



**Downtown  
Kitchener**  
Business  
Improvement  
Area

## **ANNUAL TOWN HALL • 2024 MEETING**

### **Attendees:**

1. Darryl Moore, CMG Entertainment
2. Cara Watson, AOK Craft Beer & Arcade
3. Michael Rederer, RBC
4. Laird Robertson, NEO Arcitecture
5. Councillor Stephanie Stretch, Ward 10
6. Rick Farwell, City of Kitchener
7. Councillor Debbie Chapman, Ward 9
8. Julie Phillips, Big Brothers Big Sisters
9. Karan Pachchigar, Bank of Nova Scotia
10. Dani Stock, AOK Craft Beer & Arcade
11. Steve Jenereaux, AOK Craft Beer & Arcade
12. Sydney Laurie, Marlowe
13. Wes Klassen, odd duck wine and provisions
14. Aura Hertzog, City of Kitchener
15. Jordan Dolson, Legacy Greens
16. Laura Meikle, The Walper Hotel
17. Jessica Burman, Cocoon Apothecary
18. Lane Burman, Cocoon Apothecary
19. Steve Roth, City of Kitchener
20. Merrin Manser, City of Kitchener
21. Dani Patton, City of Kitchener
22. Jen Zunic, City of Kitchener
23. Mohit Malik, Big D's Hot Chicken
24. Pankaj Batti, Ace Shawarma
25. Martha Wallace, Momentum Developments
26. Laurie Davison, KW Oktoberfest
27. Tracy Van Kalsbeek, KW Oktoberfest
28. Cory Bluhm, City of Kitchener
29. Michelle Campbell, Marche Leo's
30. Mike Morrice, MP Kitchener
31. Phong Tran, Matter of Taste
32. Lisa Brown, Ridgewood Holdings Inc.
33. Linda Jutzi, Downtown Kitchener BIA
34. Stefanie Golling, Downtown Kitchener BIA
35. Breanna Crossman, Downtown Kitchener BIA
36. Lori Muller, Downtown Kitchener BIA
37. Alexandra Giovanatto, Downtown Kitchener BIA
38. Arnold Yescas, Downtown Kitchener BIA

## **Meeting Minutes**

The meeting began at 2:07 p.m., with opening remarks from Board Chair Darryl Moore.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

Councillor Stephanie Stretch shared a land acknowledgement.

### **Board of Directors**

Board Chair Darryl Moore introduced the Board of Directors, along with the various committees they sit on:

- Cara Watson (AOK Craft Beer & Arcade) – Vice Chair, Governance & Marketing Committees
- Phong Tran (Matter of Taste) - Treasurer, Finance Committee

- Michael Rederer (Royal Bank of Canada) – Finance Committee
- Julie Phillips (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Waterloo Region) – Governance Committee
- Laird Robertson (Neo Architecture) – Marketing Committee
- Jordan Dolson (Legacy Greens) – Governance Committee
- Martha Wallace (Momentum Developments) – Secretary, Marketing Committee
- Jessica Toomer (Libro Credit Union) - Marketing Committee
- Sarah Pearson (Tasso Towers Inc., Psychotherapy with Sarah Pearson)
- Aura Hertzog (Economic Development - City of Kitchener)
- Cory Bluhm (Economic Development - City of Kitchener)
- Councillor Stephanie Stretch (City of Kitchener - Ward 10)
- Councillor Debbie Chapman (City of Kitchener - Ward 9)
- Mayor Berry Vrbanovic (City of Kitchener – Mayor)
- Waterloo Regional Police Service: Cst. James Mitchell and Cst. Lee Elliott

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

### **Staff Introductions**

The staff supporting the Downtown Kitchener BIA membership:

- Linda Jutzi (Executive Director)
- Breanna Crossman (Marketing Manager)
- Lori Muller (Event & Creative Design Manager)
- Stefanie Golling (Office & Special Programs Manager)
- Alexandra Giovantto (Creative Specialist)
- Arnold Yescas (Arts & Culture Manager)

### **MP Mike Morrice**

Linda Jutzi introduced Kitchener Centre Member of Parliament Mike Morrice.

