

Minutes of the Merrickville & District Chamber of Commerce

Date: August 11, 2020

Location: On-line Zoom teleconference

Present: Yves Grandmaitre, Nick Previsich, Robyn Eagle, Lisa Card,,
Alessandro Giuliani, Jennifer Ritskes

Regrets: Anne Barr

Guest: Mary Kate Laphen

1.CALL TO ORDER

- called to order at 7:08 pm

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- moved by Lisa and seconded by
Jennifer - carried

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST - none

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of July 14th

- moved by Jennifer and seconded by Robyn - carried

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Yves noted the excellent PowerPoint presentation on tourism trends that was provided by Lisa from Le Boat. It was an interesting and useful

presentation. Nick asked if there was more detailed information regarding Le Boat clients' experiences with small communities such as Merrickville-Wolford. Yves will raise the question with Lisa at Le Boat.

Correspondence was received from the Ottawa Jazz Festival organizers requesting a "local package experience" for Merrickville-Wolford. This will be used as part of a live auction for the Ottawa Jazz Festival. Nick suggested that Susan Piercey - Director of the Merrickville Jazz Festival, be consulted prior to the Chamber engaging local businesses to contribute to the "package". Agreed by Board members.

Yves received an email from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce indicating that as part of the RAP program, they will be reimbursing membership fees for this year.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

- motion made by Nick and seconded by Lisa to accept the Report of the Treasurer - approved.

Yves reported that the renewal of the Chamber's insurance has now been paid in full.

Jennifer updated the Board with respect to the issue of filing forms for previous tax years. She is working with Anne to find information on the 2011 tax year. Jennifer has contacted an Accountant who will provide an estimate of the work and costs needed to file tax forms for the outstanding years.

7.COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Membership Update

Yves noted that he has spoken with the new owners of the Knox Church and the Iron Forge restaurant and both have indicated a strong desire to

become members of the Chamber. A roundtable discussion on how Board members are coping with their own businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic elicited a mixed response which varied from loss of business to mainly steady good sales.

Yves reported on plans to hold a Makers' Market on the Fair Grounds on September 12th and up to 50 vendors have already signed up. Robyn will be on-site as a vendor and has offered to distribute information on the Chamber and the Chamber Maps if they are ready to go.

b) Marketing

Yves reported that the cost of producing the Chamber Map has increased slightly. He also reported that we are in a deficit (not including the \$308 for producing the map) prior to going to printing. While ad space for on the Merrickville side is full, there are still many spaces available for Wolford. To date, app. \$550-\$600 worth of ad space has been sold.

The cost of printing the map varies considerably from quotes provided by a local printer with those provided by an outside printer. Jennifer offered to obtain a quote from a third supplier. The Board members agreed that the local printer will be given an opportunity to match the external quotes before making a final decision on the supplier.

Nick raised concerns that the utility of the Map is in question if we do not go ahead quickly to get it printed and distributed. Board members agreed that this should be a priority and endorsed printing to be done within the next 2 weeks.

8. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

Phone App Proposal: The Directors agreed that we would not pursue promotion of the Phone App. at this point in time. We would revisit the proposal later in the calendar year.

Website: The Directors reviewed the chart provided by Yves (initially

created by Bruce) which compared proposals to create a new website. These were compared with a proposal submitted by a local provider.

Nick spoke in support of the submission by the later because of their familiarity with the existing Chamber website and their price quotation. A motion was drafted by Nick and seconded by Robyn to read:

“That the Chamber accept the proposal by Mejan Graphic Design to revise, update and expand the website of the Merrickville & District Chamber of Commerce”. The motion was carried.

Business Survey Questions: Yves distributed the current survey questions for comment. Nick recommended that we send out the survey as soon as possible. The tourism season is soon ending and the timely usefulness of the survey results for businesses and the municipality is limited. Yves proposed to send the survey again to the Directors with a 24 - 48 hour turnaround for final comment/change before sending out to the Chamber members by G mail - agreed by the Directors.

Digital Modernization Program: Yves reported that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce’s Digital Modernization Program had initially offered \$1800 to the Chamber provided that three local businesses sign up for the program. They have since waived this stipulation and have informed us that we will be given the entire \$1800 provided we are fully paid-up for 2020 and continue to support the Program.

Robyn asked about the status of the Stakeholder’s Zoom meetings and reminded the Directors that we need to schedule another meeting at the end of August. She also asked if Directors had noted any effect with respect to the Big Spend initiative. Lisa reported that she did not see any increase in sales.

Lisa reported on the results of an informal survey she initiated with some local businesses who supported closing St. Lawrence street from

Drummond St. to Main St. on Saturday(s). She spoke with the Mayor who offered his support for the initiative but indicated that the businesses would have to provide volunteers to set up and remove barriers and provide other functions. This requirement seems to have reduced the enthusiasm for the initiative and limited action has been taken. Nick cautioned that while this initiative may be of benefit to businesses to help promote social distancing, it may also be viewed negatively by residents who may have difficulty undertaking their usual activities on St. Lawrence St.

Yves raised the need to have early discussions about how or if Merrickville-Wolford will proceed with its annual Christmas in Merrickville initiative.

9. NEW BUSINESS

With respect to the Makers' Market organized by Laura Starkey to take place on September 12th, Yves noted that Laura has requested sponsorship assistance from the Chamber. She is required to provide portable toilets and washing/sanitizing stations and signage. Nick was asked to craft following motion:

“ That the Chamber sponsor the Makers' Market by providing \$200 to the organizer of the event to assist in its undertaking”. Moved by Jennifer and seconded by Robyn - passed.

10. QUESTIONS

Robyn asked about any plans in the Village to help new shop owners and others prepare for a possible second wave of COVID-19. Yves

indicated that this issue might be reflected in the Business Survey and an opportunity exists to modify or add to the existing survey questions.

11. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2020 at 7:00 pm by Zoom.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Nick and seconded by Lisa - accepted. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.