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Board of Management Meeting

Date: September 12th, 2024

Location: Zoom

Present: Herb Wodehouse, Maja Prvanovic-Kogut, Peter Quaglia, Melanie Lourenco, Clay Burns, Kristin Kusturin, Suzanne Lanthier, Councillor Kroetsch

Also Present: Susie Braithwaite, Brendan Wetton, Cristina Geissler (City of Hamilton)

Regrets:

Absent:

1. Meeting Called to Order: 10:01 AM

2. Changes to Agenda: Move Councillor’s Update to Item "C."

3. Approval of Agenda: (PRVANOVIC-KOGUT/KUSTURIN) **CARRIED**

4. Approval of Amended Minutes: June 13th, 2024
 • Change date from “June 14th” to “June 13th”
 (LOURENCO/PRVANOVIC- KOGUT) **CARRIED**

5. Approval of 2023 Audited Financials:
 Herb outlined the 2023 Audited Financials of the International Village BIA. Herb explained the assessment amount was right on target for this year. Herb noted grants procured by Susie have been a great way to fund projects, some budget lines are now blank as the projects has been completed.
MOTION: That the Board of Management Approve the 2023 Audit of the International Village BIA.
(PRVANOVIC-KOGUT/LANTHIER) **CARRIED**

6. Approval of Proposed 2025 Budget:
 Herb presented the International Village BIA’s proposed 2025 Budget. Herb explained there are no substantial changes to the budget this year. Herb noted a 3% increase over last year to match inflation. Herb explained that BIA members face many financial stresses and we wanted to be aware of this fact. Susie explained this is the lowest increase to the budget the Board has made in recent years. Herb asked if there were any questions about the 2025 budget; no attendees had any questions.
MOTION: That the Board of Management Approve the 2025 Operating Budget of the International Village BIA.
(PRVANOVIC-KOGUT/LANTHIER) **CARRIED**

7. Update From Councillor Kroetsch:
 Councillor Kroetsch explained there has been a lot of damage to the gates of Ferguson Station, saying this damage will be repaired as soon as possible with funding from the Ward 2 office.
 Councillor Kroetsch noted HPS Core Patrol has been expanded from 2 to 6 officers from requests by both Downtown BIAs in a recent meeting with HPS. Councillor Kroetsch explained HPS used to have close to 40 officers walking around the core. In conversations with the Chief, he has made it clear that if HPS needs more resources they can make an ask to Council.
 Councillor Kroetsch explained each part of downtown presents unique challenges, with some areas having zero vacancies. Councillor Kroetsch added streets like King Street do not contribute to a pedestrian friendly environment; LRT hopes to fix these issues though it does not help businesses today. Councillor Kroetsch explained he will continue to work on supporting efforts in the short term to help solve these issues.



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	<p>Councillor Kroetsch noted the two Downtown BIAs have made asks for specific supports and that he is currently working on bringing motions to Council. Councillor Kroetsch added he is doing everything within his power to help and support this BIA and its members.</p> <p>Councillor Kroetsch explained there has been a lot of negative attention placed on the core. Councillor Kroetsch added the more that we speak about these issues in a negative light the more this increases the perception downtown is not safe. Councillor Kroetsch noted the continued negative conversation gives people more reasons to not come down to the core.</p> <p>Peter said he is concerned the Core Patrol does not go past Wellington St. as it should at least cover Wellington Park, First Place, and Mission Services. Councillor Kroetsch added all members should reach out to HPS and the Chief if they have any feedback, as the Chief will respond to these requests. It was noted by the Board more supports from HPS are needed for the BIA. Councillor Kroetsch noted he will continue to support Susie with these types of requests.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>2024 Annual General Meeting: Herb reminded the Board the Annual General Meeting will be held on October 1st at 10am via Zoom adding it is important that all Board Members are present. Susie explained the AGM notices will be prepared and sent to property owners next week. Susie added the AGM had to be scheduled earlier so that funding would be able to be secured in a timely manner. Susie said Norm Schleeahn and Judy Lam from Economic Development will be attending the AGM as guests this year.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Fall 2024 Board Meeting Date Change: Susie explained the Board has fulfilled its meeting requirements for the year, however, there may be business that needs to be talked about over the fall. Susie added the last Board Meeting for the year will be held on November 7th at 10am over Zoom.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Motion to Approve Contribution to Operating Funds 2024 and Parking Share Revenue 2024: Susie noted the BIA receives a grant from the City of Hamilton each year through the Contribution to Operating Funds grant that the BIA uses for graffiti removal by contracting out Fernando to clean graffiti on the public realm and décor for the street. MOTION: That the Contribution to Operating Funds for 2024 in the amount of \$7,851.15 be used for graffiti removal and décor. (QUAGLIA/BURNS) CARRIED Susie noted the BIA also receives funds each year from the City of Hamilton through the Parking Share Revenue grant which is to be used for banners, décor, and activations. MOTION: That the parking share revenue for 2024 in the amount of approximately \$13,400 be used for banners, décor and activations (BURNS/LANTHIER) CARRIED</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Update on Summer 2024 BIA Business: Susie explained it had been a busy summer from Brendan, Herb, and herself. Susie added the Safety & Security in the Downtown Committee is today and she will be bringing up Ferguson Station. Remediation of the space was supposed to be completed in August. Susie noted the bulk of the work was not completed explaining the City of Hamilton did put bird netting up in Ferguson Station and a new mural on the fence. Susie noted over the summer she was in many different meetings and heard from a lot of the members. Susie added there is a lot of desperation in the current situation; she is continuing to plead for more supports.</p>

