

Downtown Oakville BIA Board of Management Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: 146 Lakeshore (BIA Office)

Minutes Recorded by Board Secretary, Chantal Ingram

Attendees:

Board Chair Susan Wayland, Secretary Chantal Ingram, Nancy Robertson, Darlene Janeiro, Erin Pavey, Janet Haslett-Theall, Lisa Whittall-Chuang

Via Zoom: Ed Rafih, Violet Jameson

BIA Member: Denis Hart

Staff in Attendance:

Executive Director, Lynette Whiley

BIA Members in Attendance:

Denis Hart

Part 1: Administrative Items

1. Call to Order:

- Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM.

2. Quorum Declaration:

- Quorum declared.

3. Conflict of Interest:

- None declared.

4. Approval of Agenda:

- Motion by Janet, seconded by Lisa. Approved.

5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (Dec 9, 2024 & Jan 8, 2025):

- Motion by Darlene, seconded by Lisa. Approved.

6. Welcome New Board Members:

- This was the first Board meeting for new Board Members, Erin Pavey and Ed Rafih. Susan introduced them and made them feel welcome.

Part 2: Town of Oakville Update

Presenter: Janet Haslett-Theall

1. Tariffs:

- Janet brought attention to the Mayor of Oakville's direction on the town's response to potential U.S.- Canada trade measures. The Town of Oakville must ensure that any response aligns with existing trade agreements and maintains compliance with applicable procurement regulations, while exploring all feasible municipal actions to mitigate negative impacts. The full document can be found on the Town Website Here: [Mayoral Direction](#)
- Minister Anon met with the Oakville Chamber of Commerce for a business roundtable. Members of the Oakville Chamber were sent an email outlining their plans, along with the Ontario, and Canadian Chambers of Commerce. They are working toward long-term solutions that protect jobs, investments, and economic stability. The Chamber network is committed to standing with Canadian businesses during this period of uncertainty and working toward long-term solutions that protect jobs, investments, and economic stability.

2. Parking Data:

- A preliminary example of the Downtown Oakville Public Commercial Parking Summary was presented. The document uses data from the 'parking pucks' installed at all downtown parking spaces to track parking utilization
 - This includes 290 spaces in the currently closed Parking garage (Church St. Parkade), over 600 spaces on 15 off-street paid parking lots, over 570 metered/paid on street parking stalls
- This is an example of the data that can be collected (day and time specific). This information can be utilized in the future to help the BIA plan events, and track attendance, or parking occupancy during large events
- A suggestion was discussed by the Board that this could become a Marketing story that encourages visitors to park further from their destination and enjoy walking/sight seeing downtown.
- Smart Commute program was discussed as a way to incentivize employees finding alternate ways to get downtown rather than driving alone. The program page can be found here: [Oakville Smart Commute Program](#)

3. Town Square Revitalization:

- Janet was able to provide a preview of the construction design to Board Members as we want to work together to promote and prepare for upcoming construction

- Construction will begin after Labour Day Weekend 2025 and continue until approximately May of 2026 so that the summer season will not be disrupted. We do not have a hard re-open date as weather could impact work being done.
- Construction was originally scheduled for 2020 following the full Downtown reconstruction project, but it was decided to postpone the work so merchants could recover from the pandemic, and Downtown could welcome visitors once again.
- Janet discussed how Lynette, as BIA Executive Director, was invited to collaborate with the planning committee working with the landscape designers to ensure connectivity with the Lakeshore streetscape and the downtown community. With her input some changes were made to the original design, and she made sure that the needs of future BIA events were taken into consideration
- The design focuses on accessibility, and creating a gathering space with ample seating, and space for events
- Businesses will remain open during construction and communication has already begin to explain the process and plans to ensure they can still operate successfully during the entire process.
- Plans are in place to work with the contractors to put up boards around the construction site so that it can remain pleasant to look at. All fencing is property of the construction company, so any signage will have to be approved by their team.
- BIA may host a virtual info meeting to inform Members about the upcoming project, and to release the official design plans. Regular updates will be provided every 2-3 weeks during construction.
- The BIA team is currently making plans to accommodate for the Home Town Holidays events in December, with Lynette working to book any public spaces now, and plan with the Town as needed.

4. Role of Council Member on BIA Board:

Janet wanted to remind Board Members and Members at large about the role of Council Members on the BIA Board, and how they help with connecting the BIA to the town's resources.

