

Wed  
Sept 5  
2018

# New economic development and planning staff at Grey Highlands



MICHELLE HARRIS



MICHAEL BRENNER

(by Donald Crosby)

Grey Highlands has just added two new senior staff members to support the unprecedented growth in the municipality.

These positions include roles that have in the past been filled by outside consultants.

### PLANNING

Michael Brenner is the new full-time Director of Planning. He brings over 25 years' experience in environmental and municipal planning.

Most recently he was the director of Planning and Development Services for the Town of Blue Mountains, overseeing some of the tremendous growth that is happening there.

Prior to the Blue Mountains, he was manager of Policy and Planning for the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Brenner just started his job in the second week of August and still getting to know the ropes.

In a brief interview, he said he foresees continued growth in this area for years to come. He is looking forward to growth in Grey Highlands in the next 10-20 years.

He said he has seen a slight but significant shift in the demographic in Grey County to young families.

"You see that in the schools," said Brenner. "I'm talking to the Bluewater School Board officials, and they find a lot of new growth."

On a personal note he and his wife moved to Grey County four years ago, after vacationing in the region for close to 30 years. His two daughters and their families along with four grandchildren also recently moved to the area.

### TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Michelle Harris is the new Director of Economic

Development and Tourism.

She has a passion for business development and community-building. "She is known for innovation, leadership and out-of-the box thinking to achieve success," said CAO Rob Adams.

She brings a strong background in marketing and media with CBC and as the owner of an award-winning boutique marketing agency. Her career in economic development began more than 10 years ago.

Most recently, she led the destination marketing organization, as owner of Headwaters Tourism, in a significant paradigm shift that resulted in Harris wanting to join the team at Grey Highlands.

She said Grey Highlands is headed in an excellent direction with the municipality's economic development plan recently approved by council. She's looking forward to helping to implement the vision for the future development in Grey Highlands.

"Economic development will be looking to the future but also focused on the insights of our heritage and where we came from," Harris said.

Harris and her husband have called the Beaver Valley their home for the past eight years.

Thanks

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