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Minutes: The Thornbury Business Improvement Area Meeting



MEETING DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2017
MEETING TIME: 8:00 a.m.
LOCATION: Town Hall Council Chamber
PREPARED BY: George Matamoros, Chair

A. Call to Order

- Chair George Matamoros welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. with the Board of Management in attendance. Also in attendance were Director of Community Services, Shawn Everitt, Renee DesRochers (Adorn II), Josie and Tony Poole (Sincerely Yours), Stephanie Riddell (Parlour by Stephanie), Jane Grahek (Furbelows), and Joan Jackel (Jessica's Book Nook)

- Approval of Agenda**
Request to move C.4 to C.6, C.5 to C.4 and placing Ontario Business Improvement Association (OBIAA) Conference as C.5.

Moved by: Leslie Lewis Seconded by: Skott Beaumont

THAT the Agenda of January 4, 2017 be approved as amended. Carried.

- Declaration of Pecuniary Interest:** none

- Previous Minutes**

Moved by: Leslie Lewis Seconded by: Casey Thomson

THAT the Board of Management minutes of January 4, 2017 be adopted as circulated. Carried.

B. Deputation: none

C. Meeting

C.1 Events update

In Sarah’s absence, Casey Thomson presented an update. She explained that the Long Table event was an independent event tied to the cookbook launch and it has been suggested that the BIA take it over but at this point we do not have the resources to put it on.

Canada Day is a cooperative endeavour between the Town, the BIA and other partners within the area. Casey gave a brief outline of events during this weekend and also identified that there are a lot of opportunities for restaurants to get involved. BIA members will be encouraged to decorate for Canada’s 150th this year.

Olde Fashioned Christmas (OFC) was revisited with Casey providing more details of where the \$20,000 budget was spent. Police costs for the evening road closure were \$1700. There had been suggestions to close Bruce Street South from noon till 9 pm, which would increase the policing cost to about \$4000. A very large portion of the budget went to marketing, including the creation of a website along with many magazine ads. The recommendation for 2017 is to do more posters and cards early, and cut back on the magazine ads. The lack of reindeer was a

big disappointment to many visitors and they are booked for 2017. Kudos to the Harbor Mews businesses who sponsored the Grinch outdoor movie. Another issue last year was the lack of volunteers, including Santa's Elves, and the lack of music. Music on the street during OFC is a challenge. Artists hesitate to use their equipment outdoors when it is so cold but it does enhance the street atmosphere in the evening and will be revisited. Much of the negative feedback from the event centered on the Artisan Market done in conjunction with the children's activities at the Community Centre. The market proved very popular with visitors and it was felt it kept them from visiting the retailers in the BIA area during the day. George acknowledged this and stated that the goal of the events is to provide visitors with great experiences. The popularity of the artisan market speaks to the fact that visitors like it so the idea is we will get more people coming to town to visit that market, and enhance their experience while in our area which is the mandate of the BIA. Though it achieved that goal, the concerns of the BIA businesses will be considered. The key is to come up with an alternative that is equally attractive to our visitors but is seen as less harmful to the retailers. Very few BIA businesses acted on the opportunity to create an in-store activity as part of OFC, and will be invited to do so again next year. The board was encouraged by the feedback received at the meeting and looks forward to greater participation in the planning for 2017. Joan Jackel did mention that Sarah has done a great job, but needs the BIA businesses' help and support and feels everyone should be taking part in building the events.

The Hoedown was originally done in partnership with Cedar Run Rodeo but it has proved popular as a summer dance party and so the plan is to continue the event as a Summer Street Dance. The idea of having a Beer Garden in conjunction with the dance needs to be investigated.

C.2. Board changes update: George explained that he has written council on behalf of the board asking them to expand the BIA board to no fewer than 6, and no more than 12 positions, with quorum remaining at 4 members. The request will be included in council's package for the 23rd February, 2017 meeting. The reasoning behind the request is that there are members interested sitting on the board and the BIA would benefit from greater participation. George encouraged those in attendance to become a part of the decision making should the board be expanded.