- The **Downtown Oakville BIA Board of Management** operates under **Section 204(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001**, designating it as a local board with specific authority and responsibilities. This means the BIA is tasked with:
 - **Beautification and Improvement:** Enhancing municipally owned spaces within the designated area beyond the town's general expenses.
 - **Promotion and Marketing:** Actively promoting Downtown Oakville as a vibrant business and shopping district.

- **Governance and Accountability:** The BIA must adhere to municipal rules, maintain transparency, and is accountable to both its members and the Town Council.
- As the Council representative on our Board, Janet facilitates the needs of the business community and ensures strong partnerships with the town. She gives direction to staff as to which departments/personnel to contact with various concerns or projects (garbage, events, permits, etc.)
- The requests to Council should follow the typical calendar year with financial asks handled during budget seasons; the Board Chair is the main point of contact between the Board and our Councillor. All concerns or issues regarding governance should be brought to the chair, who will then pass the information along.

Part 3: Executive Director's Update

Presenter: Lynette Whiley

1. Social Media & Marketing:

- Access has been restored to Meta Business Suite so we can now re-establish posting to all social platforms. Although we can access Instagram through the Meta business suite, we are still working with Meta to restore access to the full Instagram account- this should be resolved soon.
- We have hired a local social media expert, on contract to create posts for the BIA until the end of February. She is already creating various content, on advice from the ED
- Engagement metrics are strong despite a brief hiatus from posting. Two new posts saw higher than normal engagement rates. As we continue to evolve and grow our social media program, a social audit is underway that will analyze what has and hasn't worked in the past.

2. Financial Updates:

- **2024 Financial Statement:** Currently showing an overage of approximately \$65,000. The bulk of that is due to a grant of \$50,000 that was entered in the budget but was not received. As the 2024 Financial audit is currently being conducted, there may be some adjustments that shift some items out of 2024- specifically an insurance payment.
- **January Financial Statement:** Preliminary figures presented; some invoices pending. As the board meeting is held so early in the month, it is difficult to get a robust financial picture for the previous month. We may need to shift reporting to quarterly, as monthly reports don't always give a big picture overview of over/shorts
- **2025:** Focus will be on making up the deficit through sponsorships and new grants. This will be a priority for the team this year.

3. Calendar of Events:

- Calendar created for all BIA and member events- it is still being tweaked and finalized. It is a living document that will be adjusted as needed to reflect current and upcoming events.
- Monthly printed versions have been requested by members. Lynette and team are looking into the best way to have these delivered and will move forward. An interactive online version will also be available to members.
- Display options for the print calendar are under consideration, including QR codes.
- Upcoming Events:
 - March/April: Glo-DTO interactive teeter-totter installation in town square, International Women's Day, Easter Egg Hunt, Stroller Social, Earth Day.
 - May: Farmer's Market, Mother's Day, Summer Kickoff.
 - June: Early start of "The Pack."

4. Data & Research:

- Exploring new data tracking methods with Moneris to replace Environics.
- Co-op student assisting with research.

Part 4: New Business

1. Meeting Structure:

- Discussing the format and frequency of meetings.
- ED's reporting should align with strategic goals.
- Pre-read materials to be distributed 7-10 days in advance.

2. Governance Discussion:

- Focus on long-term planning and creating a strong legacy for the BIA.

Part 5: In-Camera Session

This part of the meeting was held in-camera as per the Downtown Oakville Business Improvement Area Constitution, (2021 amendments) Section 19.1. Lynette Whiley, and Denis Hart were excused.

1. HR and Staffing Update:

2. Motion:

- **Password/Security Protocol:** Establish a protocol in consultation with the Town of Oakville. All staff must provide usernames and passwords for BIA-owned devices and platforms to the Board Secretary.
 - Motion by Nancy, seconded by Lisa. Passed unanimously.

Action Items

1. Tariffs & Procurement:

- Review RFP processes to ensure compliance within the Town’s framework, and recommendations

2. Financial Review:

- Report back to the Board regarding the status of the reserve fund for 2025
- Clarify sponsorship and anticipated revenue and plans to meet upcoming needs

3. Event Calendar:

- Finalize monthly printed and interactive online versions.
- Determine display stand and QR code options.

4. Security Protocol:

- Draft password/security policy in consultation with the town.
- Collect staff login information for BIA devices and platforms.

5. Meeting Structure:

- Propose new meeting cadence and structure.
- Distribute pre-read materials in advance.

Motion to Adjourn:

- Motion by Lisa, seconded by Erin. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Next Meeting:

- Wednesday, March 5, 2025.