



November 25, 2020
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Meeting

BOARD OF DIRECTORS • MEETING MINUTES

Present: Linda Jutzi, Darryl Moore, Erika Holenski, Phong Tran, Cara Watson, Councillor Debbie Chapman, Kathy Crossley, Darren Becks, Cory Bluhm, Cst. James Mitchell and Julie Phillips, Benjamin Mathew, Councillor Sarah Marsh,
Regrets: Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, Michael Rederer
Recorder: Stefanie Golling

The meeting began at 8:31 a.m., with Darryl Moore as Chair.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS

Moved by Councillor Debbie Chapman seconded by Kathy Crossley

“That the Board approve the November 25, 2020 agenda.”

Carried Unanimously

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Phong Tran, seconded by Cara Watson

“That the Board approve the October 28, 2020 meeting minutes, with adjustments.”

Carried Unanimously

WRPS UPDATE

Cst. James Mitchell provided an update on the following:

- It is business as usual Downtown.
- The CTS site is now fully operating.
- WRPS is looking into the Anti-Mask Protest starting at 2:00pm on Saturday. WRPS is working on social media and any necessary resources for Downtown.
- Director question: Have you noticed any change with the shelters now being disbursed around the Region?
 - Yes. There has been a reduction in calls to service for the Downtown.

NOVEMBER UPDATES

Linda Jutzi provided a brief overview of the November Updates document. The report highlights that the Christkindl-in-a-Box pickup may now be moving to The Aud (rather than the Victoria Park Pavilion).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Darren Becks provided the following updates:

- Still continuing with aggressive 2021 infrastructure and operations plans.
- Extra staff deployed to maintain Downtown to ensure the core is kept clean, tidy, and usable during the winter.
- Holiday lighting should be up and running shortly.
- Special Events is working on activation in Victoria park.
- Working with the BIA on website content for January launch.
- Development of Downtown road map. Will share with Board in the New Year.
- Met with Transportation regarding Parking. Looking to start a small working group to discuss issues and post COVID-19 parking.
- COVID-19 Testing Site slated to open early December in former GRT Terminal space.
- Ontario Street gas work is close to completion and will likely reopen next week. Note roadway patching is temporary and will be re-examined in the Spring.
- A group is coming in to fix the street/string lights in the evening.
- Staff are consulting Public Health regarding outdoor Market seating.
- This years Christmas tree is being illuminated near the Victoria Park Pavilion.

Cory Bluhm presented the **MAKE IT KITCHENER 2.0: A Strategy to Guide Economic Recovery & Growth** report.

The City of Kitchener has developed a new \$110M economic investment fund. The fund will be used over a 10-year period, with the priority over the first 5-years.

Staff will complete a consultation process focusing on businesses displaced or experiencing challenges. The plan will likely be a fluid document, guiding strategy to come in the following months/years.

Immediate focus & investments: Supporting economic recovery from COVID-19

Longer-term investments:

- Health innovation
- Creative industries
- A City-wide start-up network focused on sustainable development goals
- Affordable and attainable housing
- A vibrant, active city

Director questions regarding MAKE IT KITCHENER 2.0:

- Will there be grants given to businesses?
 - The City does not have the cash resources that the Province and Feds do. The \$5M that the City has needs to be used strategically.
 - The City needs to support businesses on “how to adapt”. They will achieve this through: programming, assisting businesses with pivoting their plans, tools, resources, and grants.

DRAFT 2021 BUDGET

Linda Jutzi presented the draft 2021 budget for Board feedback and review. Below is an overview of Director comments/feedback.

Marketing

- Like “Together We Own It” videos. We need to steer away from expensive tv and Record ads, as most of our target audience would not want those. Double down on social media (Instagram). Our website is beautiful, but not as functional as it could be – continue to keep content current.
- Look at marketing in a different way. Provide unique experiences virtually and in person.
- Received lots of positive feedback that people have seen the commercials. Supports the general spend of marketing dollars.

Sponsorship of Large Events

- Do not think large events will go ahead this summer. Would hate to be in a position where its continuously being put off.
 - Don’t disagree, consideration should be made if there is a vaccine - members will want people Downtown.
 - We cannot say the BIA is not going to support large events. If we do, those events will go somewhere else. Majority of businesses want them. Send a clear message we are prepared to hear your proposals.
- Many event organizers operate year-to-year. They may not have the cash flow available to continue or will go somewhere that will support them.
 - Event organizers may have other sponsors. There may be other ways we can support them.
- Create a magical pedestrian area, similar to Belmont Village.
- If we cannot do it on a large scale, how do we push this down on a weekly basis? Maybe extend over 4-weeks.
- It is important that we hold some funds back to support the City of Kitchener events team.
- If we put funds into a reserve for events, does that mean we are in the same position we are in this year?

Action: Based on comments, the funds should be put into a reserve and communication will be sent to event organizers in January.

Other Budget Comments:

- Rename contribution of Downtown Dollars line item to UNZIPPED.
- Provide a more detailed breakdown on what \$67,000 towards the Art Walk will get us.
- Impactful beautification
 - Love the direction the BIA is heading in. If there is an opportunity, the City would love to help if it fits.
- Is there a way Sociavore can include retail?

- Make Downtown a safe, and comfortable environment for people. Close streets and provide extended drinking permits.
 - Agree with closures and spending dollars on shade and lighting. Now is the time to embrace change.
 - Patterns of behaviour have changed and will not come back for 2-5 years. Set the groundwork now, for people to set patterns for years to come.
- The Art Walk is proven to be successful - would like to see it continue.
- Make Downtown an attractive welcoming place to come. Like outdoor tents, tables, and lighting however it isn't enough or inviting on its own. Add other features – thinking of Sparks Street.
- Last year will not look much different than this year. People will look for new ways to discover. We have one shot when someone comes down for the first time. Create a beautiful warm happening place. Create an environment to come down to and tell friends about.
- Now is the time to double down on outdoor spaces.
- Sociavore – if we could have 5 people in various spots around the Downtown responsible for a block, wearing bright shirts (Ambassadors/butler/valet) to help and guide people.
- Create a map that all businesses can use. Update when there is a new construction project.
- Hesitant about on and off-road closures. Hard enough to navigate Downtown.
- Important to encourage the local community to do programming in spaces. Empty spaces do not make the Downtown welcoming or comfortable.
- Ensure window fronts are always pretty. The BIA's help with the Holiday window display is great. Keep it going for the summer.
- All in for closing streets, but we need to designate nearby streets for delivery and parking. We also need good enforcement.
- Have businesses collaborate to coordinate cleaning and maintaining of public eating areas. Businesses should take ownership to keep area clean.
- Lots of mileage out of the Art Walk. There was a significant number of calls for books.

Ms. Jutzi thanked the Board for their comments and feedback. Next steps are to prepare another version of the budget using the information shared to create another version for the Board in January.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Really like the Holiday window décor - well done!
 - Resident suggestion: can we fill vacant spaces?
- Friendly reminder this Monday November 30th at 7:00 p.m. is the Special Member Meeting to review the recommendations for change of the Organizational Bylaw.
- There will be no December meeting; we will return in January.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Erika Holenski, seconded by Benjamin Mathew
"That the meeting adjourn."

Carried Unanimously