

**Municipality Of Chatham-Kent**  
**Chief Administrative Office**  
**Information Report**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Amy Wilcox, FCPA, FCMA, PMP  
**Date:** January 14, 2019  
**Subject:** Community Meetings Information and Recommendations

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This report is for the information of Council.

**Background**

Council and administration recognize the importance of engaging with citizens and ensuring residents play a meaningful role in the deliberations, discussions, decision-making and/or implementation of projects or programs affecting them. Research has shown community engagement can lead to improved outcomes for communities. That when government seeks out the aspirations, concerns and values of communities; and communities share their aspirations, concerns and values with institutions; and these aspirations, concerns and values of communities are incorporated into decision-making processes; government is better able to meet the needs of communities - essentially as a result of being better informed.

Establishing an effective partnership between government and communities results in a greater sense of ownership, greater take-up of services, and better outcomes for residents. This could in turn lead to improved outcomes for communities and result in interventions and approaches that are tailored to the unique aspirations, concerns and values of that community.

The Mayor and several members of Council reported that during the election campaign they received feedback that our residents wanted more opportunities to work with elected officials and administration to shape our community's future. In response, Mayor Canniff has made a commitment to meet with community groups and provide more opportunities for community engagement. As of January 2, 2019, the Mayor had met with 101 community groups during the month of December and January. Members of Council were invited to participate in the meetings involving groups within their ward. A complete list of the groups can be found in Appendix A. Community meetings are continuing through January and a fulsome report will be shared with Council once all of the information has been gathered.

## **Comments**

Information from the meetings has been compiled by the project manager and shared with the Executive Management Team. Several common topics were discussed by the community groups and several trends have been identified. Issues affecting the success of community groups are included in a package provided to Council and can be categorized as follows:

- Grants: Need help identifying grant information and help applying for municipal and non-municipal grants
- Communication: More communication and community engagement would be beneficial
- Tourism: Groups need more support in promoting community events
- Culture: User fees to use municipal facilities are too high
- Licensing: Process is lengthy with duplication and hard to complete paperwork
- Customer Service: More communication on the issues logging program
- Operating Expenses: Property taxes and utilities are generally the largest items in a groups operating budget
- Special Events: Process is too difficult and lengthy, no follow-up with groups and takes too long to obtain permits
- Arenas: Several issues regarding arenas, such as, ice allocation policy, timing of ice allocation meetings, policy on returning ice
- Grass Cutting: Current contracts are not sufficient for use of the grounds, i.e. grass too long to play soccer, games occurring when the contractor tries to cut grass
- Downtown BIAs: Would like help in the installation of banners, flags, and holiday lights

As mentioned, although over one hundred community groups have been met with, several groups are scheduled to meet with the Mayor and council members until the end of January. Consequently, time is needed to compile the additional information and to develop business cases; therefore, it is requested that Council support the budget item to set aside \$400,000 per year in the base budget in a reserve to be administered by the Chief Administrative Office-Partnership Development, with allocation of the funds be held in a reserve until future programs can be developed and brought before Council for approval.

Examples of some potential projects are discussed below.

## **Volunteerism**

An overwhelming majority of the groups visited indicated that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find members and volunteers within our community. Decreasing volunteerism can be attributed to a variety of factors, including changes on family dynamics, youth leaving the area, increase demand on services provided by the groups requires an increase in help and also, the current volunteers are aging.

More modern recruiting methods and solutions need to be considered, however most groups do not have the volunteers with this type of expertise. Solutions to assist community groups in recruiting volunteers are discussed below.

### **Municipal Website-Volunteer Page**

Have a volunteer page on the municipal website where individuals could review what groups are looking for help. Information on the group, their mission, time commitment and objectives could be listed and requests for individuals with special skills such as book keeping or social media experience could be listed to help groups find the necessary persons for specific positions. No cost is associated with this recommendation and it would be completed by the Partnership Development unit.

### **Community Group and Not-For-Profit Conference and Workshops**

April 7<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup> is National Volunteer Week, a time to celebrate and thank Canada's 12.7 million volunteers. During the community meeting discussions, it became quite clear that volunteers need help, more communication and information from their local government.

