

# Summary Notes

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**Date:** February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**Subject:** Mayor's Roundtable on Economic Development

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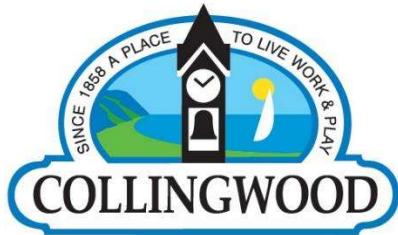
**Date:** February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**Time:** 10:03 a.m. – 11:42 a.m.  
**Location:** Collingwood Public Library  
55 Ste Marie St, Collingwood, ON L9Y 0W6  
Community Room C, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Attendees:**

- Town of Collingwood Economic Development Staff
- Georgian Bay Hotel
- VanderMarck Boutique Hotel
- Somewhere Inn (previously known as 11 Rooms)
- Theatre Collingwood
- South Georgian Bay Tourism
- Regional Tourism Organisation 7 (RTO7)
- Tourism Simcoe County
- Collingwood BIA
- Comfort Inn
- Dunncap Hospitality (Holiday Inn Express and Candlewood)
- The Collingwood Brewery
- Dorchester Hotel/MVP Holdings
- Aragon Restaurants
- Joseph Lawrence House

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced at 10:03 am. Manager Griggs welcomed everyone in attendance and noted that an emergency meeting of Council had been called and the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors Perry and Houston had been delayed in attending the roundtable discussion. Manager Griggs assumed the role of the Chair in Mayor Hamlin's absence. Manager Griggs introduced the topic for discussion noting that following consultation with key stakeholders and a public survey regarding a proposed Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) a framework was developed and will be presented for discussion. The discussion from today's round table will be used to inform recommendations to Council regarding implementation of a MAT.

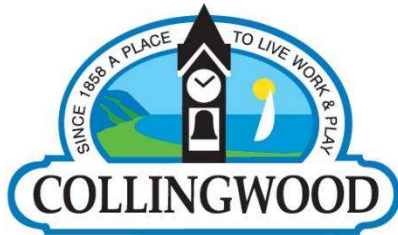


## **2. Municipal Accommodation Tax – presentation by Manager Griggs**

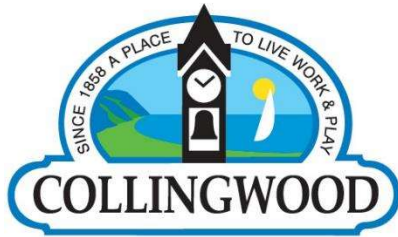
Manager Griggs presented an overview of the proposed Municipal Accommodation Tax which included: what is a MAT?, objectives of a MAT, Collingwood tourism context, Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, consultation with accommodation providers, survey results and municipal decision points. An overview of the proposed framework of the MAT was also presented, which included: recommended application of MAT, recommended rate, proposed remittance to Ontario Resort, Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA), Recommended Eligible Not for Profit (NFP), Eligible NFP-Alternative Options, Recommended NFP Board Composition, NFP Administration options, Rationale and Municipal Portion Funds. The next steps are to adjust the framework based on industry feedback, present the report to Council and prepare implementation contract with a goal to implement January 1, 2025, however the timeline could be changed to be in-line with Town of the Blue Mountains' MAT implementation and phase 2 of STA licencing.

## **3. Roundtable Discussion**

- Concern was raised that any tax would be detrimental to society and there would be a loss in revenue due to implementation of a MAT, cost for collection would be taken from gross revenue.
- Comment that there are different markets, ex. B&B vs. Hotel, could be unaffordable for some users.
- Positive view for MAT-destination marketing can increase supply. Examples of Prince Edward County and Niagara focusing marketing directly towards tourism with great success.
- Question raised about forming a NFP vs. using Southern Georgian Bay Tourism. Industry is not supportive of designating South Georgian Bay Tourism as the eligible tourism entity because Collingwood would be subsidizing the regional marketing as the majority municipal funder. However, there was support for continued regional approach with some of the revenue.
- Participants agreed that more mid-week business is needed, weekend business is strong. If MAT can't attract more mid-week business than it wouldn't be worth implementing. Manager Griggs noted that the objectives of the MAT would be getting people to stay longer and spend more money.
- Question was raised regarding creating an NFP and using an outside administrator instead of using Town staff. Manager Griggs noted that the NFP is to ensure the funds go directly to supporting tourism in Collingwood, have looked at successful models in other communities. Using an outside administrator is more cost effective than retaining in-house staff.



- Clarification was given regarding Town of the Blue Mountains' proposed MAT. Manager Griggs noted that they are in the same phase as Collingwood and are also proposing a rate of 4%, which is not locked in, similar to the rate proposed for Collingwood.
- Question was raised about how the 50% of the MAT collected by the Town is used. Manager Griggs noted that it is at the discretion of council, however staff strongly recommend that the funds be allocated specifically towards tourism initiatives.
- Comment from accommodator that people who come to Collingwood also visit TBM and other areas and are we just funding other municipalities initiatives? Manager Griggs commented that staff feel we should market regionally as well and need to explore options with our tourism strategy. She hopes that TBM will consider Collingwood as well.
- Question as to whether the Town would consider not implementing a MAT. Manager Griggs noted that there appears to be strong political appetite to implement a MAT given the likelihood of neighbouring municipalities implementing the same. Industry had previously indicated an interest in ensuring a regional approach to MAT in consideration of TBM which staff have taken into consideration regarding rate and timelines.
- Would be beneficial to promote the arts in Collingwood (theatre, visual, culinary) to people outside of our region. Comment that Collingwood has a lot more to offer other than skiing, golf and trails.
- Municipal portion of MAT revenue should not subsidize general tax rate to reduce increases.
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- Municipal portion should be allocated in addition to existing budgets for Town assets/events impacting tourism, not replace existing funding.
- Industry would like more than 50% of the revenue be provided to the eligible tourism entity. They were supportive of 60% or 70% but would prefer 100% be used for tourism promotion and development.
- Industry identified the need to have a strong voice in the governance of the promotional portion of the revenue and ensure that the industry is collectively represented.
- Governance should minimize administrative costs and maximize funds to invest in the tourism industry.
- Industry identified the need to develop more products, including events, for visitors to encourage longer stays, especially mid-week and shoulder season.
- Maximum MAT rate suggested by industry is 4%.



- Question was raised regarding timing and if implementation could wait until interest rates go down or until TBM implements their MAT and learn from them? Manager Griggs commented that there are many factors which will affect the timing of the MAT.
- Accommodators need time to plan, would not want to charge the MAT to users that have pre-booked, would want the MAT to only be for new bookings.
- Industry expressed an interest in having an opportunity to meet with the Mayor and/or members of Council appointed to the Roundtable.

#### **4. Wrap-up and Next Steps**

Another meeting will be scheduled, with the possibility of smaller representative groups, to include Council members as unfortunately they were unable to attend due to the emergency council meeting. Feedback from today's roundtable will be used to provide recommendations to Council regarding the proposed MAT Framework. The meeting concluded at 11:42 am.