

Sent: September 28, 2020 2:26 PM

To: Mayor Canniff <darrin.canniff@chatham-kent.ca>; Melissa Harrigan <melissa.harrigan@chatham-kent.ca>; Anthony Ceccacci <anthony.ceccacci@chatham-kent.ca>; Aaron Hall <aaron.hall@chatham-kent.ca>; Clare Latimer <clarel@chatham-kent.ca>; Trevor Thompson <trevor.thompson@chatham-kent.ca>; Steve Pinsonneault <steve.pinsonneault@chatham-kent.ca>; John Wright <john.wright@chatham-kent.ca>; Joe Faas <joe.faas@chatham-kent.ca>; jamie.mcgrail@chatham-kent.ca; Carmen McGregor <carmen.mcgregor@chatham-kent.ca>; Michael Bondy <michael.bondy@chatham-kent.ca>; Marjorie Crew <marjorie.crew@chatham-kent.ca>; Amy Finn <amy.finn@chatham-kent.ca>; Karen Kirkwood-Whyte <karen.kirkwood-whyte@chatham-kent.ca>; Brock McGregor <brock.mcgregor@chatham-kent.ca>; Doug Sulman <douglas.sulman@chatham-kent.ca>; mark.athier@chatham-kent.ca

Cc: Peter Fantuz <peter.fantuz@intellitix.com>

Subject: Council re: Council Growth and Recovery Strategy

Dear Mayor Canniff and Chatham-Kent Councillors:

Tonight will bring about another opportunity for Council to provide vision as we forge into the future of Chatham-Kent.

As Chair of the Board of Directors of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce, I bring the voice of our 350 members across the municipality, members of diverse sectors and employee numbers. Earlier this year, we informed Council that these members, on average, boasted 9 employees + 3 family members associated with each, representing approximately 20% of this community's population. While we maintain the strength of a healthy membership, I suggest the stated employee numbers are lesser during these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic as business owners and managers endure the struggles of the crisis.

Several months ago the Economic Recovery Task Force was created to find issues that were ailing business and organizations across Chatham-Kent. We were pleased to provide over 65% representation of our Board of Directors, including our President & CEO, as Co-Chairs and Members of the various sector sub-committees assisting and backing this initiative. Positively, Council adopted the Task Force recommendations put forward, showing their support to overcome the pandemic handicaps. Municipal Administration has now implemented many of the recommendations and has plans to embrace many more. Unfortunately, business and not for profit organizations are seeing the effects of a long and extended timeline to a health and economic crisis that should have now been long behind them. More needs to be done.

This is the time for Council to be creative and bold in creating new strategy for the Municipality, looking at short and long-term investment. All options need be considered.

While we recognize some businesses have been fortunate through this crisis, many are struggling. The current conditions put on business is overwhelming for some, challenging their fiscal and mental health. We ask Council to provide the initiative to help all Chatham-Kent business to see the opportunity of a prosperous future.

To Mayor and Council, businesses are dealing with challenging times, times when Council can provide strong support, innovation and leadership. I recognize it will take difficult decisions, some risks taken and may stretch your comfort boundaries. Council members need to take stance like never seen before in the history of Chatham-Kent.

I am certain, with your leadership, all will be welcomed as we can envision a brighter future ahead.

Yours in Prosperity,
Peter Fantuz
Chair of the Board
Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce