

**West Grey Chamber of Commerce  
Executive Meeting Minutes  
December 2, 2015**

Attending: Nella Monaco-Wells, Lois Harris, Stephanie Crilly, Cheryl Lindsay, Brenda Newton (new Chamber member Bill Wilkinson came to observe).

Guests: West Grey Minor Hockey Association executive Tom Hutchison, Neustadt delegation, including: Councillor Doug Hutchison, Dave Waechter - Sign Up Signs, Carol Dyck, - Village Creations.

Two special presentations kicked off the meeting:

Doug Hutchison made a presentation about Neustadt businesses wanting to rejuvenate their group. They are concerned about empty storefronts, and would like to actively pursue ways to fill them.

As a result, a few months ago, they had a representative from Huron East to explain their "Win This Space" contest in which winning prospective business owners are given enough rent money to get started in their operations for a year.

When they investigated the potential for Neustadt to do the same, they realized that they would need a more formal organization - one with a constitution - in order to apply for grant funding to run the contest.

West Grey Chamber of Commerce director Stephanie Crilly told them that it might be useful for them to talk to our board to find out if they and we would be a good fit. Our Chamber already has a constitution, and could help with making the application a reality.

The Chamber board had already discussed the 'Win This Space' contest previously and said that it might be advantageous to have Neustadt go ahead as a pilot, and, if successful, use the same model for other villages in West Grey, including Ayton and Durham.

A discussion ensued about how the West Grey Chamber represents all the businesses in West Grey, and how we have to work together.

Doug said that the Neustadt group could remain separate, or form a sub-committee of the Chamber to get the project off the ground.

There was concern about making sure the roles and responsibilities of whatever kind of group came out of the discussions were clear, since Neustadt already has an existing business group.

Lois asked where the funding programs were to get money for the project, and all chipped in with suggestions of the Saugeen Business Development Corporation, OMAFRA, The Business Enterprise Centre in Owen Sound and more.

Several similar projects were mentioned, including the Hawk's Nest contest for entrepreneurs run by the SBDC and the Dragon's Den in Meaford.

Stephanie suggested that the first step might be to get someone from Neustadt on the West Grey board, and then to strike a subcommittee to work through the project details.

Nella confirmed that, under our by-laws, a new director could be appointed, if the current board voted on and accepted that person.

Doug suggested that more businesses from Neustadt should join the West Grey Chamber, and that he would promote the idea in the village.

Cheryl suggested we check the application cycles for the various foundations - Trillium's deadline is March, for example.

Doug and Carol both said that they have a copy of the Huron East project proposal, which could be used as a starting point for the Neustadt project.

A discussion ensued re: the merits of hiring a professional grant writer.

Doug promised to get back to the Chamber board after talking to the Neustadt businesses about our discussion, and said he would be recruiting more members for the West Grey Chamber. The Neustadt delegation left at 6:10 p.m.

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Tom Hutchison, on behalf of the West Grey Minor Hockey Association, made a presentation about an opportunity for the Chamber during a weekend of hockey including an NHL alumni game at the Durham arena on November 18-20, 2016. The event is called the West Grey Warrior Weekend, and the NHL alumni could possibly include Guy Lafleur, Guy Carbonneau and Steve Shutt.

The Durham arena and hall have been booked and Tom was looking for the Chamber to get businesses to put on a brunch or something during the weekend. The idea would be to provide exposure for local businesses at an event that will attract crowds from all over the region and beyond, since hockey clubs would be coming from all over the province.

Stephanie suggested a trade show with exhibits along the walls of the hall. There would be no cost to businesses, since sponsorships and members who pay to play against the NHL alumni, plus ticket sales will cover costs.

Stephanie also suggested the possibility of putting together a coupon book that could be handed out on that weekend, and said the Chamber could work on it over the spring and summer. Tom left at 6:40 p.m.

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Nella called the regular meeting to order. Motion to accept the agenda by Stephanie, seconded by Cheryl. Carried.

Acceptance of the November 4, 2015 minutes was moved by Stephanie, seconded by Cheryl. Carried.

Lois and Nella talked about ideas that were raised during the Chamber's networking session at the Garafraxa Cafe on November 25<sup>th</sup>, including sending the board's meeting minutes out to the membership and posting them on the website. There was an agreement that this should happen.

The discussion then turned to having ambassadors to call around to the membership in advance of our networking sessions - which happen every other month - to generate better attendance. There was a suggestion that we could divide up the list and have each board member call their share of businesses for the reminder. This, too, was adopted.

A discussion about having the networking sessions held in one location (the Garafraxa Cafe - the Bossi's have offered to host) or moving it around ensued. It has been difficult in the past to encourage businesses to host the sessions, but in the end, the agreement was that the option to host should be made available to other businesses, if they want to do it.

The board then discussed moving the location of the monthly board meetings to different locations, particularly if more Neustadt businesses decide to join the Chamber, and if we have a new Neustadt director on the board. Stephanie said that Mary Anne Lewis, owner of the Top End restaurant in Neustadt had offered to open on Monday or Tuesday (when the restaurant is usually closed) to accommodate the board. It was decided that anyone who wanted to host the executive meetings should be able to, and that we should make an effort to meet in Neustadt every other month.

Business from the November 4th meeting:

- Stephanie reported that the Christmas shopping promotion was going well, and said she was going to be out of town for the early bird draw. Nella

volunteered to pick up ballots from the Durham businesses and Stephanie said she'd pick up the Neustadt ballots at lunch time before the weekend, and drop them off to Brenda by 6 p.m. on Friday.

- Brenda said that not all businesses participating in the "Shop to Win" had paid their fees. It was decided to gently remind those who hadn't yet paid when the ballots were picked up for the early bird draw.
- Stephanie will have the radio advertising changed for next week, and send a template of the \$25 gift certificate to Nella.

The treasurer's report was tabled by Brenda, with a \$10,539.12 balance. Brenda moved to accept and Lois seconded. Carried.

Nella provided the membership update, with the Durham Art Gallery being the latest member. She then provided the website report and relayed the correspondence received over the last month:

- The Health Care Foundation requested funding for their Christmas drive. The board decided that, since we just contributed to the Grape Escape, we would take a pass on this one.
- Junior Achievement asked for support, and since the request was made on letterhead from Peterborough, it was decided to pass on this one, too.
- The Chamber received a letter from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce updating us on the benefits of membership, including travel insurance, reduced UPS rates, auto-conferencing, etc.

Other business: Stephanie suggested we might think about sponsoring a couple of tickets for the alumni NHL hockey game to go to a needy family. The feeling was that it was a good idea, but might be difficult to choose just one family. The idea was tabled for the next meeting.

Next meeting is January 6, 2015 at Pebbles. Lois will talk to Mary Anne Lewis about having the February meeting at the Top End restaurant in Neustadt.

Stephanie motioned to adjourn the meeting and Cheryl seconded. Carried.