

MARKDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November 19, 2009 –Barrhead Pub & Grill

DRAFT - MINUTES

ATTENDING: Wayne & Dawna Fitzgerald, Stewart Halliday, Anne Watson, Janie Badgerow, Diana & John Irwin, JD Daly, Lesley & Larry McKee, Janet Juniper, Doug Crawford, Rick & Kathy Gamblen, Don & Jan Kopplin, Charmaine Peever, Patti Shaw, Charles MacLean, Jane Field, Kate Russell, Bryan Plumstead, David Turner, Barbara McKay, George Lorenz.

SOCIAL HOUR – Beer Tasting with Maclean’s Ales from Battleaxe Brewery, West Grey

DINNER – Buffet including: Fresh Georgian Bay Whitefish sautéed in olive oil, butter, garlic, White wine and fresh herbs; four-Cheese stuffed manicotti with house-made marinara sauce; organic free-range fresh local Turkey with apple sausage dressing, apple sauce and orange ginger cranberry sauce; Greek salad – Carrot and Turnip Mash – Organic Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes; Garlic Bread – Caesar Salad – Lemon Herb Rice – Fresh Fruit Salad; Lemon Poppy Seed Cheesecake – Strawberry Rhubarb Trifle; Coffee & Tea.

SPEAKER: Bryan Plumstead, Manager of Grey Tourism – on partnership and collaboration as regards building on tourism drivers in local economic development. Bryan spoke of the value of partnerships – Grey Tourism is working with one customer at a time, but likes to work with groups and individual tourism businesses to help as they may to develop regional tourism. Strategic planning has been looking at core values, seeing big changes in the area and working with the province as it rewrites tourism destination marketing strategies from the top down. A new Regional Tourism Organization will be formed in the new year to include Grey, Bruce and Simcoe as one large destination marketing organization. Bruce & Grey County, along with Owen Sound and chambers across the twin counties, have been working together for years in a Regional Tourism Marketing Partnership (RTMP). This has allowed these organizations to pool their money and do things together they couldn’t do alone – including trade shows, where they combine forces to share staff resources and volunteers to man the booths at these events. They do 12 trade shows a year – sharing makes this more affordable. Grey Tourism has developed several “experience” programs including: Ride Grey Bruce for motorcyclists; The Art Map in partnership with Barbara Pearn of Eugenia; Rural Gardens of Grey Bruce; Golf group “Stay & Play” program as well as the Grey Bruce Tourism Map – which is very successful and includes several partners. The Grey Bruce Ag. & Culinary Assoc. has also developed a local food map, supported through advertising and membership in the Grey Bruce ACA. They are always looking for ways to do things better – fulltime staff is supported by volunteers. The county considers it a municipal responsibility to invest in Chambers and Tourism – they enter new markets and send out tourism packages through national magazines – including *Harrowsmith Magazine*, the *CAA magazine* as well as ethnic publications like the Toronto Chinese newspapers to attract new people to the area as visitors. This synergy of thinking helps bring bigger and better ideas to regional tourism and strengthens the wide range of offerings promoted to the province. Marketing people work together to continually come up with ideas. The regional campgrounds have kiosks in campgrounds to promote area activities to capture people beyond regular accommodations. Key challenges identified include the geography of the area – country backroads; larger groups in different parts of the county (some have more ability to do events and promotions than others); some parts of the county appear “left out” of the overall marketing (ie. Some marketing pieces focus on Georgian Bay and miss inland towns); funding difficulties also have been found in trying to cover the entire region (ie. Georgian Bay Coastal Route received funding and assisted in creating a marketing group surrounding the Bay, but does not support marketing inland areas) – Norther Ontario can’t always get the people there as the north shore is such a distance from southern Georgian Bay. Grey County strategic planning is looking at Roles & Responsibilities in tourism – who does what and does this work? What jobs need to be done and who is best to do them. County has been working to bring in all groups involved to get feedback in this process – like to work with local chambers to access local needs and what can be done in each individual market to support the who regional market. Want to talk to business people to develop marketing for products and services and hopefully support more consistent marketing and customer service in the area. County has worked to offer workshops on customer service at reduced rates to allow access to training for tourism businesses. If we can all work together, we can define a strategy to strengthen this part of the tourism industry and boost this section of the economy.

County is always looking to cooperate better within the region. Applied for some funding from Community Futures Rural Development Fund – some success but will need more funding to continue to develop this sector.

They are also identifying Demand Generators for tourism – five have been identified as the top visitor generators: Blue Mountain; Trails; Golf; Drives (autumn colours/waterfalls tour) and Festivals and Events. Want to continue to talk to partners to see what we have and how we may further develop these generators. It is always a challenge to determine how to get visitors to spend money when doing “free” activities like driving tours and hiking the trails.

QUESTION PERIOD:

Wayne Fitzgerald asked for clarification on the new Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs). This came out of the Sorbara Report on Ontario tourism. A letter from the ministry identified some \$40M will be spent on tourism across the province – funds sourced from the HST. It is thought province needs about \$100M for all the regions so some areas will be applying Destination Marketing Fees at accommodations and other tourism industry outlets on a voluntary basis to gather more funds to support the RTOs. Announcements on the RTOs are expected in the next month or so.

Stewart Halliday asked if municipalities should be paying more to support the tourism strategy. Municipalities have been invited to strategic planning workshops to discuss this. There are many benefits available to many areas – tourism brings people, improves property values and increases tourism as a major industry in Grey & Bruce. Bryan outlined that our regional Ministry of Tourism representative Paul Sampson keeps the county apprised of tourism trends within the province and it is expected there will be more focus on municipalities in the future.

Bryan was thanked for his speech and his information.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – Called to Order at 8:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES – AGM of Nov. 20, 2008 and omnibus motion – to accept all minutes of Chamber for 2009. Previous AGM minutes were reviewed. All Chamber minutes are posted to the website at www.village.markdale.on.ca.

MOTION: Moved by Kathy Gamblen, seconded by Charmaine Peever that the minutes of the previous AGM on Nov. 20, 2008 be approved. Also all minutes of the Chamber for the 2009 year be approved by the membership. Carried.

BUSINESS ARISING:

Manager Position – Project Coordinator Kate Russell reported she is now working part-time with benefits to run the day-to-day operations of the organization. There are many grants and projects underway which support this position, including a Community Futures Rural Development Fund, which will support a Business Retention & Expansion project into the new year.

Other Business Arising noted under Chamber Initiatives Update: The Markdale and Flesherton Chambers are working together to update the local business directory to be posted on the municipal website.

Call for executive nominations – bylaws require: a president, vice president, recording secretary, secretary/treasurer and seven directors. Currently there are two vacancies.

New nominees for director: Charlie Nicholson (Pet Marketplace); Lynn Silverton (Mun. of Grey Highlands) NOTES: Director Shelley LaPointe (elected in 2008) did not attend meetings so has been dropped off the committee. Past director Patti Shaw has stopped attending meetings so has been dropped off the committee. New nominee Charlie Nicholson is unable to attend tonight but has confirmed with Doug he will stand for directorship. Lynn Silverton has been sitting on committee in a non-voting capacity – want to make that a voting director as of this evening. Underlined positions below are multi-year terms which are re-establishing at this AGM. Vice President position will be a new director in executive.

Nominees for executive positions:

President – Doug Crawford (Foodland)

Vice President – CharmainePeever (RBA Financial) **NEW**

Secretary/Treasurer – Don Kopplin (RBA Financial)

Directors standing again:

Past President/Director – Wayne Fitzgerald (Ye Olde Laundromat)

Director – Janie Badgerow (Country Critters)

Director – Rick Gamblen (Grey Bruce Insurance)

Director – Kathy Gamblen (Grey Bruce Insurance)

Director – JD Daly (Sidekicks Café)
Director – Charlie Nicholson (Pet Marketplace) **NEW**
Director/Municipal Liaison – Lynn Silverton (Mun. of Grey Highlands) **NEW – AS VOTING**
Recording Secretary – Kate Russell, Coordinator (non voting staff)

NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR - THREE CALLS – none offered.

MOTION: Moved by Janie Badgerow, seconded by Wayne Fitzgerald that the nominations be closed. Carried.

