



Call to Order

An Executive Meeting of Strathroy's BIA was held on **Monday, November 9th, 8am** at the Strathroy Seniors' Centre, noting that this meeting was rescheduled due to Remembrance Day. It was officially called to order at 8:02am, 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, Demetri Makrakos, Robin Tiller and Sue Looman.

Approval of Minutes

Motion 20-11-01 was made by Chris to approve the minutes of the October 14th Executive meeting. Robin seconded. All in favour. Carried.

Actions/Main Motions

- BIA Board member applications

It was noted that anyone interested in a spot on the BIA's Board of Directors should have submitted their application (the BIA application link has been posted online several times) as CAO Fred and Mayor Joanne have already started working through the list.

Brad provided an update that appointments, and any reappointments, will be made at Council's December 21st meeting. It was also noted that Ward 1 Councillor Marie Baker will be taking Deputy Mayor Brad Richard's spot on the BIA Board.

- Downtown patios

Demetri noted that Pop-Up Street Patios Inc. will be picking the patios up this week, November 12th or 13th. Several questions were raised about having these again next year, including how many merchants will want one, do we want bigger ones, do the fees stay the same or increase, and do we rent them or have them made? Demetri noted that Imagination Created has quoted \$4K - \$5K each to have them made, but there were also discussions about having them engineered professionally.

It was suggested that the BIA 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. There was also some talk about adding a boardwalk/walkaround to make the patios more accessible. Demetri has offered to look into the possibility of getting funding through Progress Through Partnership (PTP)

Raegan noted that both the Clock Tower and Muggs still owe for October's patio use (they have both been invoiced and reminded)

- Victorian Christmas (Dickens Dollars)

Printmore is in the midst of printing 5,000 vouchers and has assured Raegan that they will be available no later than Wednesday, November 11th. Dickens Dollars have been promoted to go on sale November 12th, with approximately 50% of the tickets being sold online, in the interest of physical distancing, and 25% sold in-person at both Mainstreet Credit Union and Town Hall. It was noted that putting all 5,000 into circulation would come at a cost of \$25K to the BIA, so it was proposed that they are sold in stages, in consideration of supply and demand.

Motion 20-11-02 was made by Demetri to invest \$15K in the first round of Dickens Dollars sales, with the possibility of using an additional \$10K for a second round of sales. Chris seconded. All in favour. Carried. It was noted that the first round would see \$75,000 in total Dickens Dollars sales and the second round would see a total of \$50,000 in sales, putting a total of \$125,000 worth of Dickens Dollars into circulation, injecting funds into our downtown and supporting our merchant members. It was noted that the second round will be discussed at the next Executive meeting, to be held on December 9th.

Officers' Reports

Treasurer's Report

Dave noted that the BIA account balance sits at \$59,628.79 as of October 31st, noting that there's \$25,726.82 in the operating account and \$33,833.87 in reserves.

Motion 20-11-03 was made by Dave to approve the financial statement, as presented and submitted. Robin seconded. All in favour. Carried.

Promotions report

Chris attended the BIA merchants' meeting held on November 4th in discussion of hosting a collective Dickens Days event. This would see independent businesses working together to create a holiday shopping opportunity, using the BIA's Victorian Christmas theme, with COVID-19 regulations in place. It was noted that downtown businesses will be running promotions and there was some discussion of creating a map and having a passport made, with posters being printed and distributed too. There was also talk of having both live and recorded music playing outdoors, and last year's Victorian Christmas candy canes will be utilized for the event. There will be another meeting held on Nov 19th and any interested participants should contact Emily (Orchard) or Kathy (Chamber).

There's been a lot of discussion about why the BIA chose not to run the Victorian Christmas event this year and the answer is simple; the health and safety of our residents, as well as the Corporation of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc By-law 41-20, which outlines the current restrictions in our area based on Federal, Provincial, and Regional responses. The COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) situation continues to evolve, as we move through a second wave, and further restrictions are put in place daily to adapt to this changing situation.

Beautification report

Raegan noted that we usually order our Xmas greenery from Nielsen's Flowers & The Country Goose, which is no longer downtown. The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc has offered to fill our downtown urns with 3' blue spruce trees for the holiday season as they have some funds left in their 2020 tree budget (these trees would later be planted somewhere in Strathroy-Caradoc)

It was also noted that the 2021 flower order has been made and it's been suggested that next year's budget should consider adding annuals for colour to Caradoc Street planters.

General Manager's report

A lot of Raegan's time has been dedicated to the Dickens Dollars initiative. This month has also seen a continuance of increased social media attention, with fresh content creation, as well as accounts payable & receivable, including CTV account management and invoicing, and various administrative functions (email and MailChimp campaigns, meeting agendas, minutes, and reports etc.)

Raegan has been working with Middlesex County and Your Town Rising, calling out for Strathroy BIA businesses to submit letters of interest to be part of a creative, inspirational project that just saw two of our merchants' storefronts 'spruced up' on a shoestring budget, acknowledging that funds are tight right now for our small businesses. These makeovers took place on Thursday, November 5th and the before & after, instructional video will be released soon.

In terms of website maintenance, Raegan has contacted eSolutions about setting up a separate email to accept electronic funds. They have added payments@downtownstrathroy.ca to our web services and this email will forward to: downtownstrathroy@gmail.com, as info@downtownstrathroy.ca already does. It was noted that this email is going to need to be added to Mainstreet account (note: login required)

Communications

Raegan has been in touch with Henry at myFM to have a script made promoting Dickens Dollars. As previously discussed, we will have posters made stating that "Dickens Dollars are Accepted Here" as well as posts to push out through social media channels. Sue has offered to have her daughter, Michelle, draw something up in a graphic that resembles the Dollars themselves.

It was suggested that a new BIA Welcome Package is put together and the BIA Buzz is brought back once the new Board of Management is formed, along with an updated BIA Information Package.

Business Advocacy

A company called EXAR Studios in London had reached out to Raegan about participating in an augmented/virtual reality 'Festival of Lights' at a cost of \$20K - \$45K, based on the level of

interactivity. TechAlliance has now partnered up with this company, making it more affordable to bring this kind of technology to smaller communities across Ontario. Demetri has taken this on as it has now become a partnership between the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and Middlesex County Tourism. It's expected that this augmented reality experience will bring life to downtown Strathroy throughout December and into January. More details to come next month.

There have also been discussions of the possibility of tourism-related office space going in at a downtown property, owned by town. This would be a mix of shared office space, while also housing BIA, CFDC, Chamber, and EconDev resources. More info on this to follow too.

Other:

It was noted that a decision on the 2021 Hometown Festival is set to be made in April. The scope of the 2021 Downtown Market should also be considered soon as this decision affects our BIA merchants.

Next Meeting(s)

- Communications: Weds, December 16th 2020 9am
- Executive Meeting: Weds, January 13th 2020 (time?)

Adjournment

Motion 20-11-04 was made by Demetri to adjourn at 9:17am. Brad seconded. All in favour.
Carried

Secretary: _____ Date of Approval: _____