

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
Board of Management (the “Board”)
of the Welland Downtown Business Improvement Area (the “Corporation”)
of the City of Welland (the “City”)
Held on Wednesday, October 10th, 2018
Rose City Kids, Division St., Welland, Ontario**

Board Members Present: D. Bujold Wright , S. Hamp, K. Jones, J. Eisen, B. Herchmer

Board Members Absent: M, Stadnyk, J. Chiochio, B. Fokkens, A. Adams

Executive Director: A. MacDonald

Recording Secretary: J. Bujold

1. Welcome – Call to Order

The Chair welcomes everyone and thanks them for attending. The Chair calls the AGM to order at 5:45 p.m.

2. Acceptance of Agenda

“BE IT RESOLVED that the agenda be accepted as written.”

Proposed by: K. Jones

Seconded by: L. Labourie (Taris on the Water)

Motion Carried

3. Declaration of Conflicts

None

4. Approval of Minutes from AGM of 2017

“BE IT RESOLVED that the minutes of AGM of 2017 be accepted as written.”

Proposed by: L. Spinosa (Black Sheep Lounge)

Seconded by: J. Eisen (European Pantry)

Motion Carried

5. Presentations

Community Report Card Survey– B. Herchmer

B. Herchmer shared that she has been a director of Board for 3 years. A focus of the Board is working on getting the pride back into Welland and the downtown. The work through the Marketing and Events Committee has been strong and feels that the board succeeded.

The Report Card contained 2 types of survey; 1. Business owners and 2. residents of downtown.

B. Herchmer thanked the downtown business owners for reinforcing the faith in the community. The survey will be up for 2 more weeks beyond the AGM. It assesses:

- the assets of the area that need improvements.
- Determine priorities.
- Suggestions on how best we can support our members and residents.

It was very important that the Executive Director was not part of the drafting and implementation of the Community Board Report Card in order to be completely unbiased.

Following the review of the finding of the survey by the Executive Director, Amanda shared she was surprised at how many suggestions were given. Some of the highlights of the Survey were shared:

Why did you open a business downtown? (A) Affordable rent; Location

What made you stay? (A) Affordable rent ; Location; BIA successful business recruitment

Travelled to other downtowns to see what is missing (A) retail; tourism; amusement and recreation; catering/restaurants

What would improve businesses downtown? (A) Accessible buildings; Improving Building facades; More entertainment; More Parking

Any concerns about the downtown? (A) Crime, graffiti and vandalism; Lack of smoking by-laws; Bicycles on sidewalks and snow removal

What is Welland's greatest strength? (A) The BIA received 120 responses where some had written paragraphs. The keywords that kept repeating were; canal, downtown, restaurants, Merritt Island and Bridge 13.

Questions for downtown residents were almost similar to those of the businesses.

Executive Director Amanda McDonald along with Brenda Herchmer reviewed the mandates of the BIA.

BIA has 6 mandates:

- 1) Beautification – Business (rated pretty good) Planters, banners, seasonal décor / Residents had some differences except for the planters which were rated the same as businesses

- 2) Revitalization – Business (rated pretty good) speaking to the benches and bike racks whereas the residents were more neutral on the bikes – notably on the use of sidewalks.
- 3) Marketing & Promotion – Business asking for the promotion of downtown as shopping local which is challenging with the limited retail shops / Residents also want more shopping in the downtown.
- 4) Special Events – Business listed in order of preference Feast Street Niagara; Canada Day; Concerts on the Canal; Sports and Farmers Market (non BIA event) / Residents spoke to Concerts on the Canal; non-BIA events such as the Farmers’ Market followed by Feast Street Niagara and Canada Day.

Suggestions from both Businesses and Resident that were received are:

- Concerts,
- restaurants,
- art crawls,
- sidewalk events,
- restaurant patios,
- sidewalk sales and garage sales.

- 5) Business Recruitment – this was an area of weakness with more work to be done into the future.
- 6) Communication – Overall the rating was higher than neutral, with response to concerns, profile of businesses, strategic planning for the downtown. The responses stemmed from over 120 residents and 30 businesses.

It is noted that the data from the survey is not yet finalized which means that the findings to date have not yet been made public. Once completed, it will be shared. .

One of the most interesting responses in the survey was to the question: What learning event would help grow your business and staff. Responses received were to learn more about sales/marketing, social media, online and window displays.

6. Executive Director

Review of 2017 – to better inform members on the budgeting process the AGM was moved from the spring (April) to the fall (October)

Recruitment 2018 – 6 grand openings, 9 new businesses, 3 site walks and this summer looked at opening Splash On and Bike Tours.

