



November 24, 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, and Michael Rederer.

Guest: Cory Bluhm

Regrets: Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, Benjamin Mathew, and Sgt. Kelly Prebble.

Recorder: Stefanie Golling

The meeting began at 8:32 a.m., with Darryl Moore as Chair.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Cara Watson

“That the Board approves the agenda.”

Carried Unanimously

There will not be a WRPS representative today; Linda Jutzi and Darren Becks will provide an update.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Kathy Crossley, seconded by Councillor Debbie Chapman

“That the Board approves the October 27, 2021, meeting minutes.”

Carried Unanimously

WRPS UPDATE

Linda Jutzi provided an update from her meeting with Staff Sergeant, Beth Houston. Sgt. Houston acknowledge frustrations and shared there will be a dedicated resource for Board Meetings, as well as Safety & Security Meetings; additionally, Sgt. Houston is working towards having a dedicated contact/Officer for downtown. There was no commitment for foot patrol, however, there has been a shift in the organization, and there are now 13 to 16 Engagement Officers working between Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.

Darren Becks added that the Mayors Office organized a meeting that took place yesterday with Superintendent John Goodman, and Staff Sergeant Brenna Bonn. There was good conversation, and acknowledgment that there are communication gaps. Cst. Lee Elliott will be the Downtown contact moving forward, however his availability may be restricted due to hours and changes.

WRPS is using data to allocate resources and noted that they have not seen an increase to call for service in the core. The Slack app may be useful, however there was no commitment to bringing back. The app is not seen a policing tool, however recognized it worked well when Cst. Elliott, and Cst. Hickey were on the beat regularly.

Overall, the conversation was positive. WRPS is looking at other options and want to be engaged in more dialog.

Ms. Jutzi added that she shared with Sgt. Houston the benefit to having a small group do a think tank in preparation for the spring. Cst. Elliott will be made available to be a part of this group to discuss what we can do for the downtown businesses, and how we can improve. It is important to have these conversations, have united messaging, and think outside of the box before the Spring.

Director questions and feedback:

- Absolutely agree, we need to have united messaging when advocating to WRPS.
- It is great that they have statistic-based ways of directing Officers, but if calls are not being answered in a few minutes, it is not useful. We have heard from many businesses that they have waited 30 minutes or longer – how is that accurate?
- Calls to service went down when we had Engagement Officers. Do we have access to those numbers, we should bring this to the attention of the people working on this.
- Is there data for to compare from before the Engagement Officer to now? What about that comparison – that would be more relevant to us.
- With the changes House of Friendship are seeing in Guelph, next week we will see people coming back downtown. The Region and House of Friendship are scrambling to setup shelters, including another location downtown. We will need resources to respond – why wait if we know this is going to happen?

CITY OF KITCHENER UPDATE

Darren Becks provided the following updates:

- The city has applied for two streams of the My Main Street grants. Some elements are still being ironed out; however, the confirmed funding includes:

- Grants for programs and activations.
- An ambassador program. This program will include four new ambassadors to work directly with businesses. This will be a data driven approach to marketing. The ambassadors will be divided across the city, with two focusing on downtown specifically (King East, and the Innovation/City Centre districts).

Cory Bluhm shared that the biggest need is to provide businesses with wrap around services, and marketing to draw customers in. Ambassadors will be responsible for consumer marketing reports, encashment area, demographics, and spending patterns. All information will be gathered and shared with the BIA.

A partner in this program is a large transaction data company in Canada. They will be providing aggregated data, to see where the primary customer for downtown is. This information will be shared with the businesses.

The ambassadors will work closely with businesses over the course of one year. There is space for ten businesses to participate in each of the areas and apply for \$10,000 in grant funding. The interior and exterior marketing plan will support recovery.

