

Minutes of the Merrickville and District Chamber of Commerce

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Merrickville District Community Health Centre

Present: Yves Grandmaitre, Anne Barr, Nick Previsich, Robyn Eagle, Bruce Perron, Lisa Card, Alessandro Giuliani

Gallery : Mathew Daniel, Owner - NEXWAVE

Mike Zaversenuke - 1840 Guest House B&B

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:40 PM
2. The Agenda was approved with the addition of an item under "Revenue Generation"
3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests was passed
4. Minutes of the previous meeting of December 22, 2019 were passed with an amendment to revise Robyn Griff to Robyn Eagle
5. Delegations None

Of note in attendance in gallery: Mr. Mathew Daniel - owner of NEXWAVE was introduced by Bruce Perron. Locally based, the Company's information indicates the following, "Resulting from the merger of a Montreal based web hosting company and an internet marketing start-up, Nexwave has become a one-stop-shop for small businesses and start-up companies looking for down-to-earth internet marketing services adapted to their needs. By combining technical and administrative expertise, our team of young professionals delivers internet marketing services which focus on business objectives."

6. Correspondence

Related to recent correspondence to the Chamber regarding taking on more responsibility for local events, the Chamber decided to reiterate its stance that given the scarcity of human and financial resources, the Chamber could not be responsible for managing events but was willing to provide support in areas such as advertising on its website and Facebook page, assistance with grant applications or other to be defined help. This in addition to encouraging Chamber members to attend planned events. It was noted that there is an upcoming meeting at the Goose at 6:30 PM on February 25, 2020 to discuss services offered by Call Betty Marketing.

7. Treasurer's Report

Discussion took place on current membership and fees generated to date. There appears to be a number of questions regarding reconciling last year's (2019) financial notations with the current year. In addition, greater clarity is needed on fees related to the "level" of membership - eg. full retail member, non-profit member, home based businesses, etc. and who has paid to date. The Treasurer requested more time to reconcile information and offered to report back at a future meeting - moved and carried.

8. Committee Reports

a) Membership

The Committee members (Robyn, Lisa and Bruce) indicated that they have reviewed the terms of reference of neighbouring Chambers of Commerce with respect to their membership process. It was also noted that there was a survey conducted by the Chamber in 2019 and should be consulted for relevance to the issue of membership.

The Committee members proposed a two phased approach:

Coordinate an event (on or around March 19 or 26, 2020) to invite all businesses to a networking event and introduce the new Chamber members and also provide a package of information that would be of value to local businesses. A Chamber webinar was also raised as a possibility. It was important to promote transparency about the Chamber regardless if not all businesses are members.

Yves noted that we need to be clear on what the value added is for businesses to become members in the Chamber and that Chamber activities have to be relevant to local business needs.

The following motion was raised and passed " That a middle-tier of membership be created for a fee of \$100.00." The Committee members are to provide further details in two weeks via e-mail on the middle tier and other categories of membership.

Anne to review the spread sheets to clarify current paid members and their tier level.

Bruce noted that we should have an "objective" and strategy to have a membership of 100 by April 30, 2020.

b) Marketing

Bruce has requested bios and head photos of each of the Chamber Board members to be placed on the website to promote the relevance of the Chamber to the local population. It was also suggested that we combine two of the Chamber's existing social

media sites into a single site and to make better use of the “Jewel of the Rideau” brand. Bruce will continue to work towards the redesign of the Chamber’s website. He also introduced Mr. Mathew Daniel of NEXWAVE as a possible future contractor to help in this process.

Bruce provided an excellent powerpoint presentation (Marketing Plan 2020) and noted that he would like to form a Marketing Committee to help in developing marketing and promotional strategies.

c) Networking

Future networking events were discussed and it was noted that they are primarily “social” in nature. The launch of the new Chamber should take place soon (date to be determined but possibly March 26, 2020.) and should be open to all - with a nominal fee for non-members. The timing of such an event should be at 5:00 PM to maximize participation.

Robyn circulated a document that recommended several networking events per year that would have an invited speaker and would be located in various member business locations. Inclusion of the RTO9 was also suggested. **RTO 9** is a “Regional Tourism Organization that is funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. **RTO 9** actively promotes tourism for the South Eastern Ontario region and works to support and grow the industry through product development initiatives”. It was noted that events need to take place at member locations.

9. Old Business/Action Items

A good discussion took place on possible new revenue generation ideas. These included:

- Chase the Ace
- a Casino Night
- the sale of promotional products eg. buttons

Additional discussion was needed on this issue and it will be brought forward to a future meeting.

10. New Business

Mike Zaversenuke suggested that each Board member have a card that could be given out at various functions and to people who might be interested in the work of the Chamber and possibly becoming a member. He also recommended that for a future map, there should be an increase in size (at no significant cost increase) and it should have a “grid” included to help identify the location of businesses.

Yves presented a “2019 Hybrid Map Proposal” and displayed some mock-ups of the map. Time did not permit a fuller discussion on the map and this will be raised at a future meeting. Yves also noted that given that the winter months are traditionally difficult times for local business, the Chamber may wish to adopt a “shop local” program to support businesses.

11. Question period

None raised.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM and the next meeting to take place on March 10th.