

## Downtown Oakville BIA Board of Management Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday May 7, 2025

Start Time: 6:30 pm

Location: DTO BIA office

Susan, Nancy, Janet, Ed, Violet, Erin, Chantal, Lisa

Agenda Item	Discussion Leader
<b>Part 1-Official Business</b> <b>1.1</b> Call to order – 6:33 <b>1.2</b> Declaration of quorum -quorum declared <b>1.3</b> Conflict of interest- none declared <b>1.4</b> Approval of agenda – Janet, Susan, all in favour <b>1.5</b> Approval of Minutes – Chantal, Lisa, all in favour	Board Vice-Chair- Nancy
<b>Part 2 - Board Chair's Update</b> <b>2.1</b> Susan discussed the staffing search. She emphasised the urgency with which we are working to get the two open positions filled: Sr. Marketing Manager, and Social Media and Digital Marketing Manager. The Sr, position is now in the final panel interview stage. As this is a senior position, the interview panel is to include Susan, Janet, and Nancy as well as Lynette. Through Janet, we have been able to utilize the town's HR department for help going through the 200 applicants for the Social/Digital position. We will conduct phone interview and hope to have the Sr. Manager in place to help with in-person interviews.	Susan
<b>Part 3 - Town of Oakville Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking garage is to open late June- they are currently working on the fire suppression system which is causing some delays. Pay by the Honk will be available for the garage which is a great option. Anyone who had a permit should have received a letter from the town with an option to renew- there will not be an open call for permits as the waitlist has many people on it. Once all permit holders have been notified, the town will reach out to those on the waiting list. There are 200 permits available for the garage and 80 visitor spots. The parking rate for the garage has increased to \$125/year. This is the first increase in the garage since 2017. *The board decided to wait until we get closer to the date and an opening date is confirmed before we put the information out to membership</li> <li>A discussion was had with the director of parks regarding the planters in town square that are owned by the town. The town does not plant at the same time that DTO BIA switches to our spring planters. We have come to an agreement for the future that the town will pay for 60% of costs to fill planters for the spring for a consistent look. The BIA will include these planters in the RFP and will invoice the town for 60% of the cost.</li> <li>The shared summer student begins May 20<sup>th</sup>. The town pays half the salary for this position. The student's focus is on outside beautification, and garbage.</li> <li>In the past we have had our own summer student as a part of the Summer Grants program. We will apply to this program for summer 2026</li> </ul>	Councillor Janet Haslett-Theall

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversations are ongoing regarding new wayfinding signage that will direct visitors to shops and services on our side streets. As the by-laws are strict regarding signage, Christina at the town is still looking at options. There have been two meetings to date to discuss what is possible within the bylaws, while also being effective for guiding shoppers. The suggestion is for signs in planters as well as the possibility of allowing businesses to put up flag or blade signs on the outside of their physical premises. There is also a possibility for sidewalk graphics. The team assigned have been actively doing investigations into best visibility and options.</li> <li>• A structural review for the new library on Church Street is underway. The building has been deemed safe for a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. They are still reviewing the possibility of a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. It was discussed that the BIA should be available to comment on the plans.</li> <li>• Seasonal patios – some businesses have come forward to complain that a 20-minute parking spot on the North Side of Lakeshore between Trafalgar and Dunn was removed to accommodate new patios. With the new food businesses on this block there are several new patios that have not existed in the past. A complaint was received and is sitting with the board and legal counsel- the space was moved to the south side of the road. We have heard that some businesses are unhappy about parking spaces being removed for patios. We will continue to have discussions as a BIA to examine how we support businesses surrounded by patios. This may include new messaging to look at patios in a different way. We can encourage thinking about building connections between people on a patio as potential shoppers. This work will be ongoing.</li> <li>• The town held a special events workshop to discuss how the town will help with big events throughout Oakville. The discussion included a look at where events happen and what do they look like. Currently, the town is only responsible for Canada Day events right now. With town involvement in big events, the permit process for events could become easier.</li> <li>• A Halton Region Police webinar has been booked for May 27<sup>th</sup>. The Oakville Chamber of Commerce will be hosting and managing the invitation and registration. There was a good discussion with police, all three BIAS and OCC. They are working toward an intro a greater police presence in BIA districts, but in a different format- this could include bike officers. The webinar will include an Introduction and definition of what a police officer does as well as setting realistic expectations. The webinar will focus on fraud, credit/debit cards, and cash. They are asking the BIAs to collect questions from their members in advance to be discussed on the webinar. It will be recorded and be available to watch after the fact. Questions for the presentation are to be submitted by Thursday May 15</li> <li>• Correction to statement in last meeting: the crime stats given at this meeting were month over month not annual. They can be seen on the Halton police website: <a href="https://www.haltonpolice.ca/en/about-us/crime-stats.aspx">https://www.haltonpolice.ca/en/about-us/crime-stats.aspx</a> Oakville is still a very safe community. We acknowledge that perception has been different in light of the recent events occurring in DTO.</li> <li>• Rabeeah mentioned she is hearing safety concerns from members- mostly jewelers, she gave them resources from the police and encourages them to attend the webinar. Once in place, the community officer needs to drop by to introduce himself and they can then talk to the community officer for concerns</li> <li>• The town is looking at a 'Potential Protest By-law near Vulnerable Social Infrastructure.' Delegations are to be heard again next week. If the by-law passes it will mandate a 20 or 50 metre distance from places of worship or vulnerable social infrastructure such as libraries. This would include Centennial Square because it is in front of the library. With the by-law protesters could still march on Lakeshore.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Part 4 -Executive Director's Update</b> <b>Staffing &amp; Interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-person interviews for the Sr. Marketing role are scheduled for Friday and early next week. We are hopeful to have someone hired by late-May to start in June. Lynette will shortlist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Executive Director

- Run by Mommy Connections, this is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party event the DTO BIA does not directly managing. Each participating parent receives a coupon sheet for a local shop.
- Rabeeah observed that at least eight participating moms were seen shopping downtown hours after the walk concluded- this shows that the walks not only draw visitors but also convert shoppers. The coupon give-aways have been popular and Rabeeah is exploring additional ways to connect parents with businesses.
- It has been noted that the media and promotional materials should be updated to be inclusive of all caregivers, not just moms which will also expand participants

#### Misc. Updates

- Lynette is coordinating a member social in response to recent requests from members.
- A potential seniors' walk is under evaluation- this was suggested by a BIA volunteer and would involve seniors meeting in the am for a walk and coffee.
- May social/digital content will focus on general promotion of downtown as a destination to visit as there are fewer events happening this month
- Nancy is collecting business-submitted events to ensure social media coverage and Board members are encouraged to share ideas for new events
- There was a conversation regarding a more proactive plan for events and marketing—plan quarterly rather than monthly. Events should be scheduled with enough lead time for effective promotion. This will be a priority when new staff begin in the weeks ahead
- We want to encourage members to use The Hive for event uploads, despite its current usability concerns. Ownership of event promotion should shift back to members; we will explore making the Hive more user-friendly. It was noted that an orientation guide/binder and better communication tools for members are needed.
- Janet is reviewing our current gift card vendor and has recommended "Any Card," a Canadian alternative. Discussion, do we want our card to be distinct and locally branded? What happens to unused balances if we switch providers? Janet will send vendor information to Lynette.
- It was suggested to add a short member survey in the member update for them to indicate if sales are up or down vs this time last year. This a step to understanding whether the continued high traffic rates are actually converting to sales.

#### Marketing & Promotion

- A customer-facing calendar is being developed with an exploration of adding QR codes.

#### Social Media Performance

- Current metrics are down compared to last year. Paid advertising is recommended to boost visibility and engagement. Plan to test boosting for Mother's Day and "Boots in the Square." A full campaign will be developed for June events. Generic reels about DTO will be boosted to increase tourism and awareness.
- The podcast is evolving into a video "Speaker's Corner" concept. Store owners are being interviewed with audio and video, but the interviewer remains off-camera. These will be shared on social media and in the member newsletter
- A give-away is bring planned for Father's Day to boost engagement

#### Part 5 - Financial Update

##### Budget Update

- We need to compare monthly actual spending to budget and assess YTD projections as we hit the six-month mark of the year. We are currently under budget, but we know the bulk of spending is projected for the last two quarters.

Treasurer &  
Executive  
Director



approximately 20 resumes from the 200 received for the Social Media role and begin conducting phone interviews.

#### **Office & Board Room Updates**

- The LG TV was sold for \$700 and the four blue chairs are being listed for sale as part of a boardroom reorganization to create more functional meeting space.

#### **Plant Reallocation**

- When the spring planters are removed, Lynette has arranged for the Jean and the Howard Cain Apartments to repurpose some of perennial plants.

#### **Focus Group for Holiday Season Planning**

- With the planned construction in the town square, Lynette will be looking to put together a focus group to discuss what direction to take for the season.
- Lynette will be visiting Sheer to take inventory of our current holiday decorations so that we can plan for any shortfalls, or updates as needed for 2025

#### **Website & Communications**

- Lynette shared that the website is now being updated regularly. There was still some shared concern by board members that there is still outdated information on the site, and that the calendar is still not being optimized.
- It was suggested that we return to the homepage carousel featuring upcoming events. The complexity is that the events calendar on the website is currently linked to a Google Drive to which we do not have access. The team will do more investigation into what is required to streamline access and create more timely updates. It was agreed that a full and up-to-date calendar of events should be visible and maintained, as it drives website traffic. Erin noted that the "Downtown Deals" section also needs to be updated.

#### **CRM & Member Info**

- Only seven stores remain in our CRM with incorrect contact data. Lynette is going to reach out to update and report back to Susan.

#### **Enviroics Data & Strategy**

- Reports are being pulled from Enviroics so we can compare data from other Ontario BIAs (Port Credit, Burlington, Yorkville) that will be used to inform Oakville's strategy. These are figures we can share with members in the future.
- Lynette met with Enviroics this week; findings will be shared with the board to identify trends and shape promotion efforts.

#### **Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt Feedback**

- The event drew 85 participants and was generally successful with participants enjoying their experience
- Learnings for the future include the correction of unclear registration instructions, underestimated attendance by the library, and an overall weak marketing execution.
- Event photography and social media coverage were delayed and inconsistent. Recommendation from the board is to have more real-time content, stronger lead-up promotions, and quicker post-event uploads to build momentum for future years.
- Participants asked for follow-up activities, post event. The BIA team needs to find ways to keep downtown busy throughout the day not just during a single event.

#### **Stroller Social Events**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ed recommends reviewing all signed contracts for 2025 to support the budget. Lynette has been gathering historical contract data and will continue to review so we can be prepared for upcoming expenses. There are still some missing contracts (Tip Tap) that need to be found. We need a better system for acquiring and storing contracts.</li> <li>• Discrepancies between the audit and our internal financials (e.g., KPMG reports a \$22K deficit while our books show a \$120K surplus) must be reviewed. Ed and Lynette will look at booking a meeting with KPMG so we can align reports.</li> <li>• Contract labour is over budget at \$42K due to unplanned staffing changes, offset by lower salary expenses. The salary line needs to be re-cast with historical and forward-looking data.</li> <li>• Ed raised concerns about our internal reporting accuracy and the need for alignment post-audit. Janet recommended connecting with Jade (Town of Oakville financial manager) for support. Ed will reach out.</li> <li>• Lynette will gather required data and Ed will assist so we can speak confidently to the numbers at the upcoming AGM</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Part 6</b></p> <p><b>Upcoming AGM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flow/ agenda was submitted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Call to order</li> <li>○ Introductions</li> <li>○ Financials</li> <li>○ Holiday/town square</li> <li>○ Video</li> <li>○ Member workshop activity- engagement piece around getting members to submit information- around events</li> <li>○ -put stickers on what you love/don't love</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It may not be possible to introduce staff in new positions as we don't believe they will be hired and in place as of June 4th</li> <li>• Should we the upcoming work on the Town Square and the holiday closure be included in the discussion?</li> <li>• We need a pre-read document that will detail the successes of the previous year</li> <li>• We will do an RSVP this year as we will need to gauge numbers</li> <li>