Revitalization 2018 – Sitting on Active Transportation Committee which will assist the downtown by having a voice at the table. Social Media initiatives; Waterways Committee with advocacy on Go Quiet on the water.

Fundraising 2018 – Welland Monopoly Game sold out.

Upcoming for 2019 – Wheelchair Accessible near Paris on the Water to be able to go down near the water. Gorilla park on budget line. Design wraps for poles; potential project to light up our historical buildings like the Courthouse.

Special Events 2017 – Supper Markets, Feast St and Canada Day were held without making use of levy funds. The funds for the events for 2018 was sponsorship and grants in the amount of \$120,844 to date. 15 events were held during the year; 8 concerts on the canal, Canada Day, Canoe Polo, Feast Street, 3 social seminars and school snacks.

Marketing & Promotions 2018 – Started a commercial presenting the downtown; live podcast at Canoe Polo Opening Ceremonies and monthly newsletter.

Beautification 2018 – 50 floral baskets made a comeback and seasonal decor.

2019 – Applied for Community Garden Grant, manufacturing of hanging brackets and awarded \$75,000 municipal grant designated for BIA catchment.

Bridge 13 – BIA office takes request and then sends them to the Region. There is a schedule in the office. The bridge is now on trip advisor and has become a tourist attraction.

2017 Awards – Multiple awards during the year pertaining to accessibility, relations between the BIA and city staff as well as the lighting and marketing success of Bridge 13. Downtown Welland BIA is a great example for other BIA's as noted at the 2017 and 2018 conferences.

The Banner Project is a tool to assist in the recognition of the catchment area to be more recognizable for Downtown. Smaller ones remain installed. The bigger ones had issues, have now been taken down but will be reinstalled most likely in 2020. One of the challenging issues both regarding the banners and the hanging floral baskets are the poles. There are 3 “owners”.

Working closely with Hydro and map to see who owns which pole. Poles on Niagara St. belong to the city and West Main from D'Angelo's Printing belong to Hydro.

Downtown restaurants with patios for 2019. Working diligently with Region.

7. Treasurer Report

Financial Report 2017 – Statement of Operations

Revenues \$178,547, Expenses \$158,726 and Accumulated deficit, end of year (\$61,844) including the long term debt.

Statement of financial position -

Financial assets \$85,775, Financial liabilities \$147,619, Accumulated deficit (\$61,844).

The Treasurer provided the expense and revenue breakdown of each event for 2018. The Board has a balance budget for 2018 and will meet this for year end.

When presenting the 2018 budget, it is noted that only 1 event is included which is Canada Day.

Reduction – Adding banners would help in Beautification with color. Brackets for floral baskets are 4 years old and some won't hold the basket. The board replaced 50 this year. There is a carryover recommendation to increase the replacement of steel brackets to the incoming Board.

Determination by the Board that Events don't help the service industry of which there several members. The businesses need a mind set change. It is not just the sole responsibility of the downtown businesses to pay for downtown that services the entire City.

8. Public Discussion

It occurred during the Presentation, Executive Director and Treasurer Report and noted comments are recorded here:

Why the survey did not address homelessness, addiction and mental health.

Member has been living in downtown for 4 years and has not seen any police walking the beat.

Reponses: This (homelessness, addiction and mental health) is not a mandate of the BIA however, it was indirectly addressed in other questions. These issues did not come up during the survey.

The policing is a function of the NRP and there have been meetings and dialogue about the NRP presence.

Commentary from attendees on the marketing of the catchment area: There is no clear start showing Downtown. We need signage showing entering the Downtown so people will know especially for the cyclists.

Queries on the having the downtown streets converted to two way. The Master Transportation Report was discussed with its report to be released shortly. To be noted that neither Division nor Main Street bridges are convertible to 2 way traffic for safety concerns as well as traffic flow. Members did bring up suggestions. Stumbling blocks are traffic lights. Very costly. Concern is traffic flow.

Several attendees shared position on shame of council for not showing up or sending representation. TO this Lucas Spinosa shared that there are 4 running candidates in attendance.

Suggestions on events that would support service industry as well is to have service industry on the sidewalk or street during event.

Query was made on the Election process to which the Chair responded that this process is overseen by the City Clerk. A minimum number of days is required and the BIA election needed to be worked around the municipal election of October 22nd. The total number of positions are 13 with two of those positions for council liaisons. If 11 or less forward their names there will be no election but acclamation. If 12 or more then there will be need of an election on November 8th.

9. Adjournment

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for providing great constructive criticism and suggestions. Felt warm to see how many people want the downtown to succeed.

Advised that there are now 326 Businesses Downtown.

Adjourned at 8:10 p.m.