**UPTOWN WATERLOO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA MEETING MINUTES**

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| **Committee:** | Board of Directors Meeting  | **Date:** | Friday, November 15 2023 |
| **Location:** | Erb Room, Waterloo City Hall | **Time:** | 8:00 am |
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| **Present** | Melissa, Alnoor, Rami, Kristen, Conrad, Mandy, Scott, Cindy, Vlad, Dana, Julie, Janet, George, Justin M. (standing for Kristin) Jeyas and Diego (BIA Staff) |
| **Regrets** | Kristin S. |
| **Absent** | None |
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| **Approve Agenda & Consent agenda** | Rami and Dana |
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| **Approval of last minutes** | Al and Scott  |
| **NEXT MEETINGS** | Board meetings: January 19, March 22 (date change moved by Vlad), May 17  |
| **conflict of interests** | None declared. |

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| **Item Discussed** | **Key Discussion Points & Action** | **Responsibility** | **Timeline** |
| **Welcome and Opening Remarks** | * Melissa provided opening remarks and welcomed everyone.
 | Melissa D. |  |
| **Chair Update** | * Melissa provided her Chair update. Mentioned recent events and upcoming CMT meeting.
* Scott suggested we make a budget submission to City’s budget and lobby from the BIA for spending priorities to support the BIA’s initiatives and will provide returns/benefits . Julie mentioned Lumen is $65,000 and very lean. City 3-year budget will be passed in February.
* Melissa suggested starting a City budget subcommittee. Motion: Al and Vlad moved to start. Jeyas to send invitation.
* Melissa mentioned potential compensation packages for BIA staff.
* Melissa congratulated Jeyas for being on CTV for an interview.
 | Melissa D. |  |
| **Financial report** | * Financial report coming. Took months to finalize transition of BMO accounts and cards.
* Mandy reminded about potential move to a credit union.
* Conrad suggested moving to premier/personal banking and ladder system for investments.
* We’re in good shape financially. Melissa reminded the Board that there is a $1 million reserve.
 | Jeyas B. |  |
| **Office/ed report** | * Jeyas provided an overview of his first 3 months as Executive Director, including a summary of recent BIA activities and achievements.
* Initiatives to improve safety in collaboration with City and WRPS, including re-starting Safe Bars Committee.
* Trees donated to City, damaged trees on King being replaced.
* Advocating to improve by-law processes such as licensing and ticketing.
* Community building initiatives – e.g. relationship with Emmanuel Church.
* Update on garbage collection issues and collaboration with Downtown Kitchener and Cambridge BIAs, advocating with Region.
* Festivals growing (Buskers and Jazz’s night time). Ideas to bring other entertainment such as Comedy Festival back and augmenting local venues e.g. Jazz Room.
* Upcoming events: Sip & Shop Open House at CGG for BIA members and staff on Nov 23rd. Winter Wonderland Dec. 1-2, 50+ vendors at the shops and special promotions at 20+ businesses. 20 Winter Art Walk windows.
* Special Olympics coming to Waterloo May 23, 24, 26, exploring partnerships and opportunities with City to promote and activate Uptown.
* Mandy suggested a package to send.
* Conrad suggested branding Uptown as the Olympic Village and Cindy suggested creating a map of the village.
* Mandy reminded of opportunity to improve our accessibility. Jane working on this in close collaboration with Amy Ross from the City.
* Melissa suggested connecting with local Olympians/elite athletes.
* Openings and closures update. Conrad mentioned Business After 5 group and that there are many businesses without a physical location yet. Melissa mentioned focus on retail
* George mentioned new businesses coming. Majority of interest restaurants.
* Rami mentioned significant decrease in tips due to rising cost of living. Charcoal’s group’s restaurants highest year ever.
* Vlad noted interest in vacant units at The Shops and upcoming closures.
* Mandy suggested a gift/shopping guide map in addition to other maps. Recommendations of particular gifts “you can do all your shopping in Uptown”. Increased potential for pop-ups and a curated shopping experience.
* Al: collaboration with SV on Japanese supper club.
* Justin suggested incremental ask for staffing for events for City budget.
* Jeyas reminded about Board participation and potential re-starting of Committees – to be lined with Strategic Plan pillars. Al reminded of benefits of committees: night market, hand in hand. Conrad: there needs to be follow up on Committees actions/suggestions.
* Mandy asked if holiday decorations can come to that block. Ramin mentioned site plan issues due to planters.
* Jeyas mentioned recent donations to Food Bank.
* Al suggested having regular contributions to other organizations, Melissa suggested that we can also promote and encourage without spending our own budget.
* Den 1880 opening soon.
* Sony Interactive Entertainment moving to 35 King. 16,000 sq. ft. 50-60 employees.
 | Jeyas B. |  |
| **Economic Development update** | * Lumen 37,000 attendees, growing year over year.
* Around 6 applications to CIP per year.
* Working with Heritage Canada, Cultural Spaces Fund. Looking to pilot for short term cultural spaces in underutilized commercial space.
* Conversions from office to residential. Lots of interest in Uptown.
* Negative consequences of increasing interest rates in construction industry.
 | Justin M. |  |
| **Other Business** | * Melissa asked members for 5 businesses comments:
* Increasing foot traffic.
* Cindy asked if social media is re-shared.
* Reminder for Sip and Shop for members and staff. Dana suggested having multiple times/dates.
* Conrad suggested giving ideas on how to use Uptown Dollars when promoting the gift card and social media trends of walking tours – virtual curated experience. Fashion show in Uptown. Dana mentioned collaborating with CuratedKW.
 | Melissa D. |  |
| **AdjourNMEnt** | * Meeting adjourned by Al and Rami .
 | Melissa D. |  |

**Next Meeting: January 19, 2024**

**Teams Link to be provided closer to the date**