

Subject: Expediting the recruitment & hiring of an Economic Development Officer

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Council.

In light of the unprecedented circumstances under which Grimsby and the World are currently operating, I write to you as a resident of Grimsby and as a member of Grimsby's Economic Development Advisory Committee **to express my support for expediting the recruitment and hiring of an Economic Development Officer (EDO).**

In a matter of weeks, the world has seen the devastating impact of the coronavirus on financial markets and vulnerable industries. This crisis will undeniably have lasting effects on every community in Canada. In this, our experience is a collective one. However, **how individual communities respond to this crisis will differentiate us by defining how well and how quickly each of those communities will recover.**

Communities with an Economic Development Officer dedicated to coordinating a response to the crisis will be in a better position to lead the community's resiliency and recovery efforts over communities lacking this resource. By expediting the hiring of an EDO who can quickly jump into action, **the Town of Grimsby will be better able to address important gaps created by this crisis**, including, but not limited to:

1. Organizational capacity

A dedicated resource focused on recovery and rebuilding efforts can provide the local business community with the engagement and economic development leadership they require; this will allow existing Town staff to resume important tasks that are vital for the effective operation of our municipality.

2. Communication

By enabling the flow of consistent and accurate information between businesses and the Town, the EDO can reduce confusion, frustration and panic that can otherwise aggravate recovery challenges. Furthermore, the development of a formal communication platform and initiatives like a Business Retention and Expansion program can serve as mechanisms to collect qualitative and quantitative data about the impacts of this crisis.

3. Analysis & Strategy

Data is a critical tool in advancing recovery efforts. Intelligence gathered can be used to create strategies that address the community's evolving needs and be leveraged to advocate for federal and provincial resources.

4. Collaboration

An EDO can develop and coordinate collaborative response and recovery efforts that engage key economic stakeholders such as neighbouring communities, local chambers of commerce, workforce development organizations, the media, local post-secondary institutions, and key local businesses and organizations.

5. Facilitation

By staying abreast of evolving funding opportunities, an EDO can facilitate business success by connecting local businesses to public and private programs and resources as they become available.

6. Advocacy

Ongoing dialogue that an EDO can have with the federal and provincial governments is critical to ensuring Grimsby is continually communicating priorities and advocating on our behalf for available resources.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present my recommendation to expedite the hiring of an Economic Development Officer in Grimsby. Our world will undoubtedly be different as a result of COVID-19 so we need someone to begin the work today that will guide our businesses in their transition to the new economy. How Grimsby responds to this crisis today will ultimately define how well and how quickly our community can thrive again.

Alejandra Wichartz