

Memorandum

Date: September 28, 2021

To: Members of Council

From: Catherine McLean, Director, Customer Service and Communications

Subject: Supplementary Information regarding the Funding Request from the Caledon Chamber of Commerce

The purpose of this memorandum is in response to Council's request for additional information regarding the recent funding request from the Caledon Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), specifically how the funds are intended to be used.

Economic Development staff met with representatives from the Chamber to discuss their funding request. The Chamber explained the request is directly connected to reinvigorating the Chamber's presence, operations, and existing brand in the Caledon community. The Chamber is working on a business and operating plan that will identify and refine priorities such as programs, events, and services that Caledon's businesses need to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chamber indicated funds are required to hire a part-time resource to support the board with running the organization currently being operated by volunteers. The Chamber needs support with re-building their brand and membership and currently have a very limited budget and capacity. Additionally, the Chamber recognizes that a strong membership base is a fundamental part of the ongoing success of the organization and that supporting their membership through COVID -19 recovery is where the majority of their focus is at this time.

The Chamber and staff discussed the development of the Economic Development Strategy, specifically its deliverables around business support, and how their programs, services, and support intersect with these deliverables. The Chamber is enthusiastic to begin a new relationship with the Town, are eager to collaborate, and build their capacity.

Staff investigated the variety of successful partnerships between municipalities and Chambers of Commerce provincially and nationally, (such as City of Guelph, Town of Grimsby, Town of Saugeen Shores, Town of Canmore, and Town of Coaldale) to assess the suitability of not only funding support, but opportunities to partner for the betterment of a community's economic health.

Economic Development staff reviewed the request for financial support with the Chamber and recommend the support requirements of the Town's Community Group Affiliation program which suggests following course of action:

1. Staff will review the Chamber's governing documentation (collected under the authority of the Community Group Affiliation policy), in order to determine suitability for capacity building support, and suitability for partnerships.
2. The Chamber will complete its business plan, which will include refined priority action items. The completed plan will be shared with staff for review.
3. The Chamber will provide a comprehensive request for financial support to Council for consideration, based on the business plan.
4. The Chamber and staff will partner to deliver appropriate programs, events and support (outlined in the Economic Development strategy) where appropriate.

In communities around the province and across Canada, Chambers of Commerce are important partners in achieving economic success, supporting new businesses, and helping existing businesses navigate the continuing pandemic. Staff are confident that the Chamber has a leadership team that can achieve its vision, and are looking forward to building a relationship that ensures Caledon's businesses have the local resources they need.

Staff will provide Council with updates as the Chamber completes its business plan, expands on the details of its request for financial support, and its progress with expanding its membership and available business supports.