

TOWN OF FORT FRANCES  
Economic Development Advisory Committee

MINUTES

June 3, 2019

The meeting of Economic Development Advisory Committee of the Town of Fort Frances was held in the Committee Room, Civic Centre on June 3rd, 2019 from 11:40 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.

PRESENT: J. Cumming, Chair, Mayor J. Caul, D. Kircher, K. Firth, J. Gillon, K. McCaig, M. Caron and J. McTaggart

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor D. Judson (11:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), D. Brown, CAO, G. Gillon, RRFDC, T. Drysdale, Consultant, (RRFDC), R. Thoms, (93.1 The Border) and K. Lawson, Deputy Clerk/Committee Secretary

REGRETS: Chief W. Windigo, D. Eldridge

**1. Call to Order - 11:40 a.m.**

**2. Disclosure of pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof - none**

**3. Approval of Previous Advisory Committee Minutes**

3.1 April 1, 2019.

McCaig-Caron: THAT the minutes from the April 1, 2019 regular meeting be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

**4. New Business**

4.1 Pride Week Celebrations.

- Councillor D. Judson was in attendance to provide an overview of the Borderland Pride's 2019 Pride Guide and the events taking place from May 24th to June 9, 2019. He announced that one of the many highlights included having Trevor Bonot act a Grand Marshall of the Borderland Pride Parade. Mayor Caul thanked Councillor Judson and his committee for the great work done bringing this event to the Town.

4.2 Rainy Lake Square Summer Agenda.

Tannis provided an overview of upcoming musical and movie events along with farmer market updates at the Rainy Lake Square. Mayor Caul expressed her appreciation to Tannis for her continued promotion of the Rainy Lake Square events.

4.3 Taste of India Event. **(Overview by Gurvinder Grewal).**

- *Gurvinder Grewal, RRFDC Intern, was in attendance to provide an overview of the Taste of India event. The notes below are the speaking notes as provided by Mr. Grewal. First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude to this council for their support in this event, and for the Town's support for such an event, as evident by the number of tickets already sold.*

*The Rainy Lake Square will be hosting Fort Frances' first Festival of India!*

*The event will be held on July 22nd, 2019 at the Rainy Lake Square. It will begin at 6 p.m.*

*Before I continue, I believe it is important to note that India is a large, diverse country. It is as diverse as Europe. One can argue that each state within India is comparable, in terms of diversity, to that of a member state within the European Union.*

*India or Indians is often a term used to describe several communities that may, or may not, originate from the country of India. This often leads to stereotyping and/or discrimination. Therefore, it is our hope that the event will provide an opportunity for participants to gain intercultural understanding that will help them differentiate between the various communities that reside within South Asia, including the various*

*communities within the countries themselves.*

*Why? The purpose?*

*Two-fold objective:*

- 1. To increase intercultural awareness and understanding. The event will serve as a platform to welcome newcomers to the District, and a way to attract new visitors to Fort Frances. Participants will in turn learn about the diverse cultures in South Asia through folk music, folk dance and folk food. The event will also provide an opportunity for participants to engage in free-flowing conversations which will encourage intercultural understanding.*
- 2. To allow newcomers, namely those from South Asia, to identify one another and form a community. Many of the south Asian immigrations expressed their desire to partake in some of their own cultural practices, such as celebrating Eid or Diwali. Unfortunately, with many of them struggling to adjust to life in the North, it is difficult for many of them to muster the courage to organize events or community gatherings. I believe this event will allow them to make lasting relationships with one another, and hopefully with the larger community.*

*The Festival of India will focus on promoting South Asian music. Dance, and food to highlight their importance in their respective community.*

*It is well known that music plays an important role in one's culture, with the South Asian community being no different. Punjabi, Hindi and Bengali music each form an integral part of daily life for their respective community.*

*What to expect:*

- *Dance*
  - *Types of dances and their origins (state(s) connection)*
    - *i.e. Bhangra from Punjab, India and Pakistan.*
    - *The Topaz group will be performing an Odissi dance. A major ancient Indian classical dance that originated in the Hindu temples of Odisha – an eastern coastal state of India*
    - *Bharatanatyam, performed by the Dasi group from Florida, is a genre of classical dance originated in Tamil Nadu, India. Performed exclusively by women, and it expresses South Indian religious themes and spiritual ideas.*
    - *Bhaṅgrā is a type of traditional dance of the Indian subcontinent, originating in the Majha area of Punjab. The dance was associated primarily with the spring harvest festival Baisakhi, and it is from one of the major products of the harvest—bhang.*

