
From: Andre Gougeon

Sent: Monday, March 11, 2019 11:05 AM

To: Nina Bifulchi and Council

Subject: Mark Crowe's article/letter in beach BOOSTER publication – February 2019

I would like to first thank Mark for his commentary. I applaud him because he recognizes what is going on at the Beach. I am a small part time tax practitioner and I have seen two of my clients move their business' offices out of the Beach because of the absence or shortage of commercial and industrial businesses . They still reside here and everyday , one travels to Vaughn, a second travels to Mississauga .Another client chose to locate in Collingwood because of the lack of high schools, his main source of clients. A fourth client closed his long standing restaurant because he experienced a steady decline of summer visitors over the past 5 years- locals cannot support many restaurant, witness how many are closing in recent years.

Its abundantly clear to see we have lost many Summer visitors. One only has to look at the city's empty parking lots. I doubt very much that anyone would be interested in purchasing one of the many establishments on Beach ! because when they perform their due diligence they will quickly determine the steady decline of visitors. Instead of going back to square ZERO for planning and tossing out 4 years of efforts to make a difference, the current council should be building on what has already been accomplished and planned.

Its clear to me that this council is only interested in establishing a retirement community - like Kirkland lake. I doubt this council has a long term plan, let alone a short term plan. If we are going the "retirement " way then let us know so we can make personal plans.

Regards

Andre Gougeon

AGFS Financial Services

On Monday, March 11, 2019, 1:57:09 p.m. EDT, Nina Bifulchi wrote:

Good afternoon Mr. Gougeon,

Thank you for your email and sharing your thoughts with council.

The steps and decisions made over the past three months since this council was sworn into office, are not reflective of a council who is only interested in establishing a retirement community.

Council has set 11 main priorities which can be found on the town's website. Of these it includes development of the beachfront, twin pad arena, library and support for the private sector in growing and diversifying the tax base. This council is very progressive, but wants to ensure we are responsible and following policy, process and legislation along the way.

I have faith in our Council to ensure the needs of the entire community are met. Over the coming weeks we will be discussing more topics that affect our community and I hope you keep up to date on these.

Sincerely,

Nina

Mayor, Town of Wasaga Beach

From: Andre Gougeon

Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2019 10:18 AM

To: Nina Bifulchi and Council

Subject: Re: Mark Crowe 's article

Thank you Madam Mayor.

I have read and re - read the council's priorities before I responded. I frankly do not see anything specific and awe inspiring. There is nothing in these priorities that leads me to conclude the town has a defined short and long term strategic plan complete with specified action plans and timetables. Each action plan should be accompanied with the resources required to achieve the desired outcome. For example, how much will it cost, does the town have the internal resources to accomplish , etc..

Eight (8) priorities are motherhood issues and anyone could have them included in the list - non starters. Two (2) are carry over from prior periods and the last is about to be set back four years because of internal political differences rather than being used as a basis to build on.

I want to start with the # 9 priority. This should be the very first priority. Our biggest asset is the Beach. The council should have dozens of action plans to restore the Beach's attraction to past years. What is the town doing to bring back the estimated 1.5 million people who have stopped coming here. First order is to stop the erosion. What is the town doing to promote the Beach. What is the town doing to keep the Francophones from Quebec to return to the Beach. The town has lost most of its major events / attractions. Edenvale has taken over the major concert that at one time was held at the Beach. Soon to follow to Edenvale will be the bikers, the snowmobile races and I fear the Blues festival and the kite event will be tested.

Here are some off the wall suggestions:

- 1) Build a pedestrian mall (without cars) on the beachfront and encourage new types of restaurants / cafes with outside seating to open. Not everyone wants to sit upstairs on the patio of a bar.
- 2) Erect a body building fenced in area
- 3) Erect a seating stand facing the Notawasaga river and reboot the water event we have enjoyed in the past. Build this as a world class event
- 4) Build a small (height) concrete wall to stop the sand erosion

Priority # 1. If the location of the Casino is not close to beach 1 or 2 you can forget redeveloping the downtown and beachfront areas. Serious business people will chase the Casino. Developers will build hotels, condo hotels. Good restaurants will follow. A casino will generate secondary businesses. If the Casino is located anywhere on 26 you can be sure that visitors will turn left instead of right towards the Beach. Our catchment potential visitors will not be coming from the East when one can go to Georgian Downs or Rama.

