

Lack of signs hampering area tourism?

By Madeleine Leclerc

Is a lack of proper signage within the municipality hindering Grand Falls' efforts to help tourists find its tourism centres?

Éric Ouellette, Gemtec engineer and owner of ZipZag, which shares space in the Malobiannah Tourism Centre, questioned members of the Grand Falls town council on the matter on March 12.

Ouellette, who is also the chairman of the Grand Falls Tourism Action Committee, considers the number of signs, especially those used to advise tourists entering the town from the Trans-Canada Highway and the downtown core, are insufficient.

"I made a study on tourist signs within the municipality and filmed the entry routes to get to the Malobiannah Centre as a tourist. I was looking for the sign with a question mark. Exit 75 for a visitor coming from Edmundston is the only location that clearly indicates

the direction to the tourist centre. The other entry points don't have proper signs. For example, Exit 83 off the Trans-Canada Highway has a sign with a question mark on Portage Road, then, good luck, you have to figure the rest of the way by yourself. This is clearly insufficient to direct tourists," Ouellette told council.

Ouellette also spoke of his committee and invited one or more Town Council members to participate in meetings held weekly or every two weeks.

"Our committee was created a few months ago. We work with stakeholders and company representatives to improve tourism. We also sent a letter to town council asking them to work with us. For the moment, no member from town council has attended our meetings," he said.

"We have faced this problem for the past few years," said Grand Falls Mayor Richard Keeley. "There is a problem

of jurisdiction in this case. Certain signs should be placed in locations that belong to the province and others within the municipality. In addition, we want to work with neighbouring municipalities and demonstrate a strong regional image before taking initiatives that could be misunderstood by our neighbours. We need to discuss this with our colleagues first," said Mayor Keeley.

"The mayor himself has admitted that there is a signage problem and that town council has been aware of this for some years. I don't see the problem for other municipalities. On the contrary, it is in their best interest that the Centre is easy to find. In addition, it would cost approximately between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to fix this problem. We are currently investing nearly \$3 million in the tourism centre and visitors have a hard time finding it. This is ridiculous," said Ouellette.



MADELEINE LECLERC PHOTO

In a recent study, Éric Ouellette determined that there is a lack of signs directing tourists to the Town's tourism centres. Ouellette addressed Town Council with his concerns on March 12.