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Susie noted she led a tour with Emily (Downtown Hamilton BIA) for Councillors (only 2 came) and staff from the city adding over the last couple of months there has been more attention placed on the state of the core. Susie noted another tour will be planned for the Spring, explaining it is important to get Councillors out to see many of the issues that the businesses are facing.

Susie explained the BIA did not receive the My Main Street Grant this round adding that the City of Hamilton was successful in their submission for funding for an event series at Ferguson Station. Susie noted the first event being planned in partnership with Empowerment Squared, HPIC, and SalsaSoul Productions will be taking place for Welcoming Week on September 28th. Susie added Strangewaves will also be at Ferguson Station for the Strange Series presented by the City of Hamilton for 4 Thursdays starting September 12th.

Susie noted she has met with the Mayor, Chief of Police, and City Manager to get more support from the City of Hamilton for members in the BIA. Susie explained some of the asks from both Downtown BIAs include a downtown revitalization plan, dedicated bylaw officer, graffiti removal for both BIAs, a Memorandum of Understanding to understand the responsibilities of the city versus the BIA, a special events coordinator shared between the BIAs for more activations, a downtown clean team, and a version of the Toronto Crisis Response program to get more social workers out on the streets. Susie explained these asks come as a result from the results of the Downtown Safety Survey.

Susie noted she has been interviewed multiple times over the summer from CHCH, Hamilton Spectator, and CHML. Susie noted she was on of the last interviews on CHML before their closure.

Susie explained the City of Hamilton is working on relocating the soup kitchen occurring on Wednesday nights to a new location in the core; this is a challenging process and will require patience for the time being.

Susie noted the encampment at Wellington Park has been relocated. The new provision in the City of Hamilton's encampment protocol requires that encampments not be set up within 100m of a funeral home. Susie added this was accomplish through the efforts of the BIA.

Susie noted the BIA was a sponsor of Hamilton Pride with a banner placement at the event and a sponsor of the AGH Film Festival with an ad in their program.

Susie explained the day-to-day management of the BIA has been very busy adding that everyday is very chaotic providing support to members and advocating for changes at the city.

12. Programming Update Ferguson Station and Remainder of 2024:

Susie noted fall programming in the area starts with Welcoming Week on September 28th. The next event will be Pop Up Village Pride and the Ghostly Block Party on October 19th from 11am-5pm. Susie added on that day there will be drag performances and a queer market at Ferguson Station. Susie noted in addition to the Halloween décor that will be present at Ferguson Station, the BIA will be providing ballons for the Block Party. Susie added the entire Pop-Up Pride event will be funded by the City of Hamilton through the MyMain Street Grant. Susie noted plans for the Holidays have been extremely challenging given the issues in the area. Susie added there is the possibility of a late-night shopping event on December 6th to coincide with the tree lighting at Gore Park.

Susie noted another option would be to hire two paid duties for four Saturdays leading up to the holidays instead of other events. Susie added it is a liability to bring performers to the area now. There have been issues with performers and carollers in the past. Susie noted holiday décor (swags and snowmen) will be going up on the poles like last year. Clay agreed that paid duties for the Saturdays leading up to the holidays would be a good piece of mind for businesses and shoppers in the area. Suzanne noted this would be a good use of resources for the holiday season. Suzanne explained Theatre Aquarius will be planning an event for the start of their season on September 28th, it will feature music, basketball related activities and more. Kristin noted they are happy to participate in any upcoming events adding that paid duties would be beneficial though she is

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unsure how the BIA would be able to get the word out that this was a program from the BIA. Maja noted it is a great idea for the area adding that customers would see the officers walking around and that it would get the word out organically. People needed to see an increase police presence in the area during the holiday season. Susie noted this could be used as a pilot project. It was discussed that depending on the cost the BIA could also look at the limited use of security guards; this is challenging given that security costs a lot and they are not able to enforce anything on public spaces.