A volunteer appreciation event that community groups could attend to learn more about a variety of topics, such as grants, government regulations, how to complete paperwork and attend workshops to inform and inspire and a dinner to thanked and spotlight (volunteer awards) volunteers for their hard work is being proposed.

The Chatham-Kent Community Foundation and the Chatham-Kent Non-Profit Network (CKNN) have agreed to co-host and assist with the funding of the annual event. As this is a new idea for 2019 we will be working with CKNN to add to their current scheduled event in April.

It is expected that the cost for the municipal portion of this annual event could be in the range of \$20,000.

### **Municipal Campaign**

Supporting CK's volunteers and voluntary sector is expected to enhance the well-being, enjoyment and health of those living in our community. It is recommended that the municipality develop a year-long campaign to encourage people to volunteer and get out and support local business and events. This project will be completed through the talents and resources of Corporate Communications and would not require funding for labour. The work will be part of their everyday responsibilities, however, some funding

will be required for materials and advertising. It is proposed that some funds, approximately \$20,000, be dedicated to this project.

### **Municipal Liaison**

Community groups indicated that it is difficult to properly promote their events and fundraising initiatives due to a lack of knowledge, time and funds. There are several local advertising companies in both print and radio willing to assist but it can be difficult to navigate the industry and know who to contact. It is proposed that the municipality provide a front line person that all community groups can contact and provide event information to. That employee would then be responsible to share information with the local network of media. This task would be an additional duty to an already established position and would not require additional funds.

### **Special Events**

The majority of groups indicated difficulty with completing the paperwork required for special events applications. Many stated that they would submit forms and not hear back from the municipality and not know if they had a permit until a day or two prior to the event. Groups have asked for help in improving this process and help in navigating municipal processes.

Currently, twenty-five percent of the Coordinator of Active Transportation and Special Events responsibilities and wages has been allocated to special events. This position is funded through Infrastructure and Engineering Services (IES)-Parks and Open Space. The position is a grade four with a salary and labour burden of \$50,080. It is proposed to reallocate twenty-five percent (\$12,520) of the salary from this position located in IES and combine additional funds to create a new position in Corporate Initiatives-Partnership Development. This employee will act as a liaison to all community groups and help them navigate municipal processes.

Therefore, seventy-five percent of this position (\$37,560.12) will be funded through the \$400,000 request.

The duties of the position will include, but are not limited to:

- Ensure the coordinated communication and approval process for special events and filming in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent operates in an efficient and effective manner
- Develop and maintain a Festival and Events Network in Chatham-Kent
- Develop and implement strategic processes to ensure external event organizers and stakeholders continue to create new revenue generating events that will provide recreation and entertainment opportunities for Chatham-Kent (e.g. marketing, volunteerism, networking, etc.)
- Manage one-off events (e.g. International Plowing Match, Pinty's Curling Event, Hometown Hockey, etc.)
- Create and lead municipal and stakeholder teams to support one-off municipal events (i.e. PC BBQ town Tour)

- Maintain a database of special events applications which take place on municipal property; ensuring responses from municipal departments are received from departments in a timely manner, overseeing the manual, the communication processes, and the application process
- Connect quickly with staff and other stakeholders/resources to resolve last minute issues and concerns
- Review, revise and create policies, processes and internal communication issues regarding special events and filming to ensure efficiency and consistency
- Liaise with community groups which require assistance with their special events and/or filming
- Liaise with outside groups wishing to come to Chatham-Kent
- Lead the municipal interdepartmental team in facilitating reviews of the events manual and related processes
- Single point person for community groups who will update all community calendars regarding event information

Several years ago, the contract position of Coordinator for Communities in Bloom was eliminated. It was believed at the time that the volunteers would be able to coordinate themselves and the volunteers and the beautification efforts would continue. This has not been the case.

During this year's International Plowing Match & Rural Expo, local horticultural societies and beautification committees showed what they could do if they were provided with some coordination and support from the municipality; therefore, it is proposed that the Partnership Liaison would also be responsible for working with local horticultural societies, beautification committees and volunteers to help coordinate their efforts.

Each year the liaison will schedule and facilitate a meeting with the groups to develop a "theme" for the year that all can work towards, i.e. 2018-Marigolds and Machinery.

