



October 27, 2021
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, Darren Becks, Julie Phillips, Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, Benjamin Mathew, and Sgt. Kelly Prebble.
Regrets: Michael Rederer
Recorder: Stefanie Golling

The meeting began at 8:32 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 approves the agenda.”

Carried Unanimously

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Cara Watson, seconded by Erika Holenski

“That the Board approves the September 22, 2021 meeting minutes.”

Carried Unanimously

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Debbie Chapman

“That the Board approves the September 28, 2021, Special Budget Meeting.”

Carried Unanimously

Q3 FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Phong Tran provided an overview of the Q3 Financial Report, including a summary of the income statement and balance sheet.

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Erika Holenski

“That the Board approves the Q3 Financial Report, as presented by Phong Tran.”

Carried Unanimously

ISSUES FACING DTK

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Cara Watson

“That the Board moves in-camera.”

Carried Unanimously

Moved by Erika Holenski, seconded by Cara Watson

“That the Board moves out of camera.”

Carried Unanimously

SMALL GROUP SESSION OVERVIEW

Darryl Moore thanked the team for their efforts and noted that attendance was well over what we would have had at a large Town Hall Meeting.

Linda Jutzi shared that overall, members were super appreciative of what we did during the pandemic, including the Business Sustainability Grant, patio program expansion, horticulture investments, DTK Art Walk, live music, and in general, how downtown looked. Some of the disappointment was that a grant program was not returning, patio sails (will be replaced in 2022), the need to make downtown clean, and the concern that the budget heavily supports patios and beautification – not the retail, health, and wellness industry. Ms. Jutzi noted that their feedback was heard loud and clear, and staff is working to assist the few retailers right away by offering the opportunity to book live entertainment in their shop.

Another topic we received a significant amount of feedback around was large events. The feedback was very mixed. Some members feel that large events do not support their business, block them off, and hurt them. They do not want to see that kind of money put in them – while others would like to see them stay. Overall, more businesses did not want to see investment into large events. The Christkindl Market was highly supported, with several comments from people wanting to see a longer market turning downtown into a beautiful place during the holidays.

The biggest takeaways were beautification, cleanliness, and safety.

Ms. Jutzi expressed her appreciation for Darren Becks’ time at the sessions; it was great to have a city presence. Mr. Becks added that the notes were well done and reflected the dialog and tone. Yesterday Economic Development met and reviewed the detail and feedback provided at the small group sessions. A follow-up meeting will take place to discuss logistical issues for events and how staff can mitigate issues. Mr. Becks further added that he is always encouraged by the positivity despite the struggles businesses may be having; they are very pro downtown and are happy to be a part of what is going on.

Further Director comments:

- Lighting and surveying in suburban neighbourhoods were interesting comments discussed. We have done a lot of commercial advertising; perhaps we could look at a survey in the future to gather more information from these areas.
- There are three core groups that the downtown can attract: (1) live within the core (this number will increase and counterbalance the office spaces), (2) beyond that broader downtown neighbourhood, and (3) the suburbs—wondering if we take a look at doing a Winterlicious event with our restaurants this winter and target geographic areas with a coupon to see response rates. It might help target marketing going forward.
 - Staff is working hard with THEMUSEUM for UNZIPPED. We have an exhibition coming downtown that we can connect with and try hard to get people to experience the core during the winter.
- I am wondering about some of the comments regarding the Art Walk. Can we keep some of the artwork up for longer?
 - The legal artist agreement was for one year and will need to change. We have to figure out which pieces will shift, but we predict replacing eight or nine.
- The concern for large events – what if we look at putting the huts in the middle of the street back to back, allowing for interaction with businesses and the vendors.
 - We need to look at events before making a drastic change. If events start moving into other parts of the city, it could be hard to get them back. Let's find things that we can do differently that will quickly respond to these issues and concerns.
 - With everyone moving into the condos, hopefully, it will change the demographics downtown. Are they going to like our large events? It's hard to tell what is relevant. Big events attract people, but the trickle-down effect is what the businesses want.
- Events cannot leave the core; they are the city's heartbeat and are branding to showcase the downtown.
- The patio investment that the BIA made a significant and impactful difference. Having rollover money has allowed us to make these impactful changes – what is the next significant investment?
- After hearing feedback, is 2022 the right time to reassess our strategic priorities? Is that too soon? The pandemic is still fresh. We need to look forward, but we will still have side effects. But where do we want to go in the next four to five years?
 - Normally this would be the year to rewrite our priorities or change. 2021 didn't feel like the right time when we were still in a pandemic.
 - We have been consistent in thinking of recovery efforts. Economic Development is working on a visioning strategy that will involve groups and stakeholders—looking forward to bringing some of that back to the

next Board Meeting. These will help shape the cities' efforts related to the downtown and collaborative efforts with the BIA.

