

**SOUTH ALMAGUIN HIGHLANDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE/  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER COMMITTEE**

**JOINT MEETING MINUTES**

**JULY 14, 2014**

The regular meeting of the South Almaguin Highlands Economic Development Committee (SAHED) and the Community Development Officer Committee (CDO) was held at the Burk's Falls Municipal Office on Monday July 14, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

In attendance: Councillor Lewis Hodgson, Councillor Rod Blakelock, Wendy Whitwell, Willy Hollett, David Gray, Anna Branch, David Thompson, Andrew Farnsworth.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**Delegations**

1] David Thompson, Chair, Near North District School Board (NNDSB)

Mr. Thompson discussed the need to strengthen the relationship between SAHED and the NNDSB. He explained that there is a direct link between community vitality and the educational system, and with declining enrolment and school closures being a reality, we need to work together. Mr. Thompson asked that the NNDSB and local schools be incorporated into SAHED's planning and that links to the local schools be placed on the municipal webpages. He also asked for information on future developments, as accurate population projections are essential to the NNDSB's short and long range planning activities.

The Committee agreed with Mr. Thompson's statements and will extend an invitation to the local NNDSB Trustee, Al Bottomley, to attend SAHED meetings. If Mr. Bottomley is unable to attend, the Committee will send him a copy of the meeting minutes in order to open a dialogue.

**Community Guide Debrief**

David Gray has distributed the 2014/15 Almaguin Highlands Community Guide to most major information centres, municipalities and businesses, with 5,000 of 10,000 copies remaining. Advertisers will be invited to pick up copies of the Guide at the Village of Burk's Falls Municipal Office for their own personal distribution.

David has received feedback from many of the individuals and groups involved in the publication, and the information will be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce as input into next year's Guide.

The Committee recognizes the great effort from the parties involved in the creation of the Community Guide. Initial responses from the public have been quite positive, and it is the Committee's expectation that the Guide will open the Almaguin Highlands to many new visitors.

### **Budget Update**

David presented the budget with spending to June 15, 2014. The only significant departure is in the Digital Sign project, which the Committee has put on hold until later in the year, when OMAFRA's Rural Economic Development Program has completed its update and our other application has been completed.

The Committee approved the purchase of a one-quarter page (or equivalent) advertising space in the Almaguin News to promote the Stone Skipping Contest.

### **Survey Results**

David has tallied the results of the Economic Development Survey. The survey went out to all three municipalities with the spring tax bills, and 139 completed surveys were collected. Upon initial examination, the summary data will help to support many of the action items in the SAHED Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Investment Readiness study. David will release a finalized version on the Economic Development webpage, and Armour and Ryerson will post links to same.

### **Investment Readiness and Strategic Planning Updates**

John Finley has now completed the required components of the Investment Readiness study in providing updates to the SAHED Economic Development Plan. The update came in the form of a separate draft strategic plan. As a result, the Committee will form a Strategic Planning Sub-committee to unite SAHED's various documents and plans and to prepare a draft prioritized list of action items. The Sub-committee will focus on producing an actionable strategic plan with a 3-5 year timeline, outlining the objectives required to meet SAHED's specific goals. The Strategic Planning Sub-committee will be comprised of Willy Hollett, Anna Branch, Andrew Farnsworth and David Gray, with the first meeting scheduled for Thursday, July 24, 2014 at 12:30 P.M. at the Village of Burk's Falls Municipal Office.

### **New Business**

none

### **Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of SAHED will be held at 6:00 P.M. on Monday, August 11, 2014 at the Village of Burk's Falls Municipal Office

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.