



**Downtown  
Kitchener**  
Business  
Improvement  
Area

## **ANNUAL TOWN HALL • 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

### **Attendees:**

1. Darryl Moore, CMG Entertainment
2. Julie Phillips, Big Brothers Big Sisters
3. Cst. Lee Elliott, WRPS
4. Cst. James Mitchell, WRPS
5. Sarah Pearson, Tasso Towers Inc.
6. Jon Rennie, odd duck wine and provisions
7. Mona Mousa, odd duck wine and provisions
8. Laura Meikle, The Walper Hotel
9. Ryan Lloyd Craig, Rich Uncle Tavern
10. Michael Rederer, RBC
11. Laurie Davison, KW Oktoberfest
12. Tracy Van Kalsbeek, KW Oktoberfest
13. Jordan Dolson, Legacy Greens
14. Dani Stock, AOK Craft Beer & Arcade
15. Steve Jenereaux, AOK Craft Beer & Arcade
16. Erin Martin, Him & Her Inc
17. Cynthia Sundberg, Virtual Causeway
18. Rick Endrulat, Virtual Causeway
19. Phong Tran, Matter of Taste
20. Michelle Campbell, Marche Leo's
21. Kevin Diebolt, X-Disc-C
22. Elvis Ellison, Ellison's Bistro
23. Jessica Toomer, Libro Financial
24. Adam Zrebiec, Barber + Craft
25. Martha Wallace, Momentum Development
26. Councillor Aislinn Clancy, City of Kitchener– Ward 10
27. Linda Jutzi, Downtown Kitchener BIA
28. Stefanie Golling, Downtown Kitchener BIA
29. Breanna Crossman, Downtown Kitchener BIA
30. Lori Muller, Downtown Kitchener BIA
31. Alexandra Giovanatto, Downtown Kitchener BIA
32. Thea Mistry, City of Kitchener
33. Darren Becks, City of Kitchener
34. Steve Roth, City of Kitchener

## **Meeting Minutes**

The meeting began at 2:10 p.m., with opening remarks from Board Chair Darryl Moore.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

The City of Kitchener is situated on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples. We recognize our responsibility to serve as stewards for the land and honour the original caretakers who came before us. Our community is enriched by the enduring knowledge and deep-rooted traditions of the diverse First Nations, Metis and Inuit in Kitchener today.

### **Board of Director Introductions**

Chair Darryl Moore shared housekeeping notes for the meeting and introduced the Board of Directors, along with the various BIA committees they sit on:

- Cara Watson (AOK Craft Beer & Arcade) – Vice Chair, Governance & Marketing Committees
- Phong Tran (Matter of Taste) - Treasurer, Finance Committee
- Martha Wallace (Momentum Developments) – Secretary, Marketing Committee
- Councillor Aislinn Clancy (City of Kitchener - Ward 10)
- Councillor Debbie Chapman (City of Kitchener - Ward 9)
- Jessica Toomer (Libro Credit Union) - Marketing Committee
- Jordan Dolson (Legacy Greens) – Governance Committee
- Julie Phillips (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Waterloo Region) – Governance Committee
- Laird Robertson (Neo Architecture) – Marketing Committee
- Michael Rederer (Royal Bank of Canada) – Finance Committee
- Sarah Pearson (Tasso Towers Inc., Psychotherapy with Sarah Pearson)
- Mayor Berry Vrbanovic (City of Kitchener – Mayor)
- Darren Becks (Economic Development - City of Kitchener)
- Cst. James Mitchell (Waterloo Region Police Services)
- Cst. Lee Elliott (Waterloo Region Police Services)

Moore expressed gratitude for their efforts to the Downtown Kitchener BIA Board of Directors.

### **Staff Introductions**

Board Director Julie Phillips introduced the Downtown Kitchener BIA Staff: Linda Jutzi (Executive Director), Breanna Crossman (Marketing Manager), Lori Muller (Member Integration and Special Events), Stefanie Golling (Office Manager), and Alexandra Giovantto (Social Media Ambassador).

### **Downtown Kitchener BIA Purpose and Overview**

Linda Jutzi provided an overview of what a BIA is and why it exists, how levy payments are collected, and the importance of collaborating with partners and advocating on behalf of the membership.

### **Waterloo Regional Police Service**

Linda Jutzi welcomed Cst. James Mitchell, and Cst. Lee Elliott to the meeting.

Jutzi acknowledged the difficulties people have had over the years. Because of the good relationship the BIA has with Waterloo Regional Police Service, they were able to bring back a dedicated officer to the core. Cst. James Mitchell noted that Jutzi has continuously advocated for dedicated officers in the core. Because of this, Cst. Matt Wilson has joined as a dedicated beat officer and has been making his way throughout downtown meeting businesses.

