



**THE CORPORATION OF
HALDIMAND COUNTY**

**Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee
Minutes**

Date: April 7, 2025
Time: 9:00 A.M.
Location: Haldimand County Administration Building
53 Thorburn Street South

Members Present S. Bentley, Mayor
T. Caputo, Member
P. Hauser, Member
P. Makey, Chair
G. Naylor, Member
P. O'Neill, Councillor
M. Reynolds, Member

Regrets A. Peet, Member

Staff Present M. Evers, Community & Development Services
L. Romanuk, Economic Development & Tourism
J. Nelson, Project Manager, Business Retention and Expansion
C. Donaldson, Administrative Assistant
W. Radix, Research & Marketing Technician

Others Present M. Legg, Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre
P. Freeman, Selkirk Chamber of Commerce

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Introduced M. Legg, from the Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre, and P. Freeman from the Selkirk Chamber of Commerce.

B. Land Acknowledgement

Chair, P. Makey read the Land Acknowledgement.

C. Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

None disclosed.

D. Approval of Previous Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee Minutes

1. Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee Minutes - January 27, 2025

Moved By: G. Naylor, Member

Seconded By: Seconded by T. Caputo, Member

THAT the minutes of the Business Development and Planning Advisory Committee dated January 27, 2025 be approved as presented.

APPROVED

E. Items for Consideration

1. Council Update

Mayor Bentley provided a Council update, highlights included:

- Dunnville, Hagersville, and Caledonia BIA presentations were received at Council and Committee
- Haldimand County's website is now compliant with Ontario's Accessibility Act
- Ward boundary review was passed with the addition of Ward 7
- Upcoming By-election on Thursday, April 10th for Wards 1 and 4
- The BMA municipal study results with socioeconomic indicators was received at Council and Committee on March 24th
- Attended a nuclear energy conference
- Haldimand County tax supported operating budget was approved with an annual tax levy of 4.46 percent

2. Chair and Vice Chair Report

P. Makey noted that the assistance from Haldimand County regarding tariff response demonstrates support for local businesses.

G. Naylor attended the Intelligent Community forum. Highlights included:

- Technology advancement and "The death of distance". Noting distance is less of an obstacle for business and rural communities
- Successful tech start-up centers
- Business incubators

G. Naylor will prepare a written report to present at an upcoming meeting.

P. Makey shared the following highlights from his learning:

- Several great cases on data centers; featuring small communities
- High quality broadband was emphasized as critical infrastructure
- Eliminating barriers for start-ups

M. Evers shared that recent Zoning By-law amendments included the addition of data centres.

3. Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre (BRC) Presentation

M. Legg delivered a presentation on the Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre (BRC).

Highlights included:

- Overview of the BRC team, services and mission including 1-on-1 consulting, grants, business start-up support, job growth, networking opportunities, community partnerships, webinars and events
- Grant programs including: Starter Company Plus, Summer Company (students), Foodpreneur Advantage, and Futurpreneur
- Summary of service statistics for 2024-2025

Upcoming at the BRC:

- BRC signature event; 3 part series on evaluating packaged food products and improving the bottom line. The free Foodpreneur workshops begin April 24th.
- County of Brant Chamber Collaboration Series beginning April 10th for bi-weekly workshops for small businesses covering marketing, finances and more
- Student biz and summer company began in April

Discussion regarding mentorship and small business opportunities ensued.

L. Romanuk added that through the tax supported operating budget an additional \$10,000 was approved to support increased collaboration with the BRC, and enhancing services in Haldimand county.

