities. The recommendations put fourth are done so with consideration and in the context of the information available at the time of the recommendation. The BDAPAC is composed of local experts providing strategic guidance supporting economic development to Haldimand County. It is of the opinion of the BDAPAC that the recommendations set forth in this report represent important directions and initiatives for the growth of the County. To continue to develop and build on the body of work already completed, and to utilize the potential value of the expertise available from committee members further financial investment is required.

Attachments

Attachment 1 : terms of reference

Attachment 2: BDAPAC Project Highlights