You can forget about selling the town's properties on Beach 1. Business people will conduct a due diligence and they will learn that that our market share of visitors has been in a perilous down spin and that the town has not shown any concrete plan to change the course and they will stay away.

What is the town doing to keep the existing businesses open for business?? Restaurant come and go for a variety of reasons. But none so important as the traffic. Our commercial malls are rife with for sale

or rent signs. Its a real shame that current owners are not made aware of the location of the Casino. Those that are hanging by a thread might stick around. Those that are prosperous might consider expansion and / or improvements.

Council should be asking why we lost the relocation of Parkbrige's head office to Collingwood. Were there any inducement offered in an attempt to keep them in The Beach?

Its a real shame that we are going back to the drawing board for the development of the downtown. We paid to get advice from the best planners and we opted for Fram, a quality developer. We invested time and money for what?? Simply put political differences. To me what is in place is a go. Blow the whistle and start developing. Fram has the private investment to get this accomplished. I for one do not wish to go through another four years.

I realize the our governments will give you the money to reboot, because that's what they do. Money is no object , it's not theirs and they do love to waste it.

Priority # 2: Those have been on the books for quite a while. The location of the Library has been studied to infinitude. The library polled the citizenship several years back and the debate about location has been put to bed. Is the town considering Stonebridge's proposal for land ???

Instead of building a twin pad arena council should be looking at a single rink with seating for 3-4,000 people and promote concerts, conferences,etc..

I note the high school is out. I knew instinctively Simcoe would never allow an high school where the majority of citizens are retired seniors.

It was never my goal to turn this into somewhat of a treatise but I am a very concerned citizen and I see nothing good with these priorities. Every priority, every goal , every single action plan needs to be aligned with the location of the Casino. And let the citizens know as soon as possible!

Thank you for the opportunity to vent my frustrations and concerns

Andre
AGFS Financial Services
Andre Gougeon CGA MBA

From: Nina Bifulchi

Sent: Mar 16, 9:11 am

To: Andre Gougeon

Good morning Mr. Gougeon,

As stated in my earlier email, I have faith in our Council to ensure the needs of the entire community are met. We have been in office for a little over three months now and are setting the stage for great things to come. This must be done in a responsible fashion.

Council has set 11 priorities which will be addressed through further action items as well as consideration in this year and years to come budgets.

Sincerely,
Nina
Mayor, Town of Wasaga Beach

From: Andre Gougeon
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 12:11 PM
To: Nina Bifulchi and Council
Subject: Downtown Development

Your assurances to stay the course with your objectives is not very reassuring., because it speaks nothing about the casino. That will be the biggest initiative of your council. You need to decide its location without any further delay. The businesses in town need to know to make plans .

Do not relinquish your responsibility to the businesses of the Beach. Do not let the operators decide the location. They are in it for the money and could not care less about the citizens.

If you locate it near our beaches, your Downtown Development aspirations will take care of themselves, new businesses will follow the casino. If the casino is located on 26 many of our local businesses will fail. Restaurants will close, retail strips will have increased vacancies, big store operators will renegotiate their leases with the landlords, seasonal vacationers will be drawn away from local rental properties, etc.

Please make the right call now.

Regards Andre

AGFS Financial Services

From: Nina Bifulchi
To: Andre Gougeon
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2019, 1:02:38 p.m. EDT
Subject: RE: Downtown Development

Mr. Gougeon,

Growing up in a family of entrepreneurs and small business owners I can tell you that at no time has my family expected the municipality they were located in nor another business entity to keep them afloat. If the expectation of some in our business community is that a casino will save their business from failure that is unfortunate to hear. To expect Council to insist the casino be located in one area of town to "save" some businesses at the expense of others would be irresponsible and unfair.

The Town has played their role in the site selection for a casino. Five sites have been approved and now Gateway, who is a business, will choose the location that works best for them.

My hope is that an announcement will be made in the near future as to what site Gateway has chosen.

Have a great day.

Nina

Mayor, Town of Wasaga Beach