

Chamber of Commerce Minutes from May 18, 2005 meeting

Attendees: Doug Pritchard, Kim Smith, Colin Pring, John VanBruinessen, Juanita McNairn, Janice Casselman, Butch Oldford, Maggie Patterson, Meghan Duncan, John Toonders

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm, beginning with introductions.

Additions to Agenda: Butch Oldford has some input for the discussion on the upcoming Nestle plant closure.

Treasurer's Report: Bank balance as of May 18, 2005 is \$13,090.01, total expenses year to date are \$2,254.25, which includes the \$1,500.00 cheque to the Chesterville doctors clinic. The report was circulated by Colin. Colin moved that it be accepted, seconded by John VanBruinessen.

The ward allocations as of Apr 21, 2005 are Winchester \$2,287.04, Chesterville \$600.00, Mountain \$875.00.

Registrar's Report: There are 81 members to date, with some of the money still trickling in – given by Doug Pritchard, with info supplied by Owen Shortt, who is absent.

OLD BUSINESS

Cheque for Doctor;s clinic: The cheque has been cashed by the clinic. Robin experienced some problems getting the photo opportunity organized. There will be an open house in July at the new doctor's clinic. It was suggested that the Chamber of Commerce would be recognized in a photo and article after that open house as a supporter of the clinic; however, Meghan suggested that for maximum exposure , we might want to organize our own photo – John made a motion to organize this, seconded by Kim Smith, all in favor. Doug Pritchard will coordinate and inform all executive as to date, time and location.

Events Coordinator Update: Bob Volks and Connie Gruich were asked to be Events Coordinators for special events. Bob Volks agreed to take this on, but Connie declined the position. Doug asked for volunteers – Juanita volunteered and suggested that there could be more than 2 Events Coordinators, but no one else stepped forward. Therefore, Events Coordinators are Bob Volks and Juanita McNairn.

Review of Minutes from Previous Meeting: Minutes had been previously emailed to the Board for review. John moved that the minutes be accepted as they are, seconded by Kim Smith. It was suggested that a “memory jogger” email be sent the day after a meeting to remind attendees of tasks that have been assigned to them.

Update on Bylaws Change: A sheet was circulated by John showing the change that will be made to Article VI, section 21 of the bylaws with respect to Disbursements: “All

disbursements shall be made by cheque signed the Treasurer and the President” will be changed to read “ All disbursements shall be made by cheque and signed by two members of the executive. The Treasurer, President and one alternate member of the Executive shall have signing authority.”

The alternate will be chosen each year based mainly on geographic location of business in order to make the signing of cheques as convenient as possible. This year the alternate will be Owen Shortt. A motion to accept the new wording was made by Juanita and seconded by Maggie, all in favour.

NEW BUSINESS

Nestle Closure Announcement: Nestle announced this week that they will be closing the Chesterville plant in mid 2006. This is a major blow to the local economy, as many local people work there and it is one of the best paying companies in the area.

John mentioned that the local funeral homes are sponsoring a service of prayer, hope and consolation, tentatively May 30.

Doug mentioned that there is opportunity to market this opportunity for other companies to take over the Nestles location – there are companies out there looking for solutions – this could be an opportunity for them. Colin suggested working with Council to develop solutions. Perhaps packages could be developed to help displaced employees move into entrepreneurial business for self. Doug recently received an email from our MPP on this topic, and he will forward it on to members of the Chamber.

Butch suggested that we as Chamber need to work closely with the Ontario government and local government – we could begin with an in-camera meeting. We need to find ways to actively court business to come here. We need to put ourselves on the map and become known as a viable business location. We as Chamber can influence government.

Doug stated that it would be Maggie Patterson’s role, as our Marketing person, to put together a package to market our location to business. Maggie stated government should be driving this marketing venture, with our support.

John suggested that we hold a separate meeting to discuss the Nestle closure. John made a motion to have a brainstorming session, Maggie seconded. The brainstorming session will be held June 1 at 7 pm, tentatively at the Old Town Hall. Kim will contact Owen to book the location, and Maggie will put together an email to all members announcing the meeting.

NDDHS – Sponsorship Opportunity: Kim Smith stated that the NDDHS School Council is looking for sponsors for scholarships for graduating students. There is an opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce to sponsor an award or bursary to a student or students. We could set our own criteria as to which student should receive the award – for example, we could specify that a student going directly into business or the workforce

would be the recipient. Butch made a motion that we set an award of \$250.00, seconded by John, all in favour. Kim and Maggie will decide the criteria for the award in a separate meeting.

Marketing Plan Progress Update: Maggie presented a first draft of our Marketing Plan. Some highlights of the plan are that Chamber will focus on the Shop Locally campaign for 2005, develop our own branding, and increase communications to focus on our value to business and the community. Anyone who wants to see the draft should contact Maggie Patterson.

Farmer's Walk: Doug has spoken to the organizer of this event, The House of Lazarus, in Mountain. It will be held on June 11, and will be from South Mountain to Mountain. The goal is to bring awareness of rural poverty and benefit the House of Lazarus, which helps those in need with food, clothing, etc. There is opportunity for the Chamber to have a display table, donate a prize, etc. There may be representation from the Ottawa media at this event, and 100 to 200 people participating. If we donate a prize, we can decide what is said at the presentation of the prize, so we could promote our area and organization. We would contact Pauline Pratt, the Director of Lazarus House, to donate a prize. Motion was made by Kim Smith to enter a Chamber Team in the walk, and seconded by Maggie.

Projects for 2005/2006: As per the Marketing Plan draft, we will focus on Shop Locally for 2005, and increasing communications. In order to increase our profile, we need to work on developing our own branding, which will include such things as letterhead, web presence, our own logo, media relations guidelines, etc. We may get involved in marketing tourism opportunities in 2006, but some members have questioned if this should be a Chamber function or government.

Next Meeting: set for 7:30 am at Louis Restaurant in Chesterville.

Move to Adjourn: John, seconded by Maggie, all in favour. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.