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Minutes: The Thornbury Business Improvement Area Annual General Meeting



MEETING DATE: Tuesday, February 23, 2016
MEETING TIME: 6:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Town Hall Council Chamber
PREPARED BY: Donna Gorrie, Recording Secretary

A. Call to Order

- Chair George Matamoros called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with all BIA directors in attendance.

Also in attendance were Director of Community Services Shawn Everitt, and BIA Events Manager Sarah McNulty. BIA members in attendance were: Joe Halos/King's Court and Town of The Blue Mountains Councillor, Tarren Gilchrist of Gaia, Keita Inoue and Brendan Thomson of The Town of The Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce, Stephanie Hensel of The Parlour, John Gyles of Gyles Sails and Marine, and Anne Wildman of Birch & Benjamin.

- Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Casey Thomson

Seconded by: Leslie Lewis

THAT the Agenda of February 23, 2016 be approved as circulated. Carried.

- No member declared a pecuniary interest with any matter as listed on the Agenda.

B. Deputation: none

C. Meeting

C.1. Welcome: Chairperson George Matamoros welcomed everyone and gave a quick summary for 2015 including the learning experience gained from the bridge banner purchase, and recognizing the great work of our event coordinator Sarah McNulty. He mentioned that we are going forward building more partnerships with tourism associations such as the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association (GTTA), and Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7). RTO7 has already been a great help in helping develop the promotion of the Fish Ladder as a Thornbury attraction. The Town of The Blue Mountains together with the BIA and the Ministry of Natural Resources will be making physical improvements to the Fish Ladder area to make it more visitor friendly.

C.2. Fish Ladder improvements: Fish Ladder improvements: Shawn Everitt gave an overview of the planned changes in 2016 including: visual enhancements, changing the gates for easier accessibility, adding a canopy, changing the glass

from one way to two way so that the TV screen will be easier to see, new paint, new signage, fish sculptures, and possibly free public WIFI access. Casey Thomson asked if there would be seating and Shawn confirmed that benches will be installed in consultation with the BIA as to the look and materials.

- C.3. Events for 2016:** Sarah McNaulty gave an overview of the BIA's events including: Canada Day, the Hoedown (August 26), the Apple Harvest Festival, and Olde Fashioned Christmas from 2015 and identified what will happen in 2016.
- Canada Day: will be much the same as in previous years.
- Thornbury Hoedown: now in its 5th year, will be held on August 26. There is an opportunity to expand this event with increased animation and music but more funding would be required. New branding will be rolled out in 2016. Sarah mentioned the need for more road closures for 2016 which will add more square footage and more animation opportunities especially for older children. The first ads went out last week.
- Apple Harvest Festival will be held from October 8 to 10 with continued collaboration with the Blue Mountain Village Association and ties to the Apple Pie Trail. It is now listed as one of Ontario's top 100 events and there is an opportunity to add more programming especially for the Monday of the weekend. In 2015 we added an apple pie eating contest in conjunction with the Thornbury Farmers Market: the only event of this type currently marketed in Ontario, and Sarah proposed that the BIA host the Ontario Apple Pie eating championship at the event.
- Olde Fashioned Christmas will be held on December 10, 2016 and celebrates its 40th anniversary. New branding has been created and it is the biggest event planned for this year with lots of opportunity for growth. Government funding has been applied for with primary focus on lighting, transportation and accessibility. The town hall will again be utilized in 2016 and plans for more street closures will be analyzed. Because of the success of the digital/social media program in 2015, we will be expanding on it since we had 30,000 views in one month.

- C.4. Olde Fashioned Christmas 40th Anniversary:** As this is the 40th anniversary of the event there is a real opportunity to begin to evolve the event. A proposal has been made for the addition of an animated light & music show that would turn downtown Thornbury into the main attraction. This show designed and produced by local resident Doug Adams would set the Olde Fashioned Christmas apart from most other local/small town Christmas events. With a proposal of this nature, there are significant costs involved. As such, a committee has been formed to examine logistics as well as undertaking the fundraising of sponsorship. George clarified that none of the funding for this idea comes out of the budget.

Gary Nordeman added that this event will be approximately one hour long and conclude with a fireworks display from the harbor area and stated that Mr. Adams has donated his time, and much of his resources thus far. Gary encourages all BIA members to speak with their suppliers and others who might assist with the fundraising and Shawn is researching whether charitable receipts can be issued. He feels this is a great opportunity for members to do something special with their businesses and to take this event to a higher level and that it will encourage more visitors in the future and more exposure to the businesses within the town and the

area. A small committee has been formed and all are encouraged to become involved.

