

Date: February 5, 2021

Re: In response to an invitation by Alyssa Keller, member of the Municipality of South Huron Climate Change Adaptation Committee (SHCCAC), to provide suggestions on how communications and promotions could be used to support the success of a proposed Community Forum virtual/online public webinar series, here are some suggestions from SHCCAC committee member Tim Cumming, Communications Specialist with Ausable Bayfield Conservation, for consideration of Stacey Jeffery, MES CPT, Climate Change Officer, Municipality of South Huron; and Coun. Marissa Vaughan, SHCCAC member, as they prepare their information report for South Huron Council:

MEDIA RELATIONS

The preparation of a municipally-approved news release would be advantageous to confirm messaging about the community forum.

The distribution of this news release to local print and broadcast media could result in media interest and interviews and news coverage informing the public about the series and there could also be value-added social media coverage as media organizations post to their website and social media platforms.

A news release could reach audiences not reached by social media (e.g., newspaper readers; radio listeners) but it would also provide approved content for websites and social media.

ADVERTISING

Information about the webinar series could be included strategically in municipal advertising such as *The Hub* and other print, broadcast, and/or social media avenues based on cost and available resources and anticipated success at engaging public participation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

One way to engage the public is through website updates and social media such as Facebook posts and events; Twitter feeds; etc. Social media should not be the only way to reach people but it has the potential to reach many audiences. The content could be posted on municipal platforms and shared on the platforms of other local organizations.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

An effective and cost-effective way to increase engagement of the public is through Facebook advertisement boots – these can be targeted to the local community.

BRANDING

It is advised that a publicly recognized name and image will be created and promoted around the community forum (e.g., ‘Your Community Adapts’; or ‘Monthly Weather and Climate Lunch-and-Learn’; ‘Your Community Forum on Weather and Climate’; ‘Twenty Minutes Towards a More Resilient South Huron’; ‘Climate Topic of the Month,’ etc.)

A name and logo or wordmark – if use prominently and frequently with lead time ahead of the start of the community forum series – could help the public to understand and follow the series. The name would have to be ‘intuitive’ – it is not enough to be ‘catchy’ ... people

have to understand what it means. It would also have to be used frequently in municipal products, advertising, and promotion.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

A logo or wordmark brand for the forum series could be created internally or using competitive quotes, according to municipal purchasing procedures.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation has worked with a number of graphic designers including local graphic designer Nikki Cyr, of Nicole Marie Creative, who provided high-quality and competitive work in creating a brand for the organization's 75th anniversary.

She is one of several graphic designers who could be considered.

NEWS RELEASE

A news release, prepared and approved by the Municipality of South Huron and using their news release template, should be prepared at least two weeks, if not more, in advance of the commencement of the community forum series.

Advance notification of the series is advisable so people can share a notice; clear their calendars; and so there is time for the information to appear on search engines.

The news release could be prepared by municipal communications staff and reviewed and approved through standard municipal protocols.

A sample is as follows:

NEWS RELEASE DRAFT

DATE OF ISSUE: March 2, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Huron invites public to enjoy free monthly webinar series about adapting to weather extremes, climate

The Municipality of South Huron is welcoming the public to enjoy a free, monthly online series of short webinars about how they can help the community adapt to extreme weather and a changing climate.

The series begins with the first lunch-and-learn virtual presentation on DATE PENDING.

"..." said Municipality of South Huron Mayor George Finch.

SAMPLE QUOTE:

"... The residents of South Huron can help our municipality prepare and adapt for the future. The community forum webinar series is a great way for our citizens to learn about what's needed and find out how we can be part of the work to adapt for the future ..."

To watch one of the presentations visit this link: [WEBSITE](#)

The presentations are also available here: [VIDEO CHANNEL LINK](#)

Public outreach through a community forum is a recommendation of the municipality's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

During the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the online webinars provide a way for the public to find out about adaptation efforts and to become part of it while being safe at home.

In 2020, the Municipality of South Huron developed *South Huron's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* with financial support provided by the Government of Canada through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program (MCIP). South Huron Council adopted the strategy on September 8, 2020.

South Huron is one of the only municipalities, of its size, in Canada, to have completed a climate change strategy of this scope.

The strategy has a vision of a “... future-ready South Huron that is resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.” The strategy has eight goals: 1) Integrate climate change adaptation into municipal planning, asset management and operations; 2) Support municipal and community resilience awareness and action; 3) Ensure community readiness and a coordinated response to extreme weather events; 4) Reduce risks to buildings, properties and people from flooding; 5) Minimize disruption to municipal service delivery; 6) Reduce health and safety risks to municipal workers and community members from extreme temperatures; 7) Protect and enhance the natural landscape to mitigate impact; and 8) Strengthen the resiliency of municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Visit SouthHuron.ca or contact the municipality for more information.

– 30 –

CONTACT: Municipality of South Huron Media Contact

PHOTOGRAPHY

It would be advisable for staff to strategically consider, through a ‘shot list,’ what photos could ‘tell the story’ of the municipality’s work to make the municipality more resilient. Either through high-quality photos taken by internal staff, or photos contracted by a professional photographer, it would be advisable to have an image for the climate change adaptation plan and at least one image for each of the monthly topics.

INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS

One way to make webinars and presentations more ‘interactive’ is to have community members provide their questions in advance of a topic – for instance, citizens could submit a question in writing or by phone or they could videotape using their smart phones (holding the phone sideways for a ‘landscape’ not ‘portrait’ view) and, if they provided permission for use of that video – or as parents/guardians for use of a video featuring a minor – their images and questions could be incorporated into the prepared presentation.

OTHER METHODS TO REACH OUT TO THE PUBLIC:

As resources permit, staff may also use other means to engage the public.

Examples include:

- Cable television interviews
- Items on website community calendars

- Posters on bulletin boards
- Town signs
- Other ...

TOPICS

The following are some possible (draft) proposed topics for these monthly webinars:

JUNE –

JULY –

AUGUST –

SEPTEMBER –

OCTOBER –

NOVEMBER –

- The Value of Green Infrastructure – Grants and Staff Support for Your Tree Planting and Other Projects, in Rural and Urban Areas, to Help Prepare and Adapt Your Property and Your Community to Extreme Weather in our Changing Climate
- An Introduction to South Huron's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
- Agriculture and Building Resiliency
- Green Technology and Energy Efficiency
- Waste Reduction
- Community Partnerships Across the Region
- Flood Protection

Ausable Bayfield Conservation has compiled a list of local, national, and international 'engagement' days that could be considered as 'hooks' for these webinars.

Alternatively, the webinars could be scheduled on a regular time within the month or on the same day (e.g., the 15th) of the month.

BROADCASTING OPTIONS

The live webinars could be broadcast via Zoom video conferencing architecture of the municipality; and/or partners. Additional avenues, such as Facebook Live and YouTube live, could be considered to make the webinars as broadly accessible as possible.

The best opportunity to engage the public is to have a 'première' of the webinar presentation, and promote the topic and involve the community in advance of that first broadcast – however, there is also the potential to reach people for posted recordings of the presentation ... and promoting those links can also help to promote upcoming community forum presentations.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the promotions around the proposed community forum would include beneficial projects undertaken by citizens; number of people to observe the webinars; public participation before the webinars and feedback following the forum presentations; website analytics; media coverage; social media engagement; etc.

After establishing a baseline of engagement, evaluation could document increases in public engagement in measures to make the community more resilient in adapting to weather extremes and changes in our climate.