MOTION: Moved by Doug Crawford, seconded by Lesley McKee that the slate of directors and executive be approved as presented. Carried.

CHAMBER INITIATIVES REPORT – Coordinator Kate Russell

Trillium Grant – final report was accepted and verified – no Trillium grants at this

Membership – currently have 77 members (69 regular – includes 3 non-profit members)

Olde Firehall restoration project

- municipality applied for Trillium capital grant in March 2009 - denied
- Chamber applied for Community Adjustment Fund monies in 2009 – denied
- Municipality had new flat roof installed – November 2009
- Chamber will apply under SODEP to seek capital grant funds – December 2009
- Front garage door is broken – needs repair for proper use of facility
- 2009 uses: Chamber office and tourist/community/volunteer info centre; summer student office; Markdale Fall Fair headquarters and chicken delivery depot; storage for local groups and Christmas wreaths; lending for event supplies to Rotary and other local groups; Cruise Night site for Participation Lodge BBQ; Moonlight Madness site for Rotary BBQ and Grey Highlands Fire Service fire prevention

Community/Tourism Info Booth Stats

- visitation numbers down due to drop in tourism numbers – tally of visitors pending
- participation in Grey Tourism survey this summer – hope to be more involved in 2010

New Hospital Build fund – less than \$1,000 away from \$15,000 pledge.

- Pledge not closed in 2008 due to the lack of action toward actual build – hold for groundbreaking

STARS Awards – two area businesses nominated

- Field & Range Sportshooting Supplies, Markdale – nominated Bus. Under 15 – will nominate again
- Infinite Glassworks, Eugenia – nominated by neighbour for Young Entrepreneur – runner-up

Support for Markdale Fall Fair

- Chamber coordinator, as volunteer on fair board – successful in Celebrate Ontario grant - \$18,750
- Supported fall fair by sharing summer student and hosting Fall Fair headquarters at Olde Firehall
- Chamber is supporting (with letters) Celebrate Ontario grant applications for Rocklyn & Feversham Fairs

Downtown Beautification:

- Chamber purchased plant watering equipment – had an individual watering plants – lawn mower overbudget
- Hanging plant baskets installed in downtown Markdale – assistance from Horticultural Society
- Working with Markdale & District Horticultural Society re: new planters with recycling containers

OMNIBUS motion:

- seek motion from membership to ratify initiatives of Chamber for 2009

MOTION: Moved by Wayne Fitzgerald, seconded by Charmaine Peever that the membership approves and ratifies the initiatives of the Chamber for 2009. Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Don Kopplin led a review of distributed copies of 2008 Year end and 2009 current financial statements and payables as follows: phone: 66.74; Union Gas: 23.32; Hydro: \$82.27; Water: \$42.49; Leesons: \$108.45; Rural Voice (Santa ad): \$42.00; FEO: \$50 – **TOTAL: \$415.27**

MOTION: Moved by JD Daly and seconded by Charmaine Peever that the financial statements be accepted as presented and that the treasurer be directed to pay the bills of the organization. Carried.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Gift Basket & Honorarium for George Lorenz for Downtown Maintenance – George watered the plant in downtown Markdale, using the new lawn mower and watering apparatus. George was thanked for his assistance, presented with a gift basket and a honorarium for his assistance.

NEW BUSINESS:

Manager position – Internship Position pending to pay coordinator until March 31, 2010 on BR&E (noted above)
- Job Creation Partnership project applied for to maintain position – funds on hold at this time (awaiting 2011)

Business directory – Coordinating update of business directory with Flesherton Chamber under above project funding. Charmaine Peever has met with David Turner and Barabara McKay on this project. Pleased with this mutual project. Barbara McKay of the Flesherton Chamber suggested the group is pleased with this first “official partnering” on a project. This will be a digital directory that will be published on the municipal website for Chambers to link to from each individual website. Events will also be mutually published on each others websites.

Economic Dev. Cmte – formed with Flesherton Chamber – to look into trade shows/development issues – this committee will seek to formalize synergy with the municipality – will make presentation to municipality on issues of concern and opportunities. Hope is to work closely with the municipality on local economic development strategies.

