

## **Township of Southgate**

### **Administration Office**

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## **Staff Report CAO2020-050**

**Title of Report:** Southgate Economic Development Update

**Department:** Administration - Economic Development

**Council Date:** August 5, 2020

### **Council Recommendation:**

**Be it resolved that** Council receive Staff Report CAO2020-050 as information.

### **Background:**

The CAO is providing Council with an update on some of the Economic Development projects and programs we have been working on.

### **Staff Comments:**

Over that last couple of months staff have been working on creating an updated listing of Township commercial and industrial business operators, as well the property owners if different. This has been a challenging task to keep current with owner and contact information, especially for absentee landowners. As part of the work we also inventoried vacant commercial buildings and undeveloped industrial lands. This is important, because in the first half of 2020 we have seen a definite increase in commercial business, industrial lands, and planning inquiries, with more interest than we have developable lands available.

We have now put into place a process working with the Tax Department that will keep listings current on an on-going basis. We will review all the monthly real estate transactions in Southgate to maintain current records of contact information for new commercial and industrial property owners or acquire what we need through the sale process.

This information will give us better data and a more accurate database of contact information we can use to communicate with our commercial and industrial business sectors on a timely basis and through more expedient processes. We went door to door to share a package of information and the "OPEN" poster (Attachment #1) created by Grey County and other materials to support our local commercial businesses.

As part of our distribution we created a survey document for businesses to provide updated contact information and to receive feedback on local issues they may need assistance with, training to help them to be successful going forward, interest in a Chamber of Commerce and other suggestions they have. A copy of the survey document is included in this staff report as Attachment #2.

Staff have researched, attended webinar presentations and have provided an information flyer to businesses about the Digital Main Street ShopHere program. ShopHere provides a platform through Shopify and the services to help setup an

online store to expand business marketing. The ShopHere flyer provides as an introduction to the program for business owners to make them aware of the program so they can look into the service if they are interested. A copy of the ShopHere flyer is included in this staff report as Attachment #3.

The Grey Bruce Huron Strong is a shop local campaign to promote gift card purchases in the region. An information sheet explaining the campaign is included in this staff report as Attachment #4. This document is posted on our website and has been shared with the local businesses.

The Grey County Buy Local campaign will feature Southgate the week of September 7, 2020. There will be radio advertising promoting the buy local campaign in Grey County and feature municipalities on a weekly basis. At the present time 2 gift baskets are being given away in Grey County each week representing a lower tier municipality. During the week that Southgate will be featured each gift basket to include a total of fifteen \$10.00 gift cards for local business in our Township. The program is funded by the Grey EcDev Recovery Plan and the participating businesses must meet some criteria to be involved.

The criteria for selection of Southgate businesses is the following:

- 1) Small independently owned (retail only, including restaurants)
- 2) Must be impacted by Covid-19, for e.g. closures/reduced operations
- 3) Doors must be open for business. Those solely offering takeout, curbside pick-up or delivery are not eligible as they will be profiled through the Grey Bruce Huron Strong campaign
- 4) Grey County reopening signage displayed
- 5) Regularly engages with our social media channels and communiques (newsletters, eblasts, etc.)
- 6) Must be endorsed as a qualified local business by the Municipality to be supported through the Buy Local Gift Basket Campaign

A promotional post card introducing the campaign is included in this staff report as Attachment #5.

### **Economic Development Information & Public Masks/Face Coverings**

In a recent public survey conducted for the Province of Ontario where 2,000 people were asked about their position on going out in the public today only 20% responded that they feel comfortable doing so. Another 19% would feel comfortable with the use of masks/face coverings and with business operator rules and guidance that ensures public safety. Further, the survey reported that a majority of those surveyed support the use of masks in places of business and public gatherings.

Dr. Ian Arra of the Grey Bruce Health Unit recently stated that we have a 70% chance of contracting COVID-19 if you come in contact with someone who is infected and spreading the virus without face coverings. If both individuals wear a mask or face covering the chance of contacting COVID-19 is around 1%.

### **Financial Impact or Long-Term Implications**

There is no financial impact to the municipality as a result of this report other than staff time to provide and gather information to support economic development and the local businesses.

### **Communications & Community Action Plan Impact:**

This report has been written and presented to Council to communicate accurate information to the public.

### **Concluding Comments**

1. That Council receive staff report CAO2020-050 as information.

Respectfully Submitted,

**CAO approval: Original Signed By**

Dave Milliner – CAO

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- Attachment 1 – Southgate Business Open Signage
- Attachment 2 – Southgate Business Information Survey
- Attachment 3 – Digital Main Street ShopHere Program
- Attachment 4 – Grey Bruce Huron Strong Gift Card Program
- Attachment 5 – Grey County Buy Local Campaign Post Card