



Call to Order

An Executive Meeting of Strathroy's BIA was held on Wednesday, October 14th, 9am at the Strathroy Seniors' Centre, with Zoom access as well. It was officially called to order at 9:05am, presided over by Past Chair Dave Brock, with General Manager Raegan Harding as secretary.

Attendees

Voting members in attendance included Dave Brock, Brad Richards, Chris Traczuk and Sue Looman. Demetri Makrakos and Robin Tiller joined in via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes

Motion 20-10-01 was made by Sue to approve the minutes of the September 16th Executive meeting. Chris seconded. All in favour. Carried.

Actions/Main Motions

- Patio quotes - looking toward 2021, tabled to next month's discussion (November Executive)

It was suggested that we come up with some metrics to measure the success rate of the four BIA businesses that had patios this summer, providing tangible review of their experience. Demetri will gather quotes from a few local businesses to have patios made for next year and look into the possibility of getting some funding through Progress Through Partnership (PTP)

- Victorian Christmas (Dickens Dollars)

It was suggested, on the BIA Facebook group, that Dickens Dollars, or a variation thereof, are a bad idea as they will likely just be used to offset the costs of everyday items, like groceries. The Board took a few moments to revisit the specific problems that existed with the former Downtown Dollars program, including the fact that the largest redemptions were made at large franchises, such as Food Basics, Shoppers Drug Mart, and TSC, with the smaller retailers seeing much smaller redemptions. While the BIA would like to be able to put restrictions on where Dickens Dollars can be spent downtown, it was noted that these three retailers contribute almost 50% of the BIA's total levy, so there is no way they could be restricted from participating. It was also noted that we've included the following exclusions for Dickens Dollars, which were not included in Downtown Dollars.

Dickens Dollars hold no cash value; any unused balance will not remain. Dickens Dollars will not be replaced if lost or stolen and cannot be redeemed for purchase of gift cards for businesses that operate outside of the Strathroy BIA boundary. They also cannot be used to purchase anything regulated by the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO)

It was also noted that the BIA will not be populating a list of "participating businesses" in the interest of time, and in consideration of the fact that, generally speaking, our BIA initiatives see very little engagement and involvement from our membership. It will be up to each BIA member to decide whether they choose to accept Dickens Dollars or not. While there is no expectation or obligation that BIA members will accept Dickens Dollars, the BIA Board hopes that they will choose to participate. Dickens Dollars are intended to promote our downtown after all; the BIA is investing a considerable amount of money into this initiative, as a pandemic promotion, and members will be reimbursed 100% so there's really no reason to reject them. It was also noted that we will offer signage for businesses who express an interest in participating.

The Dickens Dollars initiative should begin being promoted the first week of November, with blasts going out on email campaigns, radio, and social media. Raegan will reach out to myFM and have a script produced for approval. A BIA map will be included in promotions so that shoppers will know what the boundaries are, and links to our BIA business directory will be included as well so that they're able to see a list of our merchants and services. Demetri suggested that we have a URL created with a shortcut added on www.strathroy-caradoc.ca/BIA with an accordion-style list of the businesses in the BIA <https://www.strathroy-caradoc.ca/en/doing-business/Business-Improvement-Area.aspx>

Dickens Dollars will go on sale November 12th. Demetri has discussed the possibility of the town selling Dickens Dollars with the Director of Finance/Treasurer, Bill Dakin, and he says the municipality will definitely be a willing partner in selling and distributing the Dickens Dollars, with both in-person and online purchase options made available to the public through Strathroy-Caradoc's municipal portals. It was proposed that 50% of the tickets (2,500) are sold online, in the interest of physical distancing, and 25% (1,250) are sold at both Mainstreet Credit Union and Town Hall.

- BIA Board member applications

It was discussed that municipal Council should be making BIA Board appointments mid-December and there was some speculation as to whether or not the current Board is able to find out who has applied. It was asked if Brad, Council representative, or Demetri, acting representative for the Mayor, might be able to find this out and bring it to next month's meeting.