MP Morrice shared:

- He has had the opportunity to work with the Downtown Kitchener BIA team, highlighting the great programs a small team is doing.
- Thanked the businesses for investing in downtown and continuing to build something great, noting that it is clear that there are so many people who care.
- And acknowledged the Federal and Provincial governments' importance in stepping up and putting dollars back into our community.

## 2024 Highlights

Linda Jutzi provided an overview of the BIA and its purpose, as well as the defined strategic priorities. In 2024, Ms. Jutzi noted that the team has focused on developing and enhancing the following programs:

- DTK Art Walk
- Sunset Sessions
- Stroll Walking Tours
- Social media
- Travellers Tour
- Palette x Palate
- Far East Asian Night Market
- Dia de los Muertos
- And the Christkindl Market.

## City of Kitchener

Aura Hertzog, Manager of Downtown Development & Innovation, shared that Downtown Economic Development has and will continue to focus on:

- Business attraction
- Vibrancy through daily placemaking
- Square Peg
- And the Gaukel Block

Steve Roth, Manager of Special Events, introduced his team – Jen Zunic, Dani Patton, and Merrin Manser.

This year, the Special Events team executed 25 events, many with groundbreaking attendance records. Using data collection, they obtained information about the number of people and the distance they travelled. While the data is taking some time to analyze, Mr. Roth shared the following attendance numbers:

- Canada Day (1-day event) 23,000 attendees
- Cruising on King (1-day event) 31,000 attendees
- Christkindl Market (4-day event) 60,000 attendees

Councillor Debbie Chapman and Councillor Stephanie Stretch presented Rick Farwell, Downtown Operations, with the Awesome Partner of the Year award on behalf of the Board, Staff, and membership.

## Proposed 2025 Operating Budget

Linda Jutzi provided an overview of the proposed 2025 Operating Budget and the process of how the budget is approved. Highlighting that all new budget line items fall under one of the defined strategic priorities: Beautify/Enhance, Activate and Connect.

## Membership Questions & Comments

The following topics were discussed during the question and comment portion of the meeting:

- Waste collection and management through the Region of Waterloo and Clean Team.
- Safety concerns including human waste, violence, and vandalism.
- Balancing business operations with supporting a vulnerable population of people downtown and the need for Federal and Provincial support.
- Importance of utilizing programs such as the DTK Safety Ambassadors.
- Special event data collection, and the need for finer details such as spending.
- Utilization of huts during special events, including marketing opportunities and challenges.
- Responsibilities of the BIA and member businesses.
- Vacant spaces and retail trends.
- Business and customer attraction.

Linda Jutzi shared that the Downtown Kitchener BIA will be hosting a full-day Member Open House, offering businesses the opportunity to drop in and share further feedback. In addition to this, she is working on a Special Member Meeting to address safety concerns with Federal, Provincial, and municipal governments. This meeting is expected to take place in the New Year.

## Surplus Fund

Linda Jutzi shared an update on the surplus fund, as a result of Federal grant funding. Ms. Jutzi noted that the Board of Directors has a fiduciary responsibility, including overseeing how the funding is used to enhance Downtown Kitchener.

Board Directors, Jordan Dolson and Laird Robertson shared the process undertaken by the Board of Directors, including the top selected idea and how the Board intends to begin utilizing the funding.

Ms. Dolson shared that many people are craving green space. With the increase of development and vertical spaces, the vision would be to take gradual steps and engage with proper partners to create a rooftop park on the Charles and Benton Street parking garage. Although the project is still in its beginning stages, the Directors felt it was important to share a process update and gather feedback.

Member questions and comments included potential hours of operation, love for the concept, accessibility, and estimated cost.

## Business Awards

The Board and staff presented the following business awards:

- Creator of Fun: AOK Craft Beer + Arcade
- Awesome Partner: Good Company Productions
- Social Media: Rose Café
- Best New Business: Marlowe Grooming & General Store
- Creative Marketing: Big D's Hot Chicken

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Darryl Moore acknowledged Linda Jutzi for 10 years of service with the Downtown Kitchener BIA.

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.