



2021 Division Road North
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Date: June 14, 2021
To: Mayor and Council
Author: John Norton, Chief Administrative Officer
RE: COVID-19 Economic Recovery Officer
Report No.: 2021-04

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Motion to Reconsider:

That Council reconsider Motion 30-2021 excerpted as follows:

“30-2021: Moved by G. Queen, seconded by T. Neufeld That Council does not approve the Tourism and Economic Development Officer Position for the 2021 calendar year”;

And if such motion of reconsideration is decided in the affirmative, that Council pass the following Motion:

That Council approve the hiring of a temporary full-time COVID-19 Economic Recovery Officer for one (1) year to lead Kingsville's economic development and tourism strategies and to position the Town's economy for recovery during (and following) the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

At its Special Meeting of Council held on January 13, 2021 Council considered Administration's recommendation to hire a full-time, permanent Tourism and Economic Development Officer position for The Corporation of the Town of Kingsville. That position was not approved, as per Motion 30-2021 outlined above. The Tourism and Economic Development Committee is recommending that Council reconsider such motion.

If Council chooses to proceed in that manner, and such Motion to Reconsider is passed in the affirmative in accordance with the Town's procedure by-law, Administration is recommending that Council consider the hiring of a temporary full time COVID-19 Economic Recovery Officer for one year to lead Kingsville's economic development and



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tourism strategies and to position the Town's economy for recovering during (and following) the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report is coming forward to Council now to bring forward a recommendation of the Tourism and Economic Development Committee.

Earlier this year a delegation to Council of select local business owners spoke to Council about hardships endured by the business sector, especially on small businesses, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At its April 28, 2021 meeting, Kingsville's Tourism and Economic Development Committee made a motion to request that Council consider a non-permanent, full-time contract position for the purpose of promoting Kingsville as a tourism destination for the next two (2) years from COVID-19 funding.

The CAO agreed to bring forward the Committee's recommendation to Council for consideration. The CAO is proposing to Council that Council consider only a one (1) year position so that Council is able to re-evaluate the need for the role and position, especially since it is unknown whether the economy will be fully recovered in one year. In addition, the CAO is proposing a more substantial responsibility for this position that will include (i) tourism but also other areas of economic development including (ii) strengthening existing businesses in all sectors and (iii) attracting new businesses into the community.

Kingsville has a diverse business sector, from unique restaurants and shops, to traditional agricultural farming and thriving greenhouse industry. These businesses benefit our community by fueling our economy with tax dollars, providing jobs, contributing to a vibrant atmosphere that spurs tourism, and offering valuable products and services to consumers.

The economic impact of the pandemic is still not fully realized. Some businesses have been hit hard financially while others have thrived. In Kingsville, most businesses in the small retail, personal services, tourism and hospitality sectors, including food and drink establishments, have been devastated by lockdowns and unpredictable provincial restrictions that threaten their ability to remain fiscally viable. Since 2020, several local businesses have permanently closed. Small business owners have presented their concerns to Council and Administration. They have requested the Town's assistance in navigating this challenging time.

DISCUSSION

The proposed position would report to the Chief Administrative Officer and work closely with the Tourism Coordinator and provide uninterrupted focus to three core areas:



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1. Tourism:

Following a series of public consultations and workshops in 2016, the Town developed a Draft Tourism Strategic Plan to provide a framework for attracting tourism businesses, increasing support for tourism partners, and enhancing visitors' experience.

Using this guidance document, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Officer will:

- Attract visitors to Kingsville while remaining compliant with the region's local pandemic status and current Health Unit regulations
- Attract potential tourism businesses to the community
- Support businesses in their efforts to enhance the visitor experience
- Collaborate with tourism partners and stakeholders
- Create a consistent vision and messaging to market Kingsville as a tourism destination
- Develop a four-season marketing plan promoting visits to Kingsville
- Develop a strategy for the MyKingsville website brand and establish a visitor specific portal with links on municipal website

2. Business Retention and Expansion:

In 2019, the Town commissioned a Business Retention and Expansion Survey to determine the business community's needs and identify retention and expansion opportunities. The resulting report is attached here as Appendix "A".

The third phase of the project required a pivot to account for immediate needs following the pandemic's beginning. Among its findings, the report showed businesses desired central advocacy and support.

The CAO believes this was a very valuable survey and the resulting report contained some useful recommendations and next steps for implementing an economic development plan. The lack of staffing resources prevented the recommendations and next steps from being implemented.

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Officer will:

- Build upon the work of the BR&E Study and complete action items recommended for COVID-19 recovery and response.
- Work with businesses to ensure they have what they need from the municipality to remain active in the community.
- Provide the necessary tools and advice required to assist businesses planning expansion.



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3. External Investment:

Kingsville's Economic Development Strategic Plan focuses on building talent and community within the municipality and positioning Kingsville's reputation outside the Town. The plan's strategic goals, objectives and actions aim to make Kingsville an attractive destination for professionals, creative people and educated entrepreneurs.

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Officer will:

- Encourage diversification of the economy to increase employment opportunities and resiliency from the downturn in the economy caused by COVID-19.
- Move forward the strategic goals, objectives and action items identified in Kingsville's Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- Determine growth opportunities and attract new investors and business owners to Kingsville.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

Support growth of the business community.

Effectively manage corporate resources and maximize performance in day-to-day operations.

Manage growth through sustainable planning.

Link to Council 2021-2022 Priorities

- ☐ COVID-19 and the health and safety of the community
- ☐ Customer Service: Training, Technology, Staff, Review Standards/Level of service
- ☐ Housing: Affordability (lot sizes, developer incentives, second dwellings, density, etc.)
- ☐ Greenhouse: lights & dark sky, odours (site plan compliance, bylaws, other tools)
- ☐ Programming Increase: Youth and Seniors
- ☐ A development plan for Downtown Kingsville / Main Street
- ☐ Financial savings: Schools closings, Migration Hall
- ☒ Economic Development: strengthen tourism/hospitality
- ☒ COVID - economic recovery
- ☒ Communications: Strategy – Policy (social media), Website refresh and other tools, Public engagement
- ☐ Housing: Migrant Worker Housing – Inspections (Building/Fire), regulate, reduce, or increase



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- ☐ Committees / Boards: Review and Report
- ☐ Policy Update: Procedural Bylaw
- ☒ Economic Development: diversify the economy, create local jobs, industrial, Cottam
- ☐ Infrastructure (non-Municipal): Union Water expansion & governance
- ☐ Infrastructure (Municipal): Asset Management Plan update, the infrastructure funding deficit
- ☐ No direct link to Council priorities

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This role is expected to cost \$70,087 in annual salary, plus labour burden of 10%. In addition a computer and phone will be provided.

Administration intends to fund this contract through funds received in COVID-19 financial relief provided by the Province.

This one year contract position will be hired as soon as possible, likely at the end of June or sometime in July

CONSULTATIONS

Senior Management Team
Tourism & Economic Development Committee
Business Retention & Expansion Report (MDB Insight)
Kingsville's Economic Development Strategy
Draft Tourism Action Plan

John Norton

John Norton
Chief Administrative Officer