It is recommended to establish a prize fund for participants where the community can vote for a winner in a variety of categories: Voter's Choice, Best Aligned to Annual Theme, Best Youth Submission, etc. Voting can take place using the municipality's on-line community engagement tool, Let's Talk Chatham-Kent. Ideally, we will work to find corporate sponsorship, but would set aside \$1,000 towards monetary prizes if sponsors are not obtained.

### **Grants Communication**

Partnership Development use to provide information regarding grants to individuals via email. Emails are no longer sent to community groups due to a lack of access to grant information and Anti-Spam Legislation.

Information for these emails was obtained using Grant Connect, an online database providing information on grant opportunities from government, private and public sectors. Citizens could access the database from any municipal library branch.

To provide community groups with the ability to obtain grant funding, it is recommended to allocate base budget funds to Library Services for the purchase of the Grant Connect membership. It would cost approximately \$1,405 per year.

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation was passed in 2014, as a result, grant emails had to be discontinued. During the community meetings, the majority of the community groups indicated that they would appreciate information on grants to be shared with them. It is also recommended, that the municipality send grant information to our residents using the Anti-Spam Subscription Tool the municipality is using to send out media releases. It is proposed to include a section of the platform where individuals could go to the municipal website and fill in a form giving the municipality permission to send them emails regarding grants. Partnership Development has spoken to Information Technology Services. ITS is currently working on building a new subscription service. They will add the "grant" request to the scope of the project. The project is expected to be completed in February. There is no cost for the addition of this new subscription option.

Some examples of potential new grants are listed below. Each proposed grant program will need processes created and need to be approved by Council.

### **Canada Day Grants**

Canadians across the country and around the world show their pride in their history, cultures and achievements. Canada Day has been a day of celebration where many festivities are held across the country since 1868. In Chatham-Kent, several communities have hosted events to celebrate Canada's birthday, some of those communities have applied for funding through the Community Partnership Fund.

Many of the service groups that organize the events have indicated that the cost for fireworks has become cost prohibitive and would like some financial assistance in supporting their community's celebration.

To help alleviate the expense of fireworks, it is recommended to create a Canada Day grant, similar to Government of Canada's-Celebrate Canada granting program and set aside \$30,000 to be shared among the six wards evenly for fireworks displays. This would not hinder a group to apply for additional funding through the Events Grant Program for other Canada Day event expenses. For example, each ward would be allocated \$5,000; therefore, if there are two communities within the ward that host firework events, they will each be eligible for \$2,500 in funding.

### **Cultivating Neighbourhoods**

Strong neighbourhoods lead to a strong community. We should work together and develop strategies that complement CK's First Strategy. Where action plans are designed to help Chatham-Kent neighbourhoods be empowered, sustainable, safe and active communities, where they care for and celebrate each other while encouraging diversity and inclusiveness and will be environmentally and socially responsible and will

have available green space, vibrant local economies and accessible amenities of daily life.

To support this initiative and grass-root neighbourhood projects, it is recommended that a grant funding program be established called Cultivating Neighbourhoods. This will be a pilot project with the ability to add more programs to the fund. The first year will provide funding to community groups for the following projects: Establishing Neighbourhood Watch Programs with the assistance of Chatham-Kent Police Services, fund community clean-up projects and community and/or neighbourhood block parties. This program would be designed using information from a similar program implemented in the City of London, Ontario. <https://www.neighbourgoodlondon.ca/programs/>

It is recommended to put aside some funds for the program, with the following attributed to each stream of the program:

- Establishing Neighbourhood Watch Programs – to be determined based on CKPS estimation
- Community clean-up projects – Grant Total of \$3,000 to be shared equally across the ward – amount to each group will be dependent on the number of applications received – grant not to exceed \$250 per group
- Community and/or neighbourhood block parties - Grant Total of \$6,000 to be shared equally across each ward – amount to each group will be dependent on the number of applications received – grant not to exceed \$500 per group

## Senior Centres

There are eleven active adult/senior centers throughout Chatham-Kent that receive funding from the municipality. Those centres are: Active Lifestyle Centre (Ward 6); Blenheim and Community Senior Citizens Group (Ward 2); Bothwell Senior Citizens (Ward 3); Le Club de L'Amitie (Friendship Club) Pain Court (Ward 4); Merlin Senior Centre, which are required to provide specific financial information and reports annually in order to obtain the grant. Centres that receive a municipal grant are entitled based on the Elderly Persons Act, to receive funding from the provincial government.