The meeting opened for questions, with no inquiry, Cst. Mitchell and Cst. Elliott encouraged members to reach out should they have any questions or concerns.

### **2023 Highlights**

- The BIAs focus has been on beautification, connecting people, marketing and event promotion of the whole district.

- Programs include Stroll Walking Tours, DTK Art Walk, Patio Program, Social Media, DTK Live, Community Builder Grant Program, and the Live Entertainment Grant.
- BIA Success
  - It's really about getting people down here - more foot traffic, music, entertainment, streetscape, furniture, accessibility to parks, and attractive storefronts. All these things make our Downtown look better.

### **Strategic Priorities – 2024 to 2027**

Board Director Sarah Pearson shared an overview of the process taken to develop the new strategic priorities, noting that the BIA hired a third-party consultant, Shelley Aubry, as an unbiased person to ensure the Downtown Kitchener BIA reached various stakeholders and offered facilitated sessions to ensure representation with members, residents, office workers, and the Board of Directors.

Pearson shared the new Mission, Vision and 2024 to 2027 Strategic Priorities with the group:

**Mission:** to make Downtown Kitchener a destination where people connect with each other, businesses and culture.

**Vision:** the Downtown Kitchener BIA is driven to activate, beautify and connect a thriving community that fosters innovation, inclusivity and vibrancy.

#### **Core Values:**

- Local and Unique: uplifting the small businesses and restaurants that operate independently, creating a local and unique experience for all those that visit.
- Community-centric: continue to foster Downtown Kitchener as a neighbourhood that feels like home, whether that means bumping into friends on the street, in a business, or at a local festival/event.

#### **2024 to 2027 Strategic Priorities:**

- Activate: promote authentic experiences; support a vibrant arts and culture scene; amplify the use of live entertainment; and encourage experiences in unique spaces.
- Enhance & Beautify: engage in programs to make Downtown attractive for visitors, employees, and residents; work with partners where possible, including municipal and regional governments, for the best return on investment in all beautification efforts.
- Connect: act as the catalyst connecting people to the Downtown district; focus on making new connections between residents, businesses and community events.

### **City of Kitchener**

Manager of Downtown Economic Development Darren Becks shared an overview of their 2023 focus, highlighting the Gaukel Block, Carl Zehr Square, DTK Visioning exercise, and supporting operational efforts. Becks noted that over the last three years, the dedicated Downtown Operations team and Economic Development have concentrated on cleanliness, horticulture, the façade grant and the patio program process.

In 2024 and beyond, once they receive approval to work on an action plan for Downtown, they will focus on activation and placemaking initiatives on the Gaukel Block, relaunching the façade grant, and streamlining the permit and licensing process to support downtown business.

Becks reminded members that if they require support, whether navigating events, the 220 Pop-up space, or façade grant applications, feel free to reach out. Should members need help with operational concerns, they should call the Corporate Contact Centre or complete an online report, as it will ensure faster service.

Special Events Manager Steve Roth shared that he is new to the role and has spent the last six months listening, watching, learning, and building partnerships to collaborate and explore opportunities. The Special Events portfolio is growing, diversifying, and will include exciting changes, including the Christkindl Market. Roth noted that this year's event will look different, but in a good way.

At the recent Wayback Festival, Special Events collected data showing that 17,000 people attended. Roth shared that he wants to take that information and build on it to make the data advantageous to everyone.

### **Financial Management**

Board Director Michael Rederer explained the process taken to ensure the funds of the BIA are managed appropriately under the review of the Finance Committee, Board of Directors and city-appointed auditor – KPMG. When developing the budget, the Board of Directors reviews each line item to understand how the spending will benefit the membership.

### **Proposed 2024 Operating Budget**

Linda Jutzi provided an overview of the proposed 2024 Operating Budget, highlighting that all new budget line items fall under one of the new priorities: Beautify/Enhance, Activate and Connect. Additionally, Jutzi announced a new staff position that will connect to entertainment and businesses.

### **Membership Questions**

The following questions, comments and discussions happened during the meeting:

- Clarification on the Holiday Window Decorating program.
- How to connect businesses with events.
- The group discussed the data collection during the Wayback Festival and how it is quantified. Members expressed that they would love access to the data collected.
- It's great to see weekend events; however, it is dead during the week. When will the City of Kitchener staff come back to the office? We need them back - it creates vibrancy and energy. Leaders need to lead by example and support where they live and get paid from, or this will become an unsafe and desolate place.
- Downtown Dollars have always been advantageous; however, usage is down. It appears businesses are turning them down and not understanding how they work.
- Clarification on the vision for the arts and culture activation and how the new role will connect to this budget.

- Clarification on the increase to the levy.
- How does the Live Entertainment grant work for members?

### Closing Remarks

Linda Jutzi expressed that it is an honour to work with this membership. Board Chair Darryl Moore thanked everyone for their participation.

The meeting adjourned.