



April 27, 2022  
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
Zoom Meeting

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS • MEETING MINUTES

**Present:** Linda Jutzi, Darryl Moore, Erika Holenski, Phong Tran, Councillor Debbie Chapman, Julie Phillips, Martha Wallace, Rebecca Coker, Darren Becks, and Sgt. Kelly Prebble.  
**Regrets:** Cara Watson, Benjamin Mathew, Councillor Sarah Marsh, Michael Rederer, and Mayor Berry Vrbanovic.  
**Recorder:** Stefanie Golling

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

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS**

*Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Rebecca Coker*

"That the Board approves the agenda."

**Carried Unanimously**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Moved by Phong Tran, seconded by Erika Holenski*

"That the Board approves the February, 2022 meeting minutes."

**Carried Unanimously**

*Moved by Phong Tran, seconded by Erika Holenski*

"That the Board approves the March, 2022 meeting minutes."

**Carried Unanimously**

### **WRPS UPDATE**

Sgt. Kelly Prebble provided the following updates:

- WRPS is investigating the incidents that are happening, including window breaking across the core.
  - Directors noted there had been several break-ins as well.
- Inspector Bonn confirmed for Sgt. Prebble that foot patrol has started.
  - It was noted that the west end has not seen patrol and is experiencing a high level of issues. Staff is no longer willing to park in the area of King/Francis due to safety concerns.
  - Sgt. Prebble will encourage officers to stop into businesses.
- Cameras are a valuable investigative tool, often increasing the chances of identifying someone.

- When reviewing calls to service, it seems to be the same type of calls.
- WRPS is unable to expand its online reporting system. Certain offenses require follow-up, and may have a safety risk.

## **BOARD REPORTS**

Linda Jutzi provided updates to the Board on the Waterloo Regional Police Service survey sent to the BIA membership, the DTK Art Walk, Patio Program, DTK Street Squad, and temporary office move. Ms. Jutzi opened the meeting to discussion from the Board and shared further information regarding the programs:

- The Slack app was working, and having two officers going in and out of businesses was beneficial. Taking these services away, and with the lack of communication we are seeing issues getting worse; there are higher numbers, and the relationship is not there anymore. While we are still able to contact Cst. Elliott, who is awesome, unfortunately he is unable to be downtown regularly.
- As a result of these issues, we have sent out a survey to the membership. We have been personally tapping people on the shoulder to encourage them to share their frustrations. To date, the survey has been sent out 4-times, and we have received about 23 responses. Staff will continue to go door-to-door, as we recognize the need. The results of the survey will be sent to the Board, Inspector Brenna Bonn, and the Chief.
  - Our business misses the Slack app desperately. As an example, yesterday in the parkette on Francis/King, there was an individual who pulled out parafanilla, and a weapon. Initial instinct was to write on slack to neighbouring businesses, however not being unable this platform left us feeling isolated. The individual kept to themselves, and left within 20 minutes. From a communication aspect from downtown businesses, this piece is missed.
  - Has the BIA sent a letter to the Police Board and/or Region of Waterloo?
    - The intent of this survey is to do that. Previously we had Cst. Mitchell who was an excellent resource, and willing to attend meetings to share communication. There was the feeling that someone was advocating.
- Love the new art for the DTK Art Walk!
- I'm very excited for the DTK Street Squad. Seeing people on the street is awesome.
- How many people will be on the DTK Street Squad?
  - We will be starting with 6 people. The individuals understand the role, live in the downtown area, are very passionate, and know the core. It is a pilot program so we need to remember there will be kinks to work out, but eventually this will add to the program and allow us to sign up more people up.
  - All DTK Street Squad volunteers will walk in pairs, with identifiable shirts. They are not responsible for replacing the Downtown Discovery Team; their role is to be welcoming, provide directions, food options and have a friendly presence.
- In late 2021, the building in which the BIA office operates out of was purchased with the intention of the second and third floors being converted into housing. Construction has since started, and has been much more intense. Ms. Jutzi has engaged with our lawyer, Ross Weber and is looking at moving the office temporarily to the Walper building.

## Q1 Progress Report

Phong Tran shared that a lot is going on in the background and anticipates seeing changes to the balance sheet due to auditing. We are tracking well, and expenses are in line with anticipated costs to date.

## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE IN DTK

Linda Jutzi invited Keith Schappert from JLL to discuss vacancy rates in downtown. Ms. Jutzi shared that hearing the story from a commercial perspective is helpful.

### ***What is a vacancy?***

The building owner may have a signed lease but is unable to occupy it due to covid. Unoccupied is also considered vacant, but the landlord may be collecting a portion of rent.

Some of the challenges facing DTK office spaces:

- ***Parking:*** many suburban offices offer 3-4 parking stalls per 1,000 sq ft included in their rent. Parking is typically surface stalls that are onsite.
  - Some companies downtown are currently offering a shuttle service to a transfer lot – and others offer security to walk staff to their vehicle.
- ***Operating costs:*** Due to many downtown offices being larger high-rise towers, additional rent is typically higher than midrise suburban office buildings. The average additional rent in DTK is 36% higher than suburban offerings.
- ***Lack of small turnkey suites:*** there is a strong demand for space from tenants looking for 2,500-5,000 sq ft and are looking to occupy on short notice (2-3 months). This tight timeline requires updated build-out space as supply chain issues and labour shortages have extended fit-out timing.
  - Some building owners may have spaces, but they are older and want a committed tenant.
  - There is often a 6-month timeline from signing to getting into the space.
  - Real estate agent's job is to suggest to their clients to create move-in-ready suites, including kitchenettes, meeting rooms, and private offices.