The municipal and provincial grant, according to the Elderly Persons Act is calculated using the 2007-2008 net shareable expenditures. The total amount distributed annually is \$74,344 and has not increased for several years.

Although several centres are experiencing an increase in membership, revenue from membership fees has not increased at the same rate. Fees are kept low as many members are living on fixed incomes. Several of the centers have indicated that it is becoming increasingly more difficult to provide programming due to increasing costs and the fact that the provincial government has not change the method for calculating the grant.

It is proposed to increase the annual grant to senior centers and to work with Public Health to review the programs offered and provide additional funding to centres that provide programming that supports CK Plan 2035 and Public Health's strategic plan. The expected increase would need to be determined based on discussions with Community Health Services.

### **Senior Games**

Chatham-Kent has a very large contingent of citizens involved and participating in the annual Ontario 55+ Senior Games. Historically, the municipality provided a core grant that helped to subsidize the salary of the local senior games coordinator. With the redesign of the Core Grant program, this group has not received funding since the program has been revamped.

Partnership Development in 2016 conducted a service review and communicated with several Ontario municipalities to determine their level of financial and non-financial commitment to their local senior games committees. It was found that no municipality provided financial support to a committee unless the area was the host of the Ontario games and that some municipalities provide non-financial support in providing facilities where games could be hosted.

To support the CK Plan 2035 for a Healthy and Safe Community and to help promote active living for a CK population that is continuing to rise, it is recommended to provide \$5,000 annually to support the CK 55+ Senior Games.

### **Community Partnership Fund**

Each year, the municipality receives applications request funds in excess of the amount that the grant program has to distribute. It is recommended to increase the Community Partnership Fund (CPF) annually by \$63,000.

CPF-Core Grant Program: Current amount is \$237,000, it is proposed to increase the fund by \$53,000 for a total to be distributed annually of \$290,000.

CPF-Annual Program: Current amount is \$175,000, it is proposed to increase the fund by \$10,000 for a total to be distributed annually of \$185,000.

### **Theatre Rental & Risk Sharing**

Allow community groups to use municipal theaters at a reduced amount. Charge them enough to cover operating expenses for the time they are using the facility (i.e. utilities, cleaning staff, theatre staff, etc.), or create a policy to initially charge enough to cover limited operating expenses and then profit share with the group based on tickets sales (i.e. percentage of each ticket). Therefore, if the group sells more, the municipality earns more, but if the group does not sell all of the tickets, the service group does not lose money on the fundraising event. The financial impact of this solution is unknown at this time and would need to be discussed with culture and would require a business case.



## **Arenas**

Based on the community meetings, there are several issues regarding municipal arenas. The groups concerns are very extensive and would have a significant impact on the municipality's revenue from local arenas. A business case will need to be completed to determine what could be done to mitigate the groups' concerns.

A list of the concerns are, but not limited to: ice rental fees are too high, required to pay the same amount for ice whether a practice or game when a practice only has one employee at the facility, ice allocation policy is old and should be reviewed, ice allocation meetings occur too soon in the calendar year, way before any teams have been created or game schedules have been created, thus resulting in the teams having to purchase excess ice that results in a large impact on the teams' operating budgets, unable to return ice time unless the date is one month from the return date and not able to "sell" ice to other organizations that can use the scheduled times.

It is recommended to complete a business case to determine if the municipality could alleviate any of the groups many concerns.

## **Consultation**

Councillors were invited to attend community meetings within their ward. For those unable to attend, copies of the meeting minutes can be shared with them upon request. More consultation will be required with Councillors and administration to determine future projects.

## **Financial Implications**

The financial impact of this report is \$400,000 which would be held in a reserve until projects can be researched, processes created and reports provided to Council for approval of the projects.

This item will be included for discussion in the 2019 budget deliberations.

