

Town updates Economic Development plan

Town approves Economic Development Strategy

Streamlining the development process – cumbersome and too bureaucratic for some – will help build a competitive development environment, goal one of the Town's new Economic Development Strategic (EDS) action plan.

Seven recommended goals and 55 "reasonable and achievable" action plans developed by a steering committee were presented to Council last Monday by consultants hired to help with a 10-year economic development strategy.

It won't come cheap according to consultant Matt Fischer who noted the lack of financial information in the action plan report, and quoted Frank Tyger, a former New Times columnist, who said "Wishes cost nothing unless you want them to come true". Fisch-

er said if Council wants to "achieve the potential that is available in Halton Hills, you're going to have to spend a little money to do so."

Along with establishing a strong, competitive development, the goals of the EDS include building on the strong base of existing businesses, establishing an entrepreneurial climate, making Halton Hills competitively attractive, creating a vital agri-business community, creating a healthy, vibrant connected community, and developing the tourism infrastructure.

Consultant Eileen Murray said each goal is attached to strategic objectives, performance measures, recommended actions, lead responsibility, budget, time frame and priority. She said Council should not want to compare priority levels of

action plans in the goals, but "pick one or two goals to start with and branch out from there," depending on available resources.

The Town should immediately update its website Murray said, calling it the "most important marketing tool" the Town has for economic development. Currently the economic development information is found on the Town's website, and Regional/Ward Two Councillor Jane Fogal said both should be used to "sell ourselves... We've got an attractive package," Fogal said.

Doug Penrice, the Town's sole Economic Development staffer, said Council would have to prioritize which initiatives are realistic, financially viable and will get the "best bang for our buck." That list will be presented to the Economic Development committee and then Council, and Penrice asked for "some trust" that any economic development



money would be spent wisely.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said the economic development review was long overdue – the last one was done in 1998 – and would provide the foundation of what they need to

do. He said it was good to get "outside" voices from the consultants and people who filled out surveys and attended forums on the economic development action plan review.

Asked if the Town was playing catch-up because

it has been 15 years since the last economic development strategy review, Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary, chair of the EDS steering committee, said. "I wouldn't call it catch-up. I would just call it modernizing."

POLICE REPORT

TUNDRA TAKEN

A Toyota Tundra valued at \$15,000 was stolen from a Highway 7 residence sometime between February 7 and 9. The limited edition,

brown, quad cab truck has a black box cover. The plate number is AA86359.

HOT HOUSE

Extreme heat caused burning eyes for a Mill

Street East apartment tenant who called 911 at 5:03 last Thursday evening. Responding to an unknown odour investigation, Acton firefighters found no trace of any gasses, but noted it was 30 degrees in the apartment, and determined the tenant's burning eyes were caused by prolonged exposure to high tem-

peratures.

FAULTY ALARM

A Dr. Moore Court homeowner will replace a faulty hard-wired smoke detector after it malfunctioned at 12:18 Saturday afternoon. The homeowner had replaced a back-up battery, but the device continued to beep so she called for help.

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Helson Gallery update coming

The impact of housing a collection of Canadian significance in the refurbished Gallery at the Georgetown Cultural Centre has been the topic of much interest among local artists, art groups, and residents over the past few months. It represents a wonderful opportunity for exposing residents to art.

"There has been a great deal of confusion about what the Town

has done so far, and more importantly what the Town intends to do," said Mayor Rick Bonnette in a press release issued Tuesday. "I have asked staff to present information regarding the Cultural Centre and the Helson Gallery as an update for Council and the community alike."

That presentation will be made at the next Council meeting on Tuesday, February 19, beginning at 7 p.m.

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