- The priorities are broad enough, not sure 2022 is the year to change that.

Ms. Jutzi concluded the discussion by stating the budget will remain as presented. Overall, it was well-received, and there was no super negative feedback.

CHRISTKINDL MARKET

Linda Jutzi shared an update on the Christkindl Market, noting the following:

- The Special Events Team (under Jeff Young) and the Christkindl Committee have had many iterations of the event. Details are still being sorted; however, as of yesterday, we will be putting approximately 18 huts along Gaukel Street and within the surface parking lot.
 - We have arranged to bring the huts down this week for some cool programming the EcDev team is doing and will stay there until Christkindl.
- There is a desire also to put huts at the Kitchener Market. This additional location is to be determined.
- After receiving confirmation that the Christkindl Market will be staying downtown and returning to King Street next year, the BIA agreed to make a sizeable investment to replace the broken lights and decorations. Darren Becks introduced the BIA to a company named Shack Shine, who will provide a sustainable solution and replace the broken lighting. The BIA staff will assist with final touches and animal placement.
- In year two, the group will look for a sponsorship to cover this investment. Ms. Jutzi added that it has been good to work with Jeff Young again this year; he appreciated the investment as he does not have the event team.
- The event is scheduled to take place from Thursday, December 2, to Sunday, December 5.

Once details are finalized, Ms. Jutzi will send an update to the board.

Director questions:

- Are we doing to do storefront window decorating again this year?
 - Yes, windows will begin on November 6.
- Is there going to be a Holiday gift buying guide?
 - We have updated the new shopping and dining guide that will be available online.

WRPS

Sergeant Kelly Prebble joined the meeting to provide an update on behalf of the Waterloo Region Police Service. Sgt. Prebble acknowledged there is still a visibility concern; Cst. Lee Elliott has been downtown quite a bit, working with community members on concerns. Additionally, after speaking with Inspector Bonn, Sgt. Prebble could confirm that additional resources have been assigned to the core.

Director comments:

- There were a number of concerns around safety and security at the small group sessions.
- What is the process for calling WRPS now, and how should the membership move forward?
- When members are calling dispatch are long waits and causing frustration. This is not a good use of time.
- Has WRPS seen an escalation in calls to service for crime and drug use?
- Can help us understand the vision for community policing? I thought more of what you were doing previously when we had a dedicated officer, consistently involved in conversations with the BIA. This was helpful and felt like downtown concerns in general were being addressed and responded to.
- When might we see better resourcing in the downtown? Back on slack app and community resource officer relationship?
- When a business owner has an issue Slack was useful; now that we do not have a dedicated response – is the response that we are unable to use it right now?
- We are seeing more mental health issues. There may be some value at looking back at 2019 to 2021 stats.

Sgt. Prebble noted that the non-emergency line is not new to downtown. If businesses want to share frustrations, they should begin tracking and recording those times; this will help start a conversation. If businesses are seeing consistent issues, have them let Cst. Lee Elliott know. Downtown is within his portfolio of responsibility. Right now, patrol is a divisional responsibility. WRPS is downtown, but there is not a dedicated officer.

Sgt. Kelly Prebble left the meeting.

Further Director discussion:

- Information being said feels like we are taking a step backwards.
- It is an entirely different structure (re: WRPS).
- Is it time to update the membership, and update the calling card?
- Maybe we need to ask the membership, through Constant Contact, what they are experiencing.

OTHER BUSINESS

Darryl Moore shared that the BIA team has applied for significant grant funding. Linda Jutzi added that Kitchener is one of the highest spending downtowns, outside of Toronto. The BIA has submitted three applications for funding, requesting close to \$600K. The submissions were to support the DTK Art Walk, Patio Program and Holiday Programming.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Phong Tran

“That the meeting adjourn.”

Carried Unanimously