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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | September 23, 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, Councillor Sarah Marsh, Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, Michael Rederer, Benjamin Mathew**,** Cory Bluhm, Cst. James Mitchell and Julie Phillips.

**Guests:** Andrew Pinnell, Jeff Young, Richard Kelly-Ruetz.

**Recorder:** Karoline Varin

The meeting began at 8:30 a.m., with Darryl Moore as Chair.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/DECLARARION OF CONFLICTS**

*Moved by Cara Watson, seconded by Julie Phillips*

“That the Board approve the September 30, 2020 agenda with the adjustments as noted.”

**Carried Unanimously**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Moved by Kathy Crossley, seconded by Councillor Debbie Chapman*

“That the Board approve the August 26, 2020 meeting minutes.”

**Carried Unanimously**

**WRPS UPDATE**

Cst. James Mitchell provided an update on plans for short term affordable housing strategy in the Region:

* Short term affordable housing will see three locations.
  + Waterloo Inn – will be able to accommodate up to 110 users; 24/7; onsite services and staff; extended hours of stay; meals and storage space provided; opening mid-October.
  + University Avenue former dormitory – will be able to accommodate up to 80 users; individuals found camping out will be offered that location; 24/7; onsite services and staff; controlled entry; opening October 5.
  + St. Mark’s Church – will be able to accommodate up to 40; meant for individuals in need of last-minute accommodation or on probation; shorter stay; storage space provided.
* Working with Region of Waterloo on long term housing solution.
* Charles Street location will be used as administrative offices.

**CITY OF KITCHENER STAFF UPDATE**

Cory Bluhm introduced two new staff members who joined the Economic Development team:

* Cameron Dale, manager of Kitchener Market
* Darren Becks, manager of Downtown

**GOVERNANCE UPDATE ORGANIZATION BYLAW PROCESS**

Linda Jutzi outlined the process for members to vote on the approval of the new Organization Bylaw, which was developed by the Governance Committee with council from lawyer, Ross Weber:

* The new Organization Bylaw document will be sent to the membership in full, with an introductory note.
* The introductory note will explain in detail why engagement is needed underlining the changes made.
* Members will be invited via Constant Contact to the November meeting, when voting will take place; they will also be invited verbally at smaller group sessions in October.
* Voting will take place via Zoom.
* Once approved, the document will be forwarded to city of Kitchener.

*Moved by Erika Holenski, seconded by Julie Phillips*

“That the Board approve the voting process as set out by the Governance Committee for the approval by membership of the changed Organizational Bylaw.”

**Carried Unanimously**

**Action item:** The Governance Committee will share the introductory note with the Board prior to sending to the membership.

**LARGE SEASONAL STRUCTURE**

Linda Jutzi took part in meetings with other regional BIAs and OBBIA, where the installation of large seasonal structures was brought up. These structures are sculptural, animate the downtown, can be lit up, re-configured and allow pedestrians to walk through and enjoy. They can also be used throughout the year. Typically, these structures are extremely expensive. However, a local company – BOKO – can fabricate these structures at a lower cost:

* Each structure would cost each BIA $25,000.
* There would be financial backing from RTO4.
* Each structure consists of series of components.
* If approved, there would be a total of three structures - one for each BIA interested in participating: Downtown Kitchener, Uptown Waterloo and Preston/Galt.
* Either the structures or components could be shared between the three BIAs allowing for greater number of configurations and adding additional value.
* BOKO would provide engineering drawings, which may need to be reviewed by the city of Kitchener – a possible additional cost of about $2500.
* The structure has a five-year warranty, but longevity would depend on how well it is maintained.
* The design of the structure will be shared with the Board prior to fabricating.

*Moved by Cara Watson, seconded by Kathy Crossley*

“That the Board approve a spend on a seasonal outdoor structure as part of a collaborative project with the Cambridge and Waterloo BIA. This investment would be backed with funding from RTO4.”

**Carried Unanimously**

**FALL PROMOTIONAL 2020 DOWNTOWN DOLLARS**

Mark Bingeman approached Linda Jutzi to inquire if the BIA would be interested in participating in Bingeman’s Halloween event. It will be a one day, drive through event, between 2-6 p.m. 2000 vehicles are anticipated to drive by vendors giving out candy. This presents an opportunity to promote supporting local Downtown.

Directors shared the following feedback and suggestions:

* Could there be one BIA booth set up instead of various vendors?
* Giving away Downtown Dollars at a single event limits the audience
* Could the art walk booklet be given away along with candy, instead of Downtown Dollars?
* Could the Downtown Dollars be included in the art walk booklet? (logistically more complicated, and the booklet is already in print)
* Can the dollars be tied to the art walk booklet marketing campaign?

