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Provincial government lauds $50,000 grant for Schomberg rejuvenation

By Jake Courtepatte

Main Street in Schomberg is getting a huge boost to the village's revitalization project.

King-Vaughan MPP Stephen Lecce made his first announcement in Schomberg on Friday since assuming his office in Queen's Park in June, announcing a $50,000 grant towards the project.

?The Schomberg Main Street Revitalization Committee worked very hard to put this project on the radar of the government of Ontario,? said Lecce from inside Sugar and Spice Bakeshop and Café. ?? we're always happy to support economic growth in beautiful communities like Schomberg.

?I am pleased to announce our government's support for the Schomberg Main Street revitalization project which will strengthen King's local economy, improve the viability of the historic Main Street, and support our dynamic small business community,? Lecce added.

Supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, the new grant will be used to boost business opportunity, while maintaining the small-town charm of Main Street.

?My mandate as your member is to fight for as many funds to support the economy of this community as possible,? said Lecce. ?To create jobs, and make sure there are opportunities for entrepreneurs, and our small businesses succeed. There is absolute rationale, there is absolute purpose to spending this investment to help create long-term economic growth.?

The announcement is the latest from the Ford government under the headline of the Rural Economic Development (RED) program, something Lecce said is crucial to maintaining the economies of small communities.

?To make sure we diversify our businesses, make sure there are valued added jobs, and all to be able to attract investment into the small towns in this province.?

Launched in June of this year, the purpose of the Schomberg Main Street Revitalization Committee is to research and develop economic opportunities on Main Street. The funds from the grant will mainly be focused on hiring a development officer to promote the street.

Minister of Infrastructure Monte McNaughton, who joined Lecce in making Friday's announcement, said the project ?will not be the last? for improving Schomberg's infrastructure, saying he and Lecce have spoken and made plans for introducing the guidelines to expand natural gas throughout rural Ontario as well as bringing broadband to more rural communities in early 2019.

Township of King Mayor Steve Pellegrini said such announcements are ?music to (his) ears.?

?We're so excited ? we can't wait to hear what's happening in 2019.

?Schomberg is a gem. We want to make it just that much better, and have it sustainable for many years to come. We are deeply appreciative of the provincial government's support and investment in our rural economy, because quality of place translates directly into quality of life for our community.?

?Schomberg Main Street is deeply rooted in tradition and agriculture, including being home to the 168-year-old Schomberg Agricultural Fair, the Schomberg Street Gallery and A Main Street Christmas. Because Main Street is a walkable neighbourhood, it has the potential to be a focal point for our community and a popular destination for residents, the surrounding community and tourists,? added Bill?Cober, Ward 4 councillor.

The owners of Sugar and Spice opened their doors two years ago, using the Community Improvement Grant program to convert the property from residential to commercial.