

STAFF REPORT: PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES



REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: March 7, 2011
REPORT NO.: PL.11.27
SUBJECT: Land Use Planning Guide for Businesses
PREPARED BY: David Finbow, Director,
Planning & Building Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PL.11.27 for information purposes.

B. Background

Council at its meeting of Feb 14, 2011 considered a correspondence item entitled "A Land Use Planning Guide for Businesses" (the "Guide"), prepared by the Province of Ontario, and requested that Planning Services provide more information on the document (see www.thebluemountains.ca/public_docs/documents/land-use-planning-guide-for-business.pdf).

The purpose of the Land Use Planning Guide for Businesses is "to assist new and existing businesses understand the land use planning process in Ontario and, therefore, obtain land use planning approvals faster."

The Guide contains general information that is useful for all applications with sections in the Guide devoted to Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, Consents, Site Plan Control, Building Permits, Related Initiatives and Programs; and, Other Planning Approvals and Provincial Regulations. Information contained in the Guide is similar in nature to what is found in the Province's Citizens' Guide to Land-use Planning save and except that the Guide contains checklists entitled "Things to Ask During Your Early Consultation Meeting".

The Guide strongly encourages that proponents meet with the approval authority prior to proceeding. In The Blue Mountains these types of inquiries are addressed by the Planning & Building Services Department and is done so on a verbal/over-the-counter basis. Unfortunately, other core service delivery requirements encumber our ability to offer real and meaningful assistance.

Small business support, ranging from developing a business plan through to assisting in obtaining a building permit, is now offered locally by the Greater Collingwood Small Business Enterprise Centre (the "Centre"), which opened in August 2007. The Centre supports the Clearview Township, Collingwood, The Blue Mountains and Wasaga Beach area and is sponsored by the Town of

Collingwood Economic Development Department and the Province of Ontario. Located within the Town of Collingwood's Economic Development Office, it provides support to start-up and small enterprises during their initial years of development and operation and delivers youth entrepreneurship programs (including Summer Company). In addition, the Centre, facilitates various seminars and sponsors special events aimed at supporting and developing small businesses and entrepreneurship. Town Staff are in discussions with the Centre as to opportunities to strengthen their visibility and services within the Town of The Blue Mountains. The Centre's website, www.enterprisecentre.ca, contains valuable information and advice and receives several hundred visits annually.

In addition to the Centre in Collingwood, there is The Business Enterprise Centre in Owen Sound serving Owen Sound and the surrounding area. This centre is located at 173 8th Street East, Owen Sound and their website is <http://www.owensound.ca/business/enterprisecentre>.

Other resources available to entrepreneurs includes the Province of Ontario's website which includes Business Guides, information on Business Management and information on Operating a Business. This webpage is www.ontario.ca/en/communities/entrepreneurs.

Town staff are of the opinion that the Guide is a good advisory document and has made the document available via the Town's website and in the Planning & Building Services Department.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

"Providing a strong, well managed municipal government."

D. Budget Impact

N/A

E. Addendums

- a. A Land Use Planning Guide for Business

Respectfully submitted,

David Finbow
Director, Planning & Building Services