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BUSINESS

More 'talk' about 404 lands at town's economic summit

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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The need for serviced employment lands along Whitchurch-Stouffville's Hwy. 404 corridor is a "conversation that is causing a lot of distraction," according to Ian Duff, economic development director for McSweeney and Associates.

Duff spearheaded an economic summit with local business owners and town staff recently at Meadowbrook Golf and Country Club to help formulate a vision for the municipality's economic development.

The current economic development strategy dates back to 2007, according to the town's website.

"Either move on or move off," Duff told the group of roughly 15 people of the unserved employment lands in the town's west end.

The focus, instead, he said, should be trying to make the community sustainable and investment attractive.

Duff also pointed out that governments don't create jobs, but opportunities for the private sector to have businesses.

"If you don't figure this out quickly, you're going to miss opportunities. They're going to pass you by," Duff said.

With no hotels or other complementary industries to support information technology or education hubs, "it leaves us waiting for industries deciding to come here and accommodating them," Ward 3 Councillor Hugo

Kroon told The Sun-Tribune.

Kroon and Mayor Justin Altmann were the only members of council to attend the summit.

Kroon added it might be in the town's best interest to turn its focus to business retention and "to ensure the businesses that are here are supported."

"(Businesses) need to know they're far more important to us than collecting their property taxes four times a year," Kroon said.

No matter which direction the town moves in, there needs to be some accountability, Harry Renault, executive director of the Stouffville Chamber of Commerce, told The Sun-Tribune.

"If we just keep talking and educating, without any metrics to it, then we're just going to be talking and doing nothing about it."

"If we just keep talking and educating, without any metrics to it, then we're just going to be talking and doing nothing about it," Renault told The Sun-Tribune of the chamber's recommendation.

A final report on the town's new economic development strategy is expected to go before council in March.

Daycare centre family affair

Debra and Pamela Holder are the new owners of Deer Park Childcare.

The mother and daughter took over ownership of the long-running business from another mother/daughter team back in November. It's somewhat of a homecoming for Pamela, as she did a co-op placement at the daycare back in 1997.

The fully licenced childcare centre offers programming for those aged 18 months to Grade 1. They are currently working on obtaining a licence to offer services to children up to 12 years of age.

The childcare centre offers healthy meals, which are cooked on site with little to no pro-

cessed food, according to Pamela.

They also offer new enriched programming such as gym, music, French, Kids in the Kitchen as well as Fit n' Fancy. Still to be introduced is a gardening program, parent and tot programs as well as before- and after-school programming, such as dance, piano and karate.

There are eight staff members, not including management.

"We want to give people the feel that we are making things better and complementing the previous owner's way of running the business. With improvement and parent feedback, we look forward to the growth and being an important part of the community," according to Pamela.

More? Go to deerparkchildcare.com

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