4. Economic Development & Tourism Workplan & Tariff Response

L. Romanuk provided an overview of the 2025 Economic Development & Tourism Workplan and tariff response measures.

Highlights included:

- Tariff impact survey creation and distribution to local businesses
- Creation of a 'tariff hub' on BusinessHaldimand.ca where all resources related to tariffs can be accessed by businesses
- Exploring trade strategies; other market opportunities and supply chain resources for local business
- Marketing initiatives targeted at 'buy Canadian-made' and 'locally made' products
- Promote existing marketing tools such as the "real local" stickers, templates, decals etc. for businesses to put on their products, and display in their storefronts
- Campaigns targeted at bringing tourists from the US to Ontario
- Potential regional alliance with neighbouring municipalities

L. Romanuk shared that EDT has created a tariff primer, including a one-page summary, that has been circulated to leadership and Council.

M. Reynolds, P. Hauser and P. Makey shared their experiences as local businesses, regarding tariff impacts.

L. Romanuk shared the other items in the 2025 EDT workplan:

- Business Retention and Expansion: CIP/RBTCIP program review, comprehensive signage strategy, business retention & expansion program , EDT strategy
- Business Attraction: Tourism investment campaign, data dashboard, development concierge team, North Caledonia employment lands, tourism Haldimand product development, visitor experience strategy implementation, targeted experiential tourism operator meetings, Grand River Rafting 2025 operator agreement, Tourism Network Meetings
- Marketing: Content development for new website, key campaigns and ongoing partnerships

- Partnerships: Spring job fair, Six Nations Tourism, Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre, Haldimand Business Network, BDAPAC, AAC and Dunnville BIA expansion, all Chambers meeting
- Other Projects: IESO LT2 RFP battery storage and renewable energy projects, physician recruitment, CRM improvements and the business symposium

5. Physician Recruitment

M. Evers provided an overview of the Physician Recruitment project. Beginning in 2022, a committee was created to establish a road map on how to address the issue of the physician shortage that still exist today.

Supported by Council, the initiative includes a physician recruitment coordinator in place as of July, 2024. The work has been focused in 3 areas: community site visits (getting to know hospitals, care providers, clinics etc.), advertisement, and recruitment initiatives.

Discussion ensued focusing on, what BDAPAC/business community can do to support physician recruitment:

- Contribute to the marketing efforts and promote the community to candidates
- Share ideas of properties that may be a good fit for a clinic
- Share employment opportunities for family relations (spouse, kids etc.)

The committee's homework is to think further about how to support physician recruitment.

6. BDAPAC Budget & 2025 Workplan

Budget discussion included:

- Approximately \$30,000 (remaining funds) need to be utilized by Dec. 3, 2025
- Exploration of summer programs and entrepreneurial opportunities
- Data Dashboard updates

L. Romanuk shared that since the tariffs were announced, neighbouring municipalities have looked at ways to collaborate for mutual benefit.

Potential alliance opportunities were shared with the committee:

1. Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA)
2. The Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance (OMCA)
3. Ontario Food Cluster

Discussion ensued.

7. Data Dashboard

BDAPAC addressed in work plan discussion.

8. Tourism & Attraction

J. Nelson shared that there was unanimous support from Council at the March 18 Council in Committee for the Visitor Experience Strategy. Staff will begin working on various implementation activities as part of Economic Development and Tourism's annual workplan.

The Tourism Investment Attraction project (\$18,750 plus HST) is moving forward. The goal is to bring investment profiles to the June BDAPAC meeting for comment.

F. New Business

1. Upcoming Meeting

P. Makey shared the following items for consideration:

- Assistance with promoting the spring job fair taking place on April 24th
- The Haldimand Business Symposium to take place on May 1
- Looking to recruit 2 committee members to BDAPAC after the Ward By-election

Mayor Bentley identified potential opportunities to collaborate with the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nations regarding cross boarder trade.

EDT continues to receive inquiries for renewable energy projects and providing the appropriate information and staff support.

Mayor Bentley reminded the committee the County is seeking resident feedback on the Solid Waste management system. There is a survey that has been [posted to the website](#) and will be open until April 25, 2025.

G. Adjournment

Moved By: T. Caputo, Member

Seconded By: G. Naylor, Member

THAT this meeting is now adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

APPROVED