Director questions and comments:

- Sounds awesome, especially is the federal government is willing to help. What is the ambassador's level or experience?
 - The ambassadors will be experienced, not a coop.
 - Jordan Dolson (owner of Legacy Greens) was a successful candidate for suburban areas.
 - Hope is that the ambassadors will come to Board Meetings.
- What role will the BIA play in outreach?
 - The city is going to manage and pay for the back end. Where the BIA is helpful is when working on the consumer research report, and the connection to members.
- Will there be confusion on the name "ambassador"?
 - We will take back "Business Development Officer" suggestion.
- Downtown businesses did not have a positive experience with Digital Main Street. With this program being more hands on, wondering if we could receive an update every 3 to 6 months. By the time we received feed back from Digital Main Street it was too late.
 - There are programming requirements, but if they do not address we can add on top.
- In interim of hiring, maybe it is worth while identifying businesses right way that would embrace and be great for the program.
- What if we need translation supports? Is there any option for this budget?

- Absolutely, that is why we split up the East-end to support people that speak a different language. The ambassador for this area would hopefully speak two languages.
- The Multicultural Centre used to offer this service.

Mr. Bluhm added a friendly note, that this program still has to be approved this December by Council.

BOARD REPORTS

Linda Jutzi provided the Board with an update for the following programs: Christkindl Market, Holiday Windows, DTK Art Walk – Phase 3, Shopping & Dining Guide, Rolling Stones: UNZIPPED, and winter programming.

Ms. Jutzi shared that the Christkindl Market is in a year of transition. The event will take place on Gaukel Street, and within the parking lot of 44 Gaukel. In this area there will be 22 vendor huts. This year we endeavoured to engage with a contractor, Shack Shine, to assist with the super heavy lifting, lights, and trees. The BIA staff will follow behind and fill in with decorating.

With many of the lights no longer working, together with Special Events (City of Kitchener), we purchased custom light strands from Shack Shine. Next year, the intention (with Jeff Young, and the President of Christkindl) we will look for a sponsor to cover the expense of Shack Shine setup.

Lastly, Ms. Jutzi shared that the tree sales will take place on the former volleyball space at Bobby O'Brien's. This area will also serve as an outdoor bar, and host live music. If Directors are interested in available to volunteer to sell tree sales, please reach out.

Director questions and comments:

- Are there no huts at the Kitchener Market now?
 - Correct – there are no Christkindl vendors at the Kitchener Market.
- Do we think we lost vendors due to other markets?
 - We may have lost vendors to Concordia's indoor market. Additionally with COVID-19, the construction of City Hall, and the event being entirely outdoors are other contributing factors.

Ms. Jutzi added that she has had a conversation with Jeff Young; we are making this investment because we want Christkindl to succeed. It's a transitional year, but Mr. Young made the commitment that the Market will be coming back to King Street next year.

OTHER BUSINESS

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Kathy Crossley

“That the Board move in-camera.”

Carried Unanimously

Moved by Cara Watson, seconded by Phong Tran

“That the Board move out of camera.”

Carried Unanimously

- Ms. Jutzi is hoping to hear back about the My Main Street Grants on/by December 1.
- Cara Watson shared that she had a long conversation with Brandon at The Civil; a new business opening downtown, hopefully, in January 2022. This is the message Brandon shared with Ms. Watson:
 - *"The BIA was one of the main reasons I decided to open in Kitchener. What you did for struggling restaurants with the patio program was absolutely amazing." – Brandon, The Civil*
- Based on availability, the December Board of Directors Meeting has been cancelled. Meetings will resume in the New Year.
- Darryl Moore shared that this will be Kathy Crossley's last meeting as a Board Director. Mr. Moore thanked Ms. Crossley for her service to the Board and wished the best of luck in her future endeavours.
- This Friday, the BIA will be accepting an Arts Award of the DTK Art Walk. Board Directors are welcome to attend the live streamed event.

Action item: Stefanie Golling to share the Art Award link with Board Directors.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Julie Phillips, seconded by Phong Tran

“That the meeting adjourn.”

Carried Unanimously