



Business Focus Group Meeting

With the assistance of the Truro and Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity, planning staff held a focus group for the business community on October 28th, 2020. Brennan Gillis from TCPEP served as the moderator. There were 17 attendees who participated in this evening event and who provided much insight into the business community of the Tatamagouche area. Many thanks from both the Municipality and TCPEP to those who came to this meeting.

The focus group was presented with five key areas to discuss which came directly from the results of the business survey, circulated earlier in October to the business community. One main question in each area was asked to begin the discussions, which generated some great feedback. This is what we heard:

1. Customer Attraction Support

What would bring more customer traffic to your business in off/shoulder seasons?

Issues

- It is difficult to get into contact with all the Tatamagouche businesses to collaborate
 - No coordination between businesses preparing for fall and Christmas season
- People do not visit Tatamagouche when they stay in Wentworth
- People do not have places to stay in the off season - the motel is closed
- Housing is a big issue for staff

Solutions

- Collaboration amongst main street businesses – having a space for everyone to meet
- Shuttle service between Tatamagouche and the ski hill
- The municipality should offer solutions which have worked elsewhere, examples from conferences
- There should be a downtown business improvement committee

2. Transportation

Where and how would this best benefit business?

Issues:

- Tatamagouche train was supposed to provide transportation for residents but was taken over by tourists - locals cannot rely on it
- It is difficult to have a night life when people cannot walk to the downtown
- Taxi service is needed but insurance is a barrier - too expensive
- It is challenging for seniors to get around - especially to Truro

- There is not clear signage on where you can park and where you can't
- Everyone tries to park on main street

Solutions

- Uber - investigate if Uber is an option in rural environments
- Tour bus for a wine tour - use on weekends for tours and repurpose throughout the week for transit - extend shoulder season
- Get employees to park in lots and leave main street for customers
- People still treat main street like a highway. Main street should be more walkable, vibrant, and slow down traffic

3. Planning and Development

What can Colchester further support you with or improve upon?

Issues

- Difficult to find out information on building code as a business owner - can cause delays in opening
- Lack of coordination and communication between different levels of government
- Not able to pay for permits online or with a credit card
- Inconsistency with other municipalities in what is required for permits, ex: needing engineered stamped plans when other places do not require.
 - Competitive disadvantage, if it is easier in other municipalities or towns, people will open their business there

Solutions

- Investigate the opportunity for the use of credit card as payment for permits

4. Recreation and Active Transportation

What is missing in Tatamagouche to generate more business traffic?

Issues

- There is not enough signage - tourists who walk down to creamery square and walk back up because they do not know where to go
- The downtown core is busy Saturday morning but dies off in the afternoon because there is no reason to come back after lunch, business close and there is nothing to do.

Solutions

- There needs to be more outdoor patios, evening entertainment, more things to encourage people to come back in the evenings
- Seasonal uses for the trail

5. Downtown Beautification

What ideas do you have as business owners to beautify the village?

Issues

- Buildings fall into disrepair because zoning does not allow for certain uses
- Tatamagouche looks unkept and unprofessional until you get downtown
- Beautification is not financially viable for all business owners

Solutions

- Mixed use development
- Branding for the village - creation of identity
 - Cohesive theme among signage
- Bring in a graphic designer to help businesses with signage
- More art, trees, water features, and benches to create identity and sense of place
- Seasonal decorations and lighting
- A grant or funding to help businesses who want to improve their look - facade program