

Windsor BIA Advisory Committee

Meeting held January 28, 2021

A meeting of the BIA Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 3:30 o'clock p.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Councillor Chris Holt, Chair
Councillor Rino Bortolin
Councillor Ed Sleiman
Ettore Bonato, Erie Street BIA
Debbie Croucher, Downtown Windsor BIA
Mary Ann Cuderman, Sandwich BIA
Brandi Myles, Erie Street BIA
Shane Potvin, Ford City BIA
Filip Rocca, Erie Street BIA
Bridget Scheuerman, Riverside BIA, Pillette Village BIA
Howard Spinner, Walkerville BIA
Terry Yaldo, Pillette Village BIA

Guest in attendance:

Sabrina Demarco, Executive Director, Small Business Centre

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Greg Atkinson, Planner III, Economic Development
Jeff Hagan, Transportation Planning Senior Engineer
Milan Vujanovic, Senior Economic Development Officer
Sandra Gebauer, Council Assistant
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 3:31 o'clock p.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by S. Potvin,
That the minutes of the Windsor BIA Advisory Committee of its meeting held August 20, 2019 and November 26, 2019 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business Items

4.1 2021 Business Incentives – Pandemic Business Losses

M. Vujanovic refers to the Workforce Windsor Essex Survey released in 2020, specifically the question that asked if there are any specific physical changes that the City could support to help the businesses in the BIA's. Another question was included on "if there was anything else that any level of government or local organization could do to support your business". A variety of responses were received, many of which requested things that could be provided by higher levels of government. There were few responses from the BIA's; however, the feedback would probably be the same throughout the city. The City did respond in kind; there was waiving of some parking fees in certain areas; patio fees were waived allowing them to expand the footprint and some streets were closed to allow for more socially distanced activities, i.e. dining and shopping. He adds his question to the BIA's today is "have any of your needs changed from the last lockdown and have any of the Federal or Provincial programs helped you mitigate some of the issues. What can the city do to help the businesses in the BIA's and what specific incentives would work.

The Chair responds that the Mayor is supportive of continuing into 2021 the same kind of supports that were afforded to the BIA's in 2020.

D. Croucher provides the following comments in terms of the supports in 2020:

- The supports the municipality afforded the BIA's in 2020 were huge and critically impacted the success of whether those businesses thrived or managed to stay in business.
- We would like to see the supports continued as we are still in the throes of the pandemic and just coming out of lockdown.
- These supports would include the waiving of the fees for sidewalk cafes and parklets and to include the ability to close the streets for events, either at negligible or no cost.
- We would also request the waiving of on street parking which was beneficial. There was insufficient education relating to the parking app and the first free fifteen minutes.
- The Bright Lights were welcomed in the BIA's and she asks for its continuation, as she is opposed to the event being held in Jackson Park. Jackson Park only

supports one independent business, whereas the BIA's have hundreds of small independents that would benefit from increased traffic.

E. Bonato indicates he has received questions from BIA members regarding the Bright Lights. He adds six businesses have permanently closed on Ottawa Street and notes the funding from the provincial and federal governments only goes so far. He asks if data is available, that indicates how many people viewed the Bright Lights in the BIA's.

The Chair suggests a request can be sent to the Province to introduce more benefits in light of the closures and hardships experienced by the independents and ask City Council to send this to the Provincial Government or other organizations.

B. Scheuerman advises that positive responses to the Bright Lights were received in the Riverside BIA. She expresses concern that some businesses are experiencing difficulty in getting through the red tape for the rental rebate program and adds that recently the link was not working for the site.

S. Demarco asks if she is referring to the Small Business Grants Program and adds that there are been some problems with the portal. She indicates she would be happy to walk the business owners through the process.