Prepared by: Reviewed by:

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Don Shropshire  
Chief Administrative Office

Attachment(s):

Appendix A: List of community groups

## Appendix A: List of community groups

Group Name	Ward
Active Lifestyle Centre	Ward 6
Agriculture Society Highgate	Ward 4
Beautification Committee Highgate	Ward 3
Blenheim BIA	Ward 2
Blenheim BIA	Ward 2
Blenheim BIA	Ward 2
Blenheim Blades Hockey	Ward 2
Blenheim Curling Club	Ward 2
Blenheim Curling Club	Ward 2
Blenheim Golden Eagles	Ward 2
Blenheim Legion	Ward 2
Blenheim Legion	Ward 2
Blenheim Masons	Ward 2
Blenheim Senior Centre	Ward 2
Blenheim Youth Centre	Ward 2
Blenheim Youth Centre	Ward 2
Chatham Concert Band	Ward 6
Chatham Girls Hockey Association	All Wards
Chatham Kinsmen	Ward 6
Chatham Sports Hall Of Fame	Ward 6
Concerned Citizens of Wheatley	Ward 1
Dover Fire Association	Ward 4
Dover Kinsmen	Ward 4
Dover Rod & Gun Club	Ward 4
Dresden Agricultural Society	Ward 4
Dresden BIA	Ward 4
Dresden Breakfast Program	Ward 4
Dresden Horticultural Society	Ward 4
Dresden IODE	Ward 4
Dresden Kings Hockey	Ward 3
Dresden Kinsmen	Ward 3
Dresden Medical Centre	Ward 4
Dresden Ministerial	Ward 4
Erieau Community Association	Ward 2
Flying W's Gymnastics	Ward 5
Flying W's Gymnastics	Ward 5
Friends of Two Creek	Ward 1
Grande Point Park Committee	Ward 4
Highgate Legion	Ward 3
Kayo Boxing Club	Ward 6

Group Name	Ward
Ken Havoc Rugby	Ward 6
Knights of Columbus	Ward 5
Knights of Columbus-Pain Court	Ward 4
Knights of Pythias	Ward 5
Legion - Chatham	Ward 6
Mary Webb Centre	Ward 3
Merlin Friendship Club	Ward 1
Mitchell's Bay Association	Ward 3
Morpeth Community Hall	Ward 3
Morpeth Heritage Club (Senior Centre)	Ward 4
Optimist Club - Chatham	Ward 6
Pain Court Senior Centre	Ward 3
Pool Sharks	All Wards
Pretty in Pink Dover	Ward 4
Project "D" Music Festival	Ward 5
Ridgetown 4H association	Ward 3
Ridgetown 4H Association	Ward 3
Ridgetown and Area Adult Centre	Ward 3
Ridgetown BIA/Chambers of Commerce	Ward 3
Ridgetown Horticultural Society	Ward 3
Ridgetown Horticultural Society	Ward 3
Ridgetown Kiwanis	Ward 3
Ridgetown Legion	Ward 3
Ridgetown Rotary	Ward 3
Senior Games	All Wards
Southwestern Outdoors Club	Ward 1
Sydenham Curling Club	Ward 5
Sydenham Curling Club	Ward 5
Sydenham Field Naturalists	Ward 5
Theatre Kent	Ward 6
Veterans Support Group	Ward 5
Veterans Tribute Garden	Ward 6
Wallaceburg Adult Centre	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Adult Centre	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Airhawks	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Antique Motor Boat Outing (WAMBO)	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Arts Council	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Canoe and Kayak	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Dragon Boat Races	Ward 5

Group Name	Ward
Wallaceburg Kinsmen	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Lakers	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Legion	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Ministerial	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Minor Baseball	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Minor Hockey	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Minor Lacrosse	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Minor Soccer	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Neighbourhood Watch	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Rotary	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Rotary	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Task Force	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Theater	Ward 5
Wallaceburg Theatre Group/Production Company	Ward 5
Wheatley BIA	Ward 1
Wheatley Horticultural Society	Ward 1
Wheatley Legion Branch 324	Ward 1
Wheatley Lion and Lioness Club	Ward 1
Wheatley Lions and Lioness Club	Ward 1
Wheatley Minor Soccer	Ward 1
Wheatley Omstead Sharks	Ward 1
Wheatley Skating Association	Ward 1