Cultural Inventory/Development – Ceative Communities Prosperity Fund – cultural inventory/planning training – grant application submitted. This decision will be pending to provincial new fiscal year (April 2011). If successful will provide direction and information to inform cultural portion of strategic planning and community profile for municipality.

FT Hill Trust Fund/Foundation – Wayne Fitzgerald provided some background on this bequest – back in 2006 he was approached by Eber Willis, Executor for the FT Hill Estate about the will of this founding father of Markdale, in which he left money to his family, and any monies left 10 years after the death of his descendents, money would then go to the Village of Markdale to develop the industrial sector. Chamber submitted to the courts to be a recipient of the funds, as the Corporation of the Village of Markdale ceased to exist at amalgamation of Grey Highlands. Municipality also filed for the funds – approximately \$150,000. FT Hill was an original businessman in Markdale, running a store on the northwest corner of Main & Hwy. 10 (where pharmacy is now – original building burned down) – also owned many other local businesses and built his home (Now Holly Hill Manor). A third party filed to get some of the money, a “long lost” descendent asked for money, and was settled with for \$10,000. Negotiations between lawyers for all parties and the Office of the Public Trustee have led to a potential settlement – with settlement to descendent, then 80 per cent of funds to Chamber and 20 per cent to municipality (all after fees). It is expected the Chamber will receive approximately \$92,000 in this settlement. The Chamber will then be forming FT Hill Economic Dev. Foundation in 2011 when funds are received. This will create a foundation in support of enhancing the economic development opportunities in the village of Markdale (as stipulated in pending court judgement). Information on the original submissions and the judgement will be made available through the Chamber offices.

Merge with Flesherton – Committees have been meeting informally towards potential merger in 2010/2011 – there will be more meetings in January to look at initiatives, opportunities to work together and ideas are needed to move this concept forward in the new year. There are some initiatives to work on together immediately, including the business directory (as above); co-marketing radio ads to provide an economic boost to both villages through the winter. We need feedback from membership on what is wanted – members need to tell Chambers if this is what they want or not. David Turner, President of the Flesherton & District Chamber, suggested there is some excitement and some trepidation at this possibility. His Chamber has passed a motion to proceed “in principal” and will be requiring same motion from Markdale Chamber to move forward.

ACTION: A committee will be struck to look into the pros and cons of a merger between the two Chambers in the municipality of Grey Highlands. It will look at the pros and cons of the merger, discuss what each Chamber would want to

continue (events etc.) and how the two towns differ so will need sensitivity of a merged group. (ie. Markdale is more industrial where Flesherton is more cultural) and what can be done for other communities in Grey Highlands under a merged Chamber.

Fundraising Dance – It was thought the Chambers could cooperate to host a fundraising dance to raise funds for the Tornado Disaster Relief Committee (after the Aug. 20, 2009 tornado that went through the area – causing much damage in Markdale and the surrounding area). Dance date could be February 13 as a joint effort with Flesherton Chamber – this was an idea to further combine the efforts of the Chambers. Could be themed as Valentines day dance “Show Your Heart – Care for Your Community”. Two Chambers would work together, create a sponsorship program to lessen the costs (ie. RBA may donate to cover cost of band/hall rentals). Potential to bring in Maclean’s ales; Grey Bruce Ag. & Culinary Group for food, local song created for the occasion etc. Need to know when the cutoff date for fundraising for the Grey Bruce Tornado Disaster Relief Committee is. If can’t do for that, could still donate funds to food bank, local groups.

ACTION: Committee volunteers welcome – talk to board members of either organization.

Chapman’s Fundraising Tickets – Lesley McKee – Field & Range announcement re: raffle for Chapman’s Social Cmte. This raffle was originally to be under Chamber, but was sponsored by Markdale Agricultural Society.

S.Co.B.E. Awards – nominations from West Grey members pending – Lisa’s Country Cottage, Priceville?

Door Prizes – awarded to those on hand through a draw.

MOTION: Moved by JD Daly, seconded by Rick Gamblen that the AGM of the Markdale Chamber for 2009 be adjourned. Carried.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:30 p.m.