C.3. Summer Banners, lights and flowers: Casey and the committee met and some of the plans include: celebration of the 150th and decorating which will be a red and white theme which will include all flowers, all poles for banners and flags (136 banners, 106 poles). Bridge flags will fly 6 flags for the entire season, and she went on to describe further details including Hester Street and red and white lights on the Trestle Bridge with hanging baskets and more. Casey gave an explanation of costing and decisions made which include partnerships with The Town of The Blue Mountains. There were no funds/grants for decorations for the 150th but Canada 150 is sending pens and flags. Leslie mentioned that since July 1st is a Saturday it will be busier and more fun for everyone and encouraged people to visit the Government of Canada website before the deadline to order free things to promote the holiday and celebration. Renee DesRochers asked if there were to be fireworks and Shawn Everitt stated they will be held on June 30th since Meaford and Blue Mountain have them on the 1st July. Casey encouraged the BIA to send out information to all BIA members and for them to take part and participate.

C.4. 2017 Budget and Annual General Meeting (AGM):

Using an overhead projection of the proposed budget, George identified the categories and the amounts and then asked for comments.

Casey felt there should be more in the music budget. Josie Poole wondered about loudspeakers on Bruce Street and George mentioned it had been considered in the past. Shawn mentioned that at that time it was approximately \$65,000 but that with advances in

wireless technology the cost may be lower now. George requested this to be placed onto the March agenda. Given the need to order the flowers early, Shawn asked whether the board could approve the flowers before the budget process is finalized. Further analysis took place regarding costs and George stressed this is just a preliminary process to come up with a draft budget to be presented to the members at the AGM. The members will have the opportunity to change the budget before approving it.

Moved by: Kathryn Brown

Seconded: Leslie Lewis

THAT the Thornbury BIA Board of Management adopt the proposed, and amended 2017 BIA Budget as presented. Carried

The date for the next Annual General Meeting will be Wednesday, March 29, 2017 in the Council Chamber of The Town of The Blue Mountains beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Moved by: Kathryn Brown

Seconded: Leslie Lewis

THAT the Thornbury BIA Board of Management approve the purchase of 16” flower baskets and flags and banners for Canada 150. Carried

C.5. Ontario Business Improvement Association (OBIA) Conference: April 2nd – 5th, 2017 in Toronto. George explained the importance of the conference and encouraged the Board members to take part. Leslie expressed interest, as did Councillor Seguin. Directors will advise George by February 15 whether they are able to attend.

C.6. BIA fee structure update: The BIA levy is currently collected on a fixed levy basis, meaning that every member pays the same amount regardless of the size of the business. Our BIA is the only one in the province which collects a fixed levy, with everyone else paying a mill-rate on the commercial assessment. As a result, the board reports every year to the Town the number of active businesses within the BIA area. This is a time consuming process which is considered inequitable. Ruth Prince, Director of Finance, is proposing that this be changed to a commercial assessment basis as this would not only simplify the administration of the levy, but also collect the tax on a more equitable basis. As a preliminary step, George presented a schedule on the overhead projector illustrating how the individual levies vary based on the model used. Most BIAs have a minimum and a maximum levy amount that its members are subject to. The amount of the total levy collected is unaffected by the model for collecting it. The total levy is set at the AGM. In the present scenario, that amount is then divided by the number of members which in 2016 was 117, and everyone pays the same amount. Under the commercial assessment model, each property pays an amount proportionate to the property's assessment value relative to the total commercial assessment. A maximum and a minimum will put limits on what any one property pays. The number of businesses on a property is no longer relevant for levy purposes as it is the assessment value of the property that matters. The schedule presented illustrated how the levy amounts change as the minimums and maximums change. This proposal is not likely to be presented to Council before 2018 but George felt it important to get the conversation started and familiarize the members with the concepts.

D. Adjournment

Moved by: Leslie Lewis

THAT this Board does now adjourn at 9:45 a.m. to meet again Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 8:00 a.m., Town Hall, Council Chamber, or at the call of the Chair.