



Administration and Operations Committee Report

To: To the Chair and Members of the Administration and Operations Committee
From: Zach Gable, Acting Director Economic Development and Tourism
Date: December 13, 2022
Report #: RPT-0525-22
Subject: Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum - Post-Event Update
Purpose: For Information

Recommendation

THAT RPT-0525-22, dated December 13, 2022, be received as information.

Strategic Plan Priority

Strategic Priority 3 - Economic Resilience

Impacts and Mitigation

Social Impacts

The forum was an opportunity to highlight the importance of agriculture and the County of Brant's initiatives to support the sector.

Economic Impacts

There are no expected budgetary impacts. The event utilized several local businesses which resulted in a positive economic impact and additional spending from visitors to the County.

Report

Background

On November 2 and 3, 2022, the County of Brant hosted the 14th Annual Municipal Agricultural Economic Development and Planning (MAEDP) Forum. Marketed as the Agri-Food Forum, the event was targeted at Municipal Economic Development and Planning staff from across Ontario. The two-day event included a bus tour of County agricultural businesses and a hybrid forum with topics on a range of agricultural economic development topics. The 2022 MAEDP Forum was the first in-person edition of the event since 2019 and was hosted at the TownePlace Suites by Marriot Brantford and Conference Centre. The theme of the event was Tradition, Innovation and Regeneration, farms and speakers were chosen to highlight this theme.

Analysis

The event was well attended with 58 registrants for the Day 1 tour, 80 in-person registrants and speakers for Day 2 as well 30 virtual attendees.

Several County of Brant initiatives were highlighted including:

- The County's On-Farm-Diversified-Use Policy
- The GRCA's Rural Water Quality Program which is funded by the County
- Conestoga's Agriculture Equipment Operator Program which was developed in partnership with the County of Brant, SCOR EDC, and the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
- The Agricultural Systems approach to planning utilized in the County's Draft Official Plan
- The County's ISO designation through the World Council on City Data (WCCD) and specifically, it's connection to the Agricultural sector

Day 1 Bus tour included tours of Kevin Hodge Farms, Slaman's Quality Flowers new greenhouse operation, Steel Wheel Brewery, and Brantview Apples and Cider. The farms chosen connected to the theme of Tradition, Innovation and Regeneration as well showcased trends around crop diversification, succession planning and On-Farm-Diversified-Uses. Some further lessons learned through the tour included the importance of infrastructure and the impact of global events on local farm operations.

Key topics for Day 2 included:

- Keynote address on global trends as they related to agriculture,
- Workforce development challenges,
- Agriculture, environment, and partnerships,
- Agricultural systems approach to municipal planning

The full agenda is included as Attachment 1. Feedback on the event was very positive, from the evaluations received 75% stated they were very satisfied with the event, and the remaining 25% were satisfied. The Bus tour was especially well received with all respondents rating it as "Excellent". Relevant evaluation responses are included as Attachment 2.

Summary

The County of Brant hosted a successful event that demonstrated the Corporation's capabilities and assets to a wide audience. Showcasing the County's agricultural assets and targeted initiatives to support the sector, will continue as part of the 2023 workplan.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Agri-Food Forum Agenda

Attachment 2: Survey Responses

Reviewed By

Alison Newton, General Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Copied To

Russell Press, Director, Economic Development & Tourism

By-law and/or Agreement

By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No