- Caradoc Street infrastructure changes (2021 Beautification budget)

It was noted that there are now substantial concrete planters on the east side of Caradoc Street, between Front and Metcalfe. Town will be filling them with small trees and perennial grasses but the BIA should budget for some annual flowers to add some colour to these in the future. It was noted that there's been a lot of negative feedback on social media about these planters, which are ultimately designed for traffic calming measures and to make our downtown area more pedestrian friendly.

Officers' Reports

Treasurer's Report

Dave noted that the BIA account balance sits at \$59,731, as of September 30th, noting that a few large payables have been made, including \$3K to MS2 for the tourism videos and \$15K for Horticultural Maintenance. There were some questions about the CTV budget and Dave noted that the campaign runs September - September while our BIA budget runs January - December, so it's a break-even but occasionally shows a balance. It was also noted that the BIA does have a commercial now, and has since June 2020.

Motion 20-10-02 was made by Dave to approve the financial statement, as presented and submitted. Sue seconded. All in favour. Carried.

Promotions Report

It was noted that we've been working on Dickens Dollars, discussed earlier, and there are a few other initiatives that are in the works too, including an upcoming Your Town Rising collaboration, with Middlesex County, coming up in early November. Raegan is still working on collecting cheques and issuing receipts for pop-up patios and CTV payments, as the 2019-2020 campaign wraps up and the 2020-2021 campaign starts up. It was suggested by a Board member that we host a Food Drive in February, adding some incentive to donate (possibly giving away Dickens Dollars?) NOTE: there's an upcoming Promotions meeting on Wednesday, October 28th at 9:30am, Seniors' Centre.

Beautification Report

Here's Strathroy BIA's 2021 flower order:

- 38 x Bridge Baskets - Dragon Wing Begonia Red, Creeping Jenny, Wandering Jew, Lemon Coral Sedum
- 32 x 16" Hanging Baskets Dragon Wing Begonia Red, Creeping Jenny, Wandering Jew
- 60 x 4" Dragon Wing Begonia
- 40 x 4" Creeping Jenny and Wandering Jew

As mentioned earlier, next year's budget should consider adding annuals for colour to Caradoc Street planters in 2021-2022.

General Manager's Report

Raegan has been working on accounts payable & receivable, including myFM and CTV accounts management, as well as pop-up patio fee collection and communication. Various administrative duties have been performed, including meeting agendas, minutes, and reports etc. Social media and website maintenance continues to be a priority, in the midst of COVID-19, and the MS2 videos are gradually being released on our Facebook page. She has been communicating info to members re: the application process for the BIA Board of Directors/Management while also sending reminders to BIA members about how our sub-committees run, reminding them that they're more than welcome to attend all BIA meetings, along with a reminder of code of conduct. Construction work continues and Raegan is looped into that network, while also looking ahead in terms of beautification (flowers, planters, etc.) Dickens Dollars details have been ironed out, and work has begun on the Your Town Rising initiative, with Middlesex County.

Communications

It was suggested that a new BIA Welcome Package is put together once the new Board of Management is formed, along with an updated BIA Info Pack that was distributed in 2019. Another Communications meeting will be held Wednesday, October 21st, Seniors Centre at 9am. It was also suggested that the BIA Buzz is brought back in 2021, with the new Board.

Business Advocacy

Demetri mentioned the possibility of tourism-related office space going in at the old Toyota dealership at Frank & Metcalfe, which has been owned by the municipality for a while now. This would be a mix of shared office space, while also housing BIA, CFDC, Chamber, and EconDev resources. More info on this to follow.

Other: it was noted that a decision on the 2021 Hometown Festival is set to be made in April.

Next Meeting(s)

- Communications: Weds, Nov 18th 2020 9am
- Executive Meeting: Weds, Dec 9th 2020 8am

Adjournment

Motion 20-10-03 was made by Demetri to adjourn at 10:16am. Sue seconded. All in favour. Carried.

Secretary: _____ Date of Approval:

