

Minutes

Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee

May 1, 2025

Call to Order

The Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee met at the Grey County Administration Building on the above date. The Chair, Councillor Keaveney, called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. with the following members present:

Emily Rosen, Grace Morin, Roger Mooking, Dave Shorey, Councillors Dane Nielsen, Brian Milne, Warren Dickert, Terry McKay, Shirley Keaveney, Tom Hutchinson, Ian Boddy and Warden Andrea Matrosovs.

Members Sandy Gott and Councillor Sue Carleton were absent.

Staff present included Kim Wingrove, CAO; Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture; Steve Furness, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism; Kaleena Sanford, Economic Development Officer; Jacinda Rudolph, Economic Development Officer; Taylor Corfield, Campus Manager, Sydenham Campus; Linnea Catalan, Business Enterprise Coordinator; Jill Paterson, Manager of Museum and Archives; Courtney Miller, Business Enterprise Manager; Kimberly Trombley, Administrative Assistant, EDTC; Scott Taylor, Director of Planning and Development; Liz Buckton, Senior Policy Planner; Tara Warder, County Clerk; and Brittany Rier, Deputy Clerk.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Delegations

Grey County Member Municipalities - 2025 Economic Development Projects

Rebecca Ellerdiem, Community & Business Development Advisor for the City of Owen Sound, shared the new Community Profile both through a presentation supplemented

with a printed Community Profile brochure. She shared that dozens of local collaborators helped to develop the profile. The Community Profile is a web-first approach that seeks to tell stories through the people in our community; these are real people sharing their real lives.

Committee Member Dave Shorey entered the room at 8:35 a.m.

Rebecca Ellerdiem shared that the print edition includes high-level data points including QR codes to direct readers to the website for access to the most recent data. The design reinforces the Owen Sound branding and key messages. The digital edition is meant to replicate browsing through the profile. She explained that the graph displayed is generated through the City's Spotlight subscription and pulls together the demographics overview of the City itself and a 30 minute and a 60 minute radius.

She shared that the Community Profile was printed in Owen Sound at Qwik Print highlighting the incredible resources here locally. The City has big city amenities, with small town charm. She spoke to all the different resources in the area and how it's within walkable distance.

Dave Shorey, Executive Director of Georgian College Owen Sound Campus and Committee Member, voiced that the work done by the City is excellent with dynamic data using the tools on the website. He shared that he thought this will help to profile the community in new ways. Taking a perspective from within Georgian College, he emphasized that many of the students are working in town helping to fund their education which in turn helps the community.

Councillor Ian Boddy entered the room at 8:37 a.m.

Andrea Matrosovs shared excitement about the strong economic development network.

Shannon Campbell, Strategic and Economic Development Officer for the Township of Georgian Bluffs, shared that the Township is putting a strong focus on connecting and building relationships with local businesses.

She shared two upcoming initiatives including Business in the Bluffs; a digital series of videos highlighting local businesses, and Experience the Bluffs; a new tourism blog. She shared that both of these initiatives are helping to create strong relationships within the community and will help share their story with a wider audience. In regards to Business in the Bluffs, it was noted that they have received a lot of great feedback from businesses in the area and that there are no extra costs to the community as this is all done in house. She shared one of the most recent highlights being Dual Acres, a local business offering horse-drawn sleigh and wagon rides, which is just outside of Shallow lake, had just over 6000 views on Facebook.

The Experience the Bluffs, a new tourism blog, is an initiative that is shared on Georgian Bluffs' social media platforms, but particularly on Facebook and their website. She shared an example of the self-guided waterfall tour. This initiative will profile volunteer organizations and groups in the community.

Other things noted were more opportunities for community connection including the Kemble Maple Tour which is largely organized by community members, and the

Township Family Fun Fair which happened at the Kemble Arena on April 12th with well-over 700 people in attendance. The Township of Georgian Bluffs has also fostered a partnership with Cobble Beach with their community night market starting this Monday May 5th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 pm. This event will occur the first Monday of every month from May to October, going along with the cruise nights, and will be called Markets and Motors.

Kim Wingrove, CAO, shared the wonderful community initiative, #TrashTagGB, which has been highlighted on social media. She noted that it shows the community spirit which is an important part of an economic development campaign.

Items For Direction or Discussion

EDTC-PEDAC-03-25 Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Progress Report - April 2025

Director Savanna Myers shared the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture strategic progress update for April 2025. She shared the biggest challenge in regards to Grey County's Response Strategy to tariff threats is the continued uncertainty, but emphasized working together with our member municipalities to actively monitor the situation.

Priorities for the year included leadership and collaboration, investment readiness, business retention and expansion, and mentorship support. She emphasized that Economic Development is here to be the voice of the community, and that amazing people and products are developed and sold here in Grey County.

Director Myers shared the success of the recent regional job fair where 66 employers were included, having 64 on site that day. Over 600 job seekers attended the job fair. The success of the recent networking event, Cruise and Connect, with almost 350 people in attendance.

Director Myers shared the success of the ongoing "Gather" campaign. She shared that the campaign has been featured on Toronto billboards and at the local Owen Sound Attack games through this season and will continue all next season.

Director Myers went on to share the success of the Business Enterprise Centre. She shared the success of the Sydenham campus with approximately 71 short term rentals.

Lastly, Director Myers shared that in the first quarter at Grey Roots, they are focusing on the innovative practices. A Lean Assessment was completed for the heritage village. She emphasized that membership is up 19% from the previous year.

PED-06-25

Moved by: Councillor Hutchinson

Seconded by: Dave Shorey

That report EDTC-PEDAC-03-25 regarding the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Strategic Progress Report – April 2025 be received for information.

Carried

EDTC-PEDAC-04-25 Key Sector Scan and Tariffs

Director Myers shared the recent trade shows and conferences staff have attended to share all of the great tourism Grey County has to offer. She shared that Canadians are sharing a sense of community pride and spirit and that people are keen to explore their own backyards.

Kaleena Sanford, Economic Development Officer, presented on their first sector scan being agriculture. The team has been actively listening to local groups hearing their concerns, challenges and potential opportunities. Farmers are seeing longer growing seasons, improved crop genetics and better tile drainage which are leading to diversified crops.

Kaleena shared the current impacts of tariffs and how it relates to market volatility especially where products are being exported and reimported into Canada and the challenges in the agricultural sector, including those around mental health and changing climates.

Steve Furness, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, presented on Manufacturing sharing that the Excellence in Manufacturing (EMC) head office is located right in Owen Sound. He shared that Grey County recently co-hosted the first EMC event in-person since the pandemic.

He shared that with the recent changes to tariffs, there are opportunities for new markets and inter-provincial trade; items can be sourced within Canada to avoid the tariffs. He shared that while Canada is not the direct target of these issues, there is still significant uncertainty affecting investing and developing within Canada.

The Committee shared a local program called Shed Talks. Mental health workers make visits to farms to connect with local farmers in a relaxed environment and provide tools and resources for their mental health.

PED-07-25

Moved by: Councillor McKay

Seconded by: Councillor Nielsen

That report EDTC-PEDAC-04-25 regarding the Key Sector Scan and Tariffs be received for information.

Carried

Growth Management Study Update

Liz Buckton, Senior Policy Planner, shared the 2025 Growth Management Strategy (GMS) update.

She shared that the current Ministry of Finance projections are anticipated to be larger than what was forecasted. Grey County will be preparing this forecast to 2051. She provided an explanation accompanied by a graph showing the GMS updates since the census in 2021. She shared that Grey County will be working closely with Hemson Consulting.

Director Scott Taylor reinforced that municipalities are not the only organizations contributing. Other public community partners will play a part in gathering this information.

Liz Buckton shared that projections are offered by the province on an annual basis.

Roundtable Discussion

Sector Trends and Challenges

Comments were made by the committee on the importance of tourism and how staycations are going to attract people to this area. It was suggested that Grey County ask the Province to consider implementing the staycation tax credit again to residents of Ontario. The discussion continued on the lack of availability of affordable and suitable housing in the region, and how the region is missing out on highly skilled candidates.

Councillor Hutchinson left the meeting at 10:20 a.m. and returned at 10:22 a.m.

The conversation on the impacts of tariffs on the marine sector and how the industry is seeing multiple trade barriers continued. The Port of Owen Sound is currently being underutilized, but the committee discussed how it could be utilized better in the future.

Chair Keaveney noted the Community Builder Award was awarded to Grace Morin this week.

PED-08-25

Moved by: Councillor Boddy

Seconded by: Warden Milne

That the County of Grey send correspondence to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and Ministry of Sport, to respectfully request the reinstatement of the Ontario Staycation Tax credit; and

That the correspondence be sent to MPPs for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and Simcoe-Grey.

Carried

Correspondence

There was none.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Next Meeting Date

Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment

On motion of Councillor Milne, the Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee adjourned at 10:24 a.m. to the call of the Chair.