

Downtown News to 'Feel Good' About

[Original text except for Table of Contents, coming soon and "News Coverage".]



A Message from Deputy Mayor Stan Frost

Hello everyone. This is my final opportunity to communicate with you about the downtown vitalization project. By the time this newsletter reaches you, the 2014 municipal election will be past history and there will be a number of new faces and personalities on Cobourg Council including a new Deputy Mayor. One thing I can say for sure though is that the Town of Cobourg is fully committed to a sustained and successful effort with respect to the vitalization of our downtown. That will not change.

As your current Deputy Mayor, I have been very much involved in the Vitalization initiative from the very beginning. We have moved through an assessment and planning phase and we are now in the early stages of implementation. A number of the 12 projects that make up the initiative have been completed and more will follow soon.

In getting us to where we are now on this large and complex project, I want to express appreciation on behalf of the Town for the significant volunteer help we received in conducting the surveys and analyzing the results. I also want to take this opportunity to thank other organizations in our Town for their considerable help, the DBIA and the Chamber of Commerce for their valued assistance. We now have a plan and we will work the plan.

Like many of you, I want to see quick results. I can tell you though that downtown vitalization is a complex and multi-faceted challenge. It is not conducive to instant gratification. We will make steady and sustained progress. We will succeed!

The project is now in the hands of an "action team". This team is made up of a number of senior Town staff including the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Directors of Planning and Public Works. Overall project management is being provided by Wendy Gibson, our Economic Development Officer. Project status is reviewed at team meetings every few weeks.

At this stage, the tendering for way finding signage is in progress. In addition, the venture initiative business plan and the tourism asset study will soon be completed. A group has been assembled to guide the art work and physical improvements to the Henley Arcade. We will see results in these areas in the near future.

Thanks again to everyone for your support.

Sincerely,

Stan Frost
Deputy Mayor

Project Update: 3D Virtual Tour



As part of the Downtown Master Plan the Town of Cobourg is looking into creating a 3D Web Based Virtual Tour of Downtown Cobourg. This virtual tour will help depict existing downtown buildings and incorporate the renderings created of our future downtown including directional, gateway and parking signs, beautification and other improvements. Future additions will include second and third floor living units and revamped retail and commercial space.

Using the existing 3D model created in 2013, the Town will incorporate updates and this will become the basis for creation of a new web-friendly version of the downtown. This will become part of an updated Downtown Cobourg business based website to be used as a marketing tool and a resource for starting a business in the downtown.

The 3D Web Based Model will become a tool to show investors our aspirations while depicting and detailing the opportunities available in Downtown Cobourg.

This 3D Web Based Virtual tour was a key element of the Downtown Vitalization Action Plan however 2014 budget constraints witnessed its removal. Overtures will be made to Council during upcoming budget deliberations to have this element reinstated so that the Town can take advantage of existing Provincial funds for this initiative.

For more information on the 3D Web Based Virtual Tour contact Wendy Gibson, Economic Development Officer at The Town of Cobourg by calling 905-372-5481 or emailing wgibson@cobourg.ca.

Project Update: Keeping You Informed via the Project Billboard



The Marketing & Communications team has been busy figuring out ways to continually keep citizens informed. Through radio campaigns, on air interviews, newspaper articles, the creation of an eNewsletter 'Downtown News to Feel Good About', presentations to Council, a Volunteer Appreciation & Open House event and the use of social media the team is continually striving to ensure citizens are in the know.

Another addition to this goal has been the creation of the Downtown Vitalization Project Billboard, an 8 x 20 foot poster board that captures all of the Downtown Vitalization projects, start and end dates and a summary for each. This billboard is set to be installed on the wall at 1 King Street East.

"It is our hope that this billboard will help showcase the many projects that are being worked on or have been completed," said Ashley Purdy, Communications Officer for The Town of Cobourg. "We want the downtown revitalization to be successful, and in order to do so we need to communicate to our stakeholders, business owners and our citizens. You simply cannot communicate enough! With so many projects on the go this visual board will keep our citizens up-to-date and knowledgeable."

Both Cobourg Council and the Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee have approved the billboard.

The billboard will be unveiled within the month of November.

For more information on the Project Billboard contact Ashley Purdy, Communications Officer at The Town of Cobourg by emailing apurdy@cobourg.ca.



Interview: Ryan Breaks Down his YEP Experience for Us!

We chat with Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP) candidate Ryan Barrett on his experience running his downtown business Tech-Tonics, a computer repair, sales, service and training business located downtown Cobourg at 48 King Street West.

Q. With the Youth Entrepreneurship Program now complete for the summer tell us some of your most memorable experiences.

A: Throughout the duration of the Youth Entrepreneurship Program I had many great experiences. Many times I would have a customer who was very satisfied with the service I had provided to them, for example something relatively simple to me like cleaning up their computer. In the next little while I would have another customer come in who would say that one of my previous customers who was really happy with the repair I had done had recommend me to them. One of the nicest things I saw were people who had read the front page article about my business in the newspaper and came in with the intention of supporting me and making my business a success. I was also surprised at the number of friends excited to help out with setting up the store and helping with various things along the way.

Community support was huge and there were a lot of people who ended up helping me out a lot, I even received used furniture from multiple people and memberships to various organizations. I didn't even ask for any of this, they just wanted to help.

Q. Did you have to make any changes to your business due to customer feedback?

A: There were a number of changes I made to my business, both things I saw which needed revision and customer recommendations. One small change which greatly improved my operations was to create a repair ticket system. Initially I thought I would be able to keep track of what was wrong with every device and who it belonged to, as I had previously been doing this for the last few years. However I hugely underestimated the demand for my services and was quickly overwhelmed. That's when my organization began to break down. Simple things like opening up a laptop that seemed to be working just fine, although I knew something must be wrong with it if it was in my store. Another time having a customer walk in and not knowing which device was theirs. To avoid all these problems I set up a sheet for me which detailed what the problem was and a claim slip for the customer that matched up with my sheet. This system greatly streamlined my business.

Another change I made early on was to stop advertising. Following a few newspaper articles and a few other method of advertising I found myself much busier than I had expected and on the verge of how much I could handle.

Q. Did you feel that your business was a success? Why or why not?

A: I feel my business was very successful. Going into the program I was prepared that even if I only made a small profit I would be satisfied as the real success would be in what I learned. The business ended up being very profitable and I learned a lot. Exposing myself to a vast number of problems taught me more than you could ever learn taking courses in the various areas.

Q. Would you do anything differently if you were to open again next summer?

A: If I was to open up next summer in the same location the biggest thing I would do differently would be hiring at least one employee. This would have reduced the excessive work load I had and allowed me to take on additional jobs.

Q. What can you tell us about being an entrepreneur and will you consider entrepreneurship in your future?

A: Being an entrepreneur is a lot of work, very satisfying but time consuming. I often found myself working almost 18 hours a day just to keep up with all the work I had to do. If I didn't love what I was doing I simply wouldn't have been successful. In the future entrepreneurship is definitely strong career option. Being flexible in how you do things and being in control of how everything works is a great luxury.

Q. Would you recommend others apply to the YEP program?

A: I would definitely recommend others apply to the YEP program. It is a lot of work but the experience you gain is invaluable and the potential to earn a good profit is very high if done right. I personally had a great experience with the program and hope that many other entrepreneurs in the future have similarly great experiences themselves.

For more information on the Youth Entrepreneurship Program contact Wendy Gibson, Economic Development Officer at The Town of Cobourg by emailing wgibson@cobourg.ca or calling 905-372-5481.