*Musical instruments*

- *We will also be showcasing a musical drama, including instrumental performances performed by the Vedic Mace group.*
  - *Types of musical instruments, their origins, and cultural significance.*
    - *Sitar a plucked stringed instrument, originating from the Indian subcontinent, used in Hindustani classical music.*
    - *A sitar can have 18, 19, 20, or 21 strings.*
    - *The tabla - a percussion instrument originating from the Indian subcontinent, consisting of a pair of drums, used in traditional, classical, popular and folk music. A particularly important instrument in Hindustani classical music since the 18th century, and remains in use in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.*

*Another important component of cultural experience is to experience one's cultural cuisine. So, the Festival of India will also be accompanied by Taal Fine Indian Cuisine, which will serve a variety of dishes such as:*

*Indian cuisine:*

- *Traditional food will also be served. Taal Fine Indian Cuisine has been kind enough to travel to Fort Frances for this event all the way from Brantford, Ontario.*
- *The dishes that will be served include:*
  - *Malai kofta*
  - *Aachari paneer*
  - *Parathas*
  - *Jeer Rice*
  - *Dal*
  - *Gulab Jumun*

#### *Importance of respecting vegetarianism*

- *Derived from the Latin word vegetus meaning “whole, sound, fresh or lively”. In Indian culture it implies a balanced philosophical and moral sense of life, as well as a diet of vegetables and fruit.*
- *Vegetarianism in Indian culture is viewed as an essential step towards a better society.*
- *Economically, much farmland is required to grow the grain that feeds livestock in order to produce meat.*
  - *In the Indian context: India is a country that suffers from a scarcity of land (mostly attributed to its high population) and according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, India has about 195.9 million people that are undernourished. This makes diet an especially sensitive issue. Not just from a cultural or religious perspective, but from an economic perspective.*
  - *Importation of grains or meat could worsen India’s current account deficit.*

*Touch on the deal being offered. \$20 for unlimited food until June 15th, and \$30 after that.*

*We are hopeful that the festival will also include a henna artist, from Jai Henna, and a turban tying service offered by the Lakehead University Sikh Student Association. We believe this will encourage participants to discuss their experience and ask questions, and thus promote intercultural understanding.*

#### 4.4 Tourist Center.

*- Emma Dykstra was in attendance to provide an overview of a survey currently being undertaken at the Tourist Information Centre.*

*The notes below are the speaking notes as provided by Ms. Dykstra.*

• *The Fort Frances Tourist Information Centre is open for the 2019 season, we opened on May 17,*

*2019*

• *In addition to keeping track of tourists and the purpose of their visit to the centre on our Google spreadsheet, we have a new survey provided to us from Destination Northern Ontario*

• *We were provided with an iPad to put on display for tourists so they can fill out the survey online*

• *The survey asks the following questions:*

1. *Where are you from?*
2. *Where are you going?*
3. *What is your party size?*
4. *Approximately how much are you spending per day on this trip?*
5. *What will be the length of your stay here?*
6. *Who are you traveling with?*
7. *Why are you travelling?*
8. *What are you planning to do while visiting this region?*
9. *Where are you staying?*
10. *What is your mode of travel?*
11. *How many times have you visited this region?*
12. *How did you hear about this region?*

• *If tourists don’t fill out the survey, we ask them some of the questions casually ourselves then*

*fill out the survey for them after they leave*

• *This survey will provide us with more details on the kinds of tourists are visiting our region,*

*as well of the purpose of their visit to the area, not just the purpose of their visit to our tourist centre.*

*The data extracted from this survey will be presented at the end of the year.*

#### 4.5 MAT Committee Update.

- *Tannis advised the committee is still waiting on one more stakeholder to name someone to sit on the committee. Committee recommended that meetings should begin*

sooner than later. Tannis advised that the First MAT Committee meeting has been scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on June 11th at the RRFDC office.

- 4.6 Celebrate Ontario Grant.
  - Tannis provided an update on a grant to assist paying for the Rainy Lake Square series.
- 4.7 Summer Meetings.
  - consensus was reached to bring back the next EDAC meeting on September 9th.

## **5. Standing Items**

- 5.1 Ideas from the April 2nd, 2019 Brainstorming Session - Ideas to Drive Economic Growth.
  - committee provided some additional ideas on the original chart. Under Manufacturing/Industrial Growth an idea was discussed respecting the potential of hydro farms to allow for the growing of vegetables year round. The idea of steam or solar generation to accommodate was discussed.
  - in addition a small discussion was had surrounding the use of the current OPP detachment office which will be vacant at the end of 2020.
- 5.2 Mill Update.
  - some significant work has been done on formulating a joint statement. A message to the public will follow.
- 5.3 Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot.
  - no update available.

## **6. Adjourn 12:50 p.m. / Next Meeting Date - September 9, 2019**