The motion:

“To approve funds for Downtown Dollars to a maximum of ($ TBD) to support the free Halloween event at Bingemans” has been amended to the following:

*Moved by Councillor Sarah Marsh, seconded by Councillor Debbie Chapman*

“That the Board approve the purchase of candy to give away along with the art walk booklet at a BIA booth during the Bingeman event.”

**Carried Unanimously**

*Moved by Councillor Sarah Marsh, seconded by Phong Trang*

“That the BIA staff present new marketing ideas for how to use the Downtown Dollars”

**Carried Unanimously**

**Action item:** Look at a plan to use Downtown Dollars in association with the current public art projects and art walk booklet.

**CHRISTKINDL PROGRAMMING**

Jeff Young, manager of Events, city of Kitchener, noted that the planning of this event is still in flux. Initial plans included a series of smaller locations, controlled access, storefront displays, King Street activations, some street closures, usage of parking spaces for vendors and using the Victoria Park Pavilion with limited capacity. These met with the support of Waterloo Region Public Health, but no official approval has been given. However, since the most recent changes to provincial guidelines of capacity at public gatherings, planning had to change once more.

Here are some possible ideas and challenges the team is considering:

* Have a virtual component to the event featuring the history of the event and highlighting Christmas celebrations around the world.
* Projection of pas performances on a downtown wall.
* Access and capacity need to be controlled to fulfill provincial guidelines at the same time ensuring a positive experience.
* More passive experiences that also encourage movement around downtown.

Following the presentation, the Directors provided the following feedback:

* The additional ask of $5000 for BIA to spend for the event is likely not necessary as additional staffing and fencing will not be needed.
* Concern was raised if vendors would be interested to take part with the current 25 capacity at public gatherings.
* If the capacity doesn’t change, treat the event as a marketing opportunity for downtown businesses.
* Decorate downtown instead, to entice visitors to come.
* It’s important to consider the mental wellbeing of citizens especially in the upcoming winter months, so continuing to build awareness of the downtown businesses and to explore safe activations of downtown is crucial.

It was agreed to differ the motion to ask for funds till the October meeting. The BIA will continue to work with Jeff’s team to find solutions for safe activations during Christkindl Market.

**DIGITAL SIGNAGE DOWNTOWN**

The city of Kitchener is undertaking a Downtown Kitchener Digital Sign Study in order to evaluate the merits of allowing digital sings in downtown. Currently digital signs are not allowed, but the city has seen an increase in requests for these types of signs. Andrew Pinnell from Planning, city of Kitchener, invited the Board to share feedback on the benefits, concerns and limitations on usage.

Directors shared the following feedback:

**Benefits**

* Create a happy vibe.
* Modernize the downtown.
* Provide additional lighting.
* Add excitement.
* Create opportunity to promote businesses.

**Concerns**

* Privatization and influx of advertising.
* Take away form the small-town charm/intimacy of downtown.
* Take away from the local art aesthetic.
* Mental static – may be challenging for some residents.

**Limitations**

To address concerns, the following ideas were suggested by Directors:

* Limiting the size of signage.
* Limiting the hours of operation of signage.
* Providing guidance on type of screen to be used.
* Limiting the location on buildings.

Once a tentative position will be put together by the city, the Board will hear back.

**Action item:** Andrew Pinnell to send an email to Directors to invite further comments.

**CONSTRUCTION UPDATES**

Cory Bluhm informed the Board, that most structures are in place in the placemaking renovation of Queen Street with majority of construction on target. There will be a market added to Vogelsang Green acknowledging the contribution of local businesses. Street murals will also be coming soon.

The renovation of Carl Zehr square is scheduled to be completed next summer. Updates to Council will be provided soon and will be shared with the Directors.

**2021 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Linda Jutzi talked about three possible scenarios that would affect the budget:

1. Pre COVID.
2. Experienced after COVID.
3. New scenario in 2021

Directors raised questions and suggestions to consider while discussing the 2021 budget:

* Would closure of King Street be possible and effective in 2021 as a placemaking intervention? As seen in the example of the closure of side streets in Belmont Village this summer.
* Work with city of Kitchener to collaborate on a large/spectacular closure.
* Come back with a plan for making downtown a safe and inviting place including a marketing plan to promote downtown businesses and a downtown experience.
* Intending to meet with membership to get feedback.
* If King Street is to be closed in 2021, it is crucial that business and restaurant owners need to seriously commit to participating in that activation.
* Use monies typically allotted to festivals, to work with downtown businesses to create safe and interesting spaces for visitors.
* Turn King Street into a one-way street, expand pedestrian space, have shared block parties/dinning experiences.
* Collectively build partnerships, create ambiance.
* Downtown lost an audience as offices closed and people are working from home: need to look at what audience to target – most likely the condo residents thus make downtown an extension of their living room.
* Need to consider significant changes that will happen with the introduction of a cycling grid in downtown.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was recorded.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Moved by Benjamin Mathew, seconded by Julie Phillips*

“That the meeting adjourn.”

**Carried Unanimously**