13. Community Engagement Coordinator Update:

Brendan noted the fall campaign will be a bit different due to some of the issues we have been facing; the focus will be on the business owners in the area featuring a caricature created by GoBIA and information about each business.

Brendan noted California Dream Lounge at 185 King St. East reopened briefly. Bylaw was aware the business was operating without a business license and using water pipes which are not allowed under the current bylaw. Multiple members and residents in the block expressed concerns with the reopening of the business. Brendan added last week the business was once again shut down for non-payment of rent.

Brendan explained Omnes did not renew their lease at 191 King St. East and the property owner has a new tenant ready to lease the space. Brendan added the Ward 2 office was very helpful with some of the issues that the property owner faced getting a zoning verification report, she was thankful for this support and the help from the BIA.

Brendan explained in the summer, an individual posing as a set dresser on a film crew approached multiple businesses about a large-scale production near Wellington/King. The BIA reached out to the Hamilton Film Office to learn that this individual has done this before and that there is no film production planned.

Brendan noted the BIA continues to report issues to the city including dumped garbage (especially in the alleyway between Walnut/Mary); bylaw issues like vacant lots not being mowed, graffiti/damage to electrical box wraps and other assets, and issues at Ferguson Station.

Brendan noted a rise in graffiti in the area. The old Forbidden City building at 208 King St. East has a new tag that covers the entire side of the building which was sent to bylaw and the crime manager.

Brendan explained with the support from the Ward 2 office, two of the tree stumps that have been left on the sidewalk for multiple years now have been removed. On the day this happened, the on-parking was closed for a whole day even when work was not being completed. Susie did send feedback that the parking should not have been closed the entire time as it is very disruptive.

Brendan explained the BIA had the opportunity to provide feedback on the new Tourism Strategy mainly saying it needs to be focused on building local pride in the community/downtown and they need to approach the strategy from an emergent perspective as the city is under multiple states of emergency.

Brendan added feedback was also provided on the new Economic Development website mainly saying the new site needs to be more focused on building up small businesses in our community as we are facing record vacancies.

Brendan explained each summer the City of Hamilton asks us to complete a vacancy audit. Based on the audit, the BIA is currently sitting at a 30% vacancy which includes a mix of offices and ground floor units.

Brendan noted members have been asking questions daily about LRT and that the Hamilton LRT office let us know the conceptual design for the LRT project is currently being updated and expected to be shared publicly later this year. Enabling work is also underway and will continue into 2025.

Brendan explained the BIA has printed another run of banners for the street and is planning to complete a banner inventory and replace any before the start of winter. Brendan added a couple of the electrical boxes in the area have been wrapped with art by the City of Hamilton over the summer.

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	<p>Brendan explained apartments above Riverview Pharmacy at 303 King St East are now renting. Brendan mentioned there is a new business opening soon at 203 Main St. East, Retrosaurus, a new piecer at 181 King St and a sandwich shop at 310 King St. Brendan added the BIA has lost a couple of businesses including P&A Plastics on Main, Golden Scissors on King William, Imperial Coin & Stamp, Omnes, and Black Forest Inn. Brendan explained when talking to the businesses on the street they have noticed that morale is quite low, many seem to have lost hope that the situation will get better. Brendan added over the last couple of months we have heard from businesses about incidents happening to them or their customers including people flashing weapons, overdoses, shoplifting, harassment/threats, and parking issues. Brendan explained many do not report issues anymore as they do not see the point and that 6-7 businesses will not be renewing their leasing or looking to break the lease in the coming months. Maja said the former Luv La Vie building has been sold and will report back with more information.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Executive Director Update: Susie noted the cornstalks and bows for the fall season like last year will be going up at the end of September adding that a couple of the poles will be doubled up near the intersections based on feedback from the previous year. Susie added she is continuing to bring attention to issues to different City of Hamilton departments adding that the conversation about the state of the core is continuing to progress and there seems to be a forward momentum right now. Susie thanked the board and members in the area that continue to bring issues forward as this all helps to keep that conversation going. Peter thanked Susie, Brendan, Herb, and anyone else that had a part in the relocation of the encampment at Wellington Park. Peter added he is extremely appreciative that patrons and residents in the area can use the park again. Herb thanked Susie for all her work on the relocation of this specific encampment.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Other Business: None</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Management will be held on November 7th, 2024.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Adjournment: 11:20 AM (PRAVNOVIC-KOGUT/BURNS) CARRIED</p>

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