### ***Possible incentive program***

With many companies moving to "hybrid work," the ability for companies to share monthly parking spots has become more important. New technologies on the market allow you to sell a block of permits and have multiple people share them. Once the allocated parking spots are filled, they would be required to pay the hourly rate or find alternative parking. Park Co. is a great technology that lets people know when parking is available and offers alternatives.

There are simple things that landlords can do, such as maintaining a good art scene. Many of the DTK office buildings are going through retrofit/remodeling. This presents a unique opportunity to connect the landlord and local artist communities to partner to showcase their work while lending a fresh design element. Downtown's art scene does not go unnoticed.

Additionally, encouraging landlords to create some build-in ready suites.

Director questions and comments:

- When we talk about housing and rent evictions - does this happen in the commercial world?
- Communication with tenants about changes/updates being made to buildings is important. Lack of communication and dated buildings can impact tenants' willingness to stay in space. Owners with multiple buildings can benefit by moving tenants into other spaces during construction.
- What is the differentiator that we as a downtown have? Maybe there is a way we can work together more with real estate agents to make sure information/opportunities are in the hands of people coming downtown.
  - Education and incentive programs go a long way. Many companies look at how the built community impacts people mentally, physically, and emotionally.
  - Maybe Park Co. could be implemented into some of the City of Kitchener lots.
  - Offering health and wellness ammentieis within the building/area.
- Where do you see the commercial market downtown in 5-years?
  - The challenge with downtown right now is there are so many construction fences up. When they are removed, you will see the hustle-bustle and the activity return to the core.
  - If you look at Uptown Waterloo as an example, the amount of growth they would have to go through would require a lot of construction.
- Is it mainly tech interested in commercial space?
  - There are different price levels; tech is primarily interested in brick and beam – or a funky space. We are also seeing more professionals and services; examples include KPMG, Gowlings, and other talent agencies.
- Where are people coming from - are they local or from other cities?
  - We are seeing a lot of local tech companies, and have also seen a lot of multi-national compies. This could be because of the GTA sprawl.
  - Some large companies looking to locate to Waterloo Region include Master Class and Skywatch.
- On average, what is the price point for commercial space?
  - Kitchener is definitely at a "discount" compared to other cities like Toronto. The average is about \$20/sq ft.
  - Kitchener didn't see as many sub-leases in our area, as carrying costs are much lower than places like Toronto.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

City of Kitchener's Director of Transportation Services, Barry Cronkite joined the meeting and provided the following updates:

- Currently there are two conctruction issues – Queen Street and Ontario Street
  - Queen Street is one way right now; it will likely stay that way until late June, or early July. Work is expected to stay on track.
  - We have not seen a ton of conctruction happening on Ontario Street this week due to hydro work. This area is still scheduled to be completed between late June, and the beginning of July. Once complete they will then transition to the

other side of Ontario Street (Charles and Joseph). They will maintain one lane traffic there.

- The City has relooked at Gaukel Street, and are going to keep the street open from King to Halls Lane. This will help to serve the businesses and Charlie West. We should see a more complete Gaukel Street and better landscape soon. The work is to be completed in late May; staff are working with Momentum to move things forward.
- Staff are trying to limit whatever they can in the downtown, to avoid impacting patio season, and special events. By shifting, these needs will happen in the fall.
- Staff are looking at extending free parking after 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday and Sundays. The permanent change long-term would be to shift and charge a special event rate in surface lots to offset revenue and other costs. Other options are being looked at to extend drop off spots on King Street; staff are looking to make these changes shortly after next weeks meeting.

Questions and comments from Directors:

- City staff need to look at more loading zones.
- Ontario Street will be very disruptive. There a couple of businesses where their access will also be limited. i.e. Dogtopia, Grand Trunk, etc. This construction will extend to end of June, or early July. The plan is to create a formal loading space in Halls Lane (Ontario and Queen Street). This will be a big benefit for the immediate area.
- Downtown Cycling Grid construction at Duke and Weber is being left alone for now, and no work will be completed there. There will be some paint markings on the road for cyclists.
- Has there been consideration to remove fencing in front of Young Condos to open King Street parking spaces? Staff should sit there from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and watch.
  - Will look at this area for short-term parking. Parking will be disbursed all along King Street.
- Every potential ballard we can pull out should be a top priority and would be beneficial; especially since we are losing surface lots. Create as much opportunity - there are a lot of restaurants and anything we can create should be a top priority.
  - The City will address the BIA's needs for parking.
- We need to find places where delivery companies can access loading zones. As we grow, we will have more people sitting on patios that take away from parking spots.
  - Staff would like to see a sub-committee for parking to define these spots, to ensure the BIA needs are met before changing. We want to get it right the first time.

**Action item:** Linda Jutzi to follow up with Darren Becks and Barry Cronkite regarding parking.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Councillor Debbie Chapman*  
"That the meeting adjourn."

**Carried Unanimously**