

BACCS Meeting

November 21, 2024

6:30pm DeVenney Room-Bridgetown Library

In Attendance: John Osborne, Laura Ricketts, Samantha Langley, Jennifer D'Aubin, Caroline Perriman, Trudy White, Carrie Ness, Holly Kaulbach, Zach Van Wagner, Nancy Price, Harrison Murphy, Dustin Enslow, Ted Agombar, Steve Rafferty

Absent: Ro Allen

John called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Daniela Siggia-Beasant -Economic Development Coordinator for Annapolis County, Town of Annapolis Royal and Town of Middleton gave a presentation on what she does and how she can help us. An overview of her presentation is at the bottom of the minutes.

Everyone in attendance went around the table and introduced themselves to our new Councillor Ted Agombar.

Agenda Additions/Deletions: none.

Review of October Minutes: Cadets was spelled incorrectly. Laura made a motion to accept the minutes with the spelling correction. Zach seconded. Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance:

Light Up The Town revenue has started to come in. No other significant change from last month.

VIC/Tourism:

Federal Grant Application is due December 31, 2024-Jennifer is contacting Kirk to see if he is able to take care of this again this year.

Development Committee:

Congratulations to Caroline for your fabulous poppy garlands-they look great. The Trail Connector is finished. The committee is working hard on planning Christmas Decorations.

Ciderfest:

John brought up that it's probably time it not be a Chamber event or be a committee under the Chamber umbrella with separate volunteers. We need to do a post in January looking for volunteers or the event likely will not happen in 2025.

Membership: No report.

Light Up the Town: Things are moving ahead. Sponsorships are looking good. There will be fireworks this year.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commerce Committee: John

The Chamber is tired and not working effectively, he presented a couple of options as possibilities for the Chamber moving forward:

- A. Separate not for profit to take care of the various items each committee is taking care of now.
- B. Create a sub commerce committee within the Chamber of Commerce.

Discussion ensued.

Also, possibly a quarterly meeting, hosted by the County Councillors with a representative from each volunteer group getting together to discuss what they are up to and connect. Dustin agreed to organize this meeting.

It was decided that there would be a special Chamber meeting on January 8, 2025 at 6:30pm at the DeVenney Room to discuss this matter further and make some decisions in preparation for the January meeting. All are invited.

No December meeting. Next meeting will be January 16, 2025.

John called to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm.

Presentation Overview from Daniela Siggia-Beasant -Economic Development Coordinator for Annapolis County, Town of Annapolis Royal and Town of Middleton:

Here's a summary of our discussion as requested:

Key Points

- **Interconnected Approach to Economic Development:**
 - Emphasized that Annapolis County is a holistic economy with communities that collaborate and benefit from shared initiatives.

- Highlighted the importance of identifying untapped sectors, supporting entrepreneurs, and fostering business growth tailored to the specific needs of Bridgetown.
 - **Community Strengths:**
 - Acknowledged Bridgetown's adaptability, collaboration, and resilience as key assets for future growth.
 - Praised the Chamber of Commerce's role in bridging gaps and supporting local businesses.
 - **Opportunities for Support:**
 - Offered to provide free training and education to address specific business needs (e.g., digital marketing, strategic planning, exploring new markets).
 - Shared plans to develop a countywide business directory to spotlight all entrepreneurs, including those operating outside formal networks.
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Concerns Raised by Attendees

1. **Fear of Overpromising:**
 - Attendees expressed concerns about the potential for overpromising outcomes that may not be achievable within my current contract.
 2. **Equity Among Communities:**
 - A concern was shared that Bridgetown might not receive the same level of attention and support as Middleton and Annapolis Royal.
 3. **Short-Term Nature of My Role:**
 - The limited duration of my contract was noted as a barrier to long-term planning and optimism about sustained progress.
 4. **Interest in Development Opportunities:**
 - Bridgetown has significant room for growth and is eager for economic development attention, particularly in identifying and leveraging opportunities.
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Commitment to Addressing Concerns

- **Taking Concerns Seriously:**
 - I assured the group that I understand and take their concerns seriously. I will prioritize transparency, avoid overpromising, and focus on actionable, short-term goals that can lay the foundation for future work.
- **Equity in Focus:**
 - I committed to ensuring Bridgetown's needs and potential are fully represented in my work, alongside Middleton and Annapolis Royal and beyond.
- **Exploring Development Opportunities:**

- I will actively look for ways to highlight Bridgetown's potential and facilitate connections that can drive growth. (I have already contacted 2 international investors this morning)