C.5. Presentation and discussion of the Budget for the 2016 Thornbury Business

Improvement Area: George Matamoros gave a brief explanation of the role of the BIA noting that the role is to attract visitors and to beautify the area. All businesses within the designated area are members of the BIA and subject to a levy. In 2015 the area was expanded and with the development of the west side we will have more lampposts, and so more banners, etc. which requires an increase in the budget. George advised the members that this was their meeting with the opportunity to affect where and how much money is spent. The BIA must budget to break even and the total levy is agreed at this meeting. Once passed by Council, the levy is collected equally from the members of record at that time. Unlike the majority of BIAs which collect the levy proportionately to the municipal assessment value of the property, our levy is collected equally from all members regardless of size.

Discussion ensued with regards to the east side which needs beautification which would be very costly with sidewalks, lampposts etc. A plan and budget for the improvements is needed so that we can begin to work toward making this a reality. Director of Planning Michael Benner should be consulted to begin this process.

Joe Halos thanked the BIA directors and stated that he was quite encouraged with the direction the BIA has been taking with good ideas, initiatives and discussion but felt the increase to be too much. Mr. Halos then identified the concerns he had with this budget, including money spent on improving the website and sending the directors to the OBIAA conference. George explained the board's reasoning in arriving at these numbers and why they felt they were necessary and justified. In defence of the conference he explained that there is a lot to be learned in running a BIA and that the knowledge and experience gained at a conference would ultimately benefit the members through the board's improved focus and effectiveness. Councillor Seguin explained that website costs also include an increase in social media presence, not just the website hosting. It also includes making the site mobile friendly as most visitors use their mobile devices to learn about the area they are visiting.

George then invited any member present wishing to have a budget item changed to put forward a motion specifying the changes.

Mr. Gyles thanked the BIA directors for their ongoing commitment and then questioned the increase stating that he felt it was a lot for one budget. George mentioned the amount was received as an estimate and could be a one time cost. George Matamoros explained the expense of replacing lighting for the posts since these costs include having to use other employees. He also stated he felt that attending the provincial conference had a huge benefit for the Directors to attend. George stated that this budget is what the BIA board feels they need to do the things they propose properly and asked those present say whether they felt that some of the items should not be budgeted for and not be done.

Casey Thomson, in response to a comment that the levy was being increased 25%, pointed out that yes in absolute terms the levy was going up 25%, but the

area the board was responsible for had also increased significantly, and looking at the levy on a per member basis it had only gone up about 4%. She gave a breakdown of the number of members prior to the changes in 2015, 100 members and an \$80,000 levy was then \$800 per member, compared with 120 members with a \$100,000 levy being \$833 per member.

Moved by: Joe Halos

Seconded by:

Motion to amend the proposed budget as follows in order to take \$12,000 out of the current budget.

(Reduce the fish ladder from \$8000 to \$3000, reduce Music from \$2000 to zero and reduce the website from \$7000 to \$2000.)

George Matamoros asked if there was a seconder. There being none the motion died.

Mr. Inoue asked if the BIA membership (OBIAA) Ontario Business Improvement Area Association was mandatory and it was stated that it is not mandatory. George explained that the rest of the costing in this section included the GTTA and all the memberships. George also addressed a question regarding the costing for the website and stated that the BIA has to follow the towns purchasing policy because the BIA is technically an arm of the town. Three quotes will be needed and they will seek companies within the area.

Mr. Inoue also questioned the music cost for the parkette.

Mr. Inoue said the fireworks and lighting was a good idea but wondered about a backup plan because of weather. Casey explained that the music was part of the 4 seasons of charming ideal of having music and things and the need to invest in it to add to the ambience and makes the experience of visiting, more memorable.

C.6. Vote:

Moved by: T. Gilchrist

Seconded by: K. Inoue

Motion that the Thornbury Business Improvement Board Management and members present approve the 2016 budget as presented. Carried.

New Business: Mr. Halos stated that he is a team player and that once a decision is made he is 100% behind it.

George thanked those present and the faith that they have placed towards the Board and that they will continue to do what is in the best interest of the BIA members as a whole.

D. Adjournment

Moved by: Gary Nordeman

THAT the BIA Board of Management does now adjourn from the Annual General Meeting at 7:50 p.m. Carried.