D. Croucher states there are various ways to quantify the success of the Bright Lights, i.e. a large part of their programming was virtual which did generate a great amount of revenue for our member businesses. She adds one of the supports that the municipality can afford small businesses in the next six months relates to the grant. S. Demarco and her team have done a great job in listing all of the funding and the opportunities that are available, predominantly the municipal and federal supports. The issues we are facing is most evident with the Tourism Adaption Fund, Canada Summer Jobs and the Ontario Small Business Fund. Many small businesses do not have the time to complete grant applications. It would help if there were a member of the municipality that the BIA's could contact to ask questions regarding these grants.

S. Demarco indicates she will take this request to her team to see if they can assist as many businesses are struggling. She adds that perhaps volunteers from the college and the university could assist through the Summer Jobs Program.

E. Bonato suggests that information relating to the Windsor Essex Small Business Centre be placed on the City of Windsor's website.

M. Vujanovic reports that on the City of Windsor website under the Economic Development section, there is a COVID-19 resources area, which takes you directly to the Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation website. There is a list of COVID economic response; everything from Federal and Provincial Governments to the Windsor Essex Small Business Centre.

The Chair asks if there is an easier way to access this information on the City's website.

S. Demarco responds that the Mayor's Office has been very active on Social Media during the pandemic and she asks if the Mayor could post more frequently regarding the resources that are available and to guide people to the website link.

M. Vujanovic that this is something that they can do.

Moved by D. Croucher, seconded by E. Bonato,

That City Council **BE REQUESTED** to continue the economic incentives put in place in 2020 for the BIA's including but not limited to the cafes and parklets; waiving of fees for on street parking, street closures, assistance with Bright Lights funding and any additional benefits.

Carried.

5. New Business

B. Scheuerman refers to Council's motion regarding bike lanes along Wyandotte Street and the lane reduction as this affects the Riverside and Pillette Village BIA's. What we are trying to do is slow the traffic down; we cannot remove the parking. Our idea is to have one lane of traffic travelling east, one lane travelling west with a bike lane and a lane for parking. She states that this matter went to Council was sent to Transportation Planning for a report back outlining different options.

J. Hagan provides an overview of what the report touches on which was intended to address two Council resolutions. He provides the following information:

- The first Council resolution referred to WBIAAC's request to look at the feasibility of lane reduction on Wyandotte Street East between St. Luke to Lauzon Road.
- At it relates to the Wyandotte Street East Corridor through the Pillette Village and Riverside BIA's, we looked at the potential to remove some lanes on a temporary basis, which was not practical.
- Council had directed Transportation Planning to look at any projects in the queue that could alleviate some of the active transportation pressures in that area including possibly reducing Wyandotte from four lanes to three lanes.
- We were looking at the feasibility of taking away enough of Wyandotte in each direction to provide one through lane in each direction along with a centre left turn lane in the areas where it would make sense.
- There would be significant issues as far as Wyandotte's function as a commuter route if we took a lane off in each direction.
- Wyandotte in this area is identified in the Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) as a multi modal corridor.
- The ATMP asks us to find cycling facilities on an alternate parallel route which could possibly be identified along Ontario Street.

- We also identified a few major obstacles to continuous cycling facilities, which is the grade separation at Wyandotte and George. There is no place to put cycling facilities unless a lane is removed in each direction.
- We will be focusing on the two BIA's to look at where cycling facilities can be placed along Wyandotte.
- Councillor Gignac requested that this consultation happen in person which may affect the timing somewhat.

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by B. Myles,
That the update regarding the bike lanes and lane reduction along Wyandotte Street provided by the Transportation Planning Senior Engineer **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

In response to a question asked by E. Bonato regarding if there are any restaurant subsidies, the Chair responds that he is not aware of any subsidies.

B. Scheuerman asks for the status of the capital works projects in Pillette Village.
G. Atkinson indicates he will contact her with the information.

D. Croucher notes they did not receive the planters in 2020 and asks for planters in 2021. It is suggested she contact Wanda Letourneau, Manager Horticulture.

6. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the call of the Chair.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 4:32 o'clock p.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR