

Mayor's Business Breakfast April 30, 2018 – Mayor Rob Keffer

- Good morning, everyone, and thank you so much for joining us for the Mayor's Annual Business Breakfast.
- I really look forward to this event each year, because it offers an opportunity to reflect on the progress we've made and to look ahead to what's next.
- So, thank you for joining us, and thank you in particular to Tina Morrison and the Bradford Board of Trade for helping put on this event and congratulations on a very successful home show.
- I also want to thank our Town's Economic Development team for their hard work, as well as the staff here at The Club at Bond Head for their hospitality.
- Let me also acknowledge that we are joined by my colleagues on Council including Deputy Mayor James Leduc and Councilors Raj Sandhu, Gary Baynes, Gary Lamb, Ron Orr and Peter Dykie. Councilors Peter Ferragine and Mark Contois unfortunately could not join us today.
- Rachel Sullivan from the County's economic development team will also be speaking. Welcome, Rachel.
- I want to welcome provincial MPP candidates, Liberal candidate Trustee Lorelea Carruthers, Conservative candidate Caroline Mulroney.
- And I want to thank my wife, Jean.
- On this lovely morning, I hope everyone noticed the work going on at the Strathallan Lands, and the economic development this will kick start in our Town. And today is an opportunity to talk about What Town Council has done and what's next.
- As a Council, we've done a lot, and we've made a lot of progress.
- We've set the framework for businesses, both large and small, to come to Town.
- Job growth is strong and we have set a foundation for that economic development to continue, whether by marketing our land and assets, or by working directly to attract new businesses.

- We have new companies building and longtime businesses expanding and growing.
- Med Relief and Mitek are two such examples, but there is an excitement and momentum in economic development that bodes well for the future.
- And tied to economic development, is the new small business openings, and many of these in our downtown. We now have a vastly improved aesthetic in our historic downtown. People keep commenting that downtown Bradford has never looked better. And it's true, but there's more to be done.
- I am pleased with how this Council has kept our taxes as low as possible. Every member of Council works hard at budget time and throughout the year to find efficiencies. We prudently have used efficiencies to keep our tax increases to just the rate of inflation.
- We've kept taxes low while still investing in the services residents need and deserve. We've done this through thorough, thoughtful fiscal management—going diligently through the budget to make changes where needed. You have heard me say that Simcoe County tax pressure on our residents is increasing because of MPAC assessments, but we have done what we can at the local level to mitigate the increases.
- One area of particular success is seniors' housing. Whether independent living, assisted living, memory care, or senior rental development, these developments that are on the way will not only provide choices for seniors, but will offer employment in an important sector, creating hundreds of well-paying local jobs.
- Because our economy is growing and we've managed our finances well, we're able to invest in our Town with things like reconstructing 17 urban roads and resurfacing 10 rural roads.
- We have had initiatives that have led to success—whether by ...
 - opening Henderson Park; which will conserve acres for future use and enjoyment;
 - moving forward with our jobs corridor along Highway 400;
 - the Line 5 interchange that will help with traffic congestion;
 - getting the Highway 400-404 Link back on the province's plans;
 - expanding access to local child care;

- starting to build not one but two assisted-living homes for seniors, with other seniors' developments on the way;
 - preserving our built heritage;
 - continuing to improve our roads and bridges;
 - bringing in energy-efficient street lights to save tax dollars and protect the environment;
 - planting more trees and conducting an urban forestry program;
 - improving the canals;
 - increasing transit options, both in Town and with weekend GO Train service;
 - and a much improved downtown with new businesses openings.
- This Council will leave a lasting imprint through the Official Plan work that we are doing. We're protecting our heritage buildings and green spaces and ensuring development is done in a controlled, smart manner. Our Town initiated OP Amendments last year on our priority areas: Employment Lands, Growth, Downtown and Seniors. And this year we are bringing them all together in a new OP. There is a meeting tonight where residents can voice opinions, ideas and concerns about OP. Our official plan works to ensure a better town, not just a bigger town.
 - We've made a lot of progress: low taxes, strong job creation, seniors' housing, new and better parkland, protection of our heritage, and smart growth.
 - But there's more to do.
 - So, what's next? I see three areas where the work we have started this term needs to continue and needs even greater efforts.
 - We need to fix our traffic problems.
 - We need to invest in Municipal infrastructure like Holland Street reconstruction, the Community Centre on Simcoe Road, a new fire hall and Town facilities. We also have to make sure facilities like child care and schools are built where required working with the Province and the school boards.
 - And we need to ensure there are a variety of housing options, including affordable housing, for our residents.

- On traffic—we are thrilled that our advocacy resulted in the Highway 400-404 Link being put on the province’s growth plan for our region. But we must go further, and our next MPP must support designing, funding and building the Highway 400-404 Link.
- Town Council has worked hard to support the province’s work towards all-day, frequent GO Train service. We had then-Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca up to the Bradford GO Train station, and we’re very pleased to see increased weekly service, the new weekend service and 70 new parking spaces.
- We also benefit from the provincial gas tax transfer to run our BWG Transit and we are studying right now increased service levels with new routes and lengthening service.
- On municipal infrastructure—our CAO had a report on our last Council agenda explaining that as our Town grows, there will be requirements to invest in facilities. We have done a good job on recreation, like the wonderful new Henderson Park, but fire stations and Town Halls and Arts Centres have to be in our minds. We have to be prepared to look to the future, build what is required to find efficiencies in service delivery, and be ready if upper level funding is available.
- On affordable housing—we’ve worked with the planning tools we have as a Town Council to ensure a mix of housing options. That means not just building four-bedroom, two-story homes, but also bungalows, ‘bungalofts’, condos and rental apartments. Our new OP will have language directing housing styles and inclusionary zoning. And the County of Simcoe has to deliver on their goal of 202 units of affordable housing by 2021.
- On schools—the school board is planning new schools for our town, and we have to work to get them built as soon as possible. I know other municipalities look on in envy of BWG with the investment that is planned in schools and child care.
- There has to be cooperation with all levels of government to get our priorities progressing. At this time, I want to thank someone who has been very vital to our community for over 23 years.
- That someone, of course, is Julia Munro, our long-time MPP.
- She’s retiring this June 7th, having reached the milestone of longest-serving female MPP in Ontario’s history.

- I am glad candidates running for MPP are here, and I want to be clear that as Mayor, I will work to advance the interests of Bradford West Gwillimbury—these areas where more must be done are areas where we'll need to work together.
- We really do live in a wonderful town. We have an excellent location with the Hwy 400 corridor, and the GO Train line. We have the best of urban amenities, with the landscapes and economic activities of premier rural Ontario.
- And we have hard working, engaged citizens that are the heart of our Town.
- As a Town Council, we have been successful.
- From “getting the little things right”, like fostering a more collaborative Council, we set a tone for an accountable, frugal and transparent Council from day one.
- That tone has led to success
- Thank you for your attention this morning, because thanks to our economic development and our strong, competitive business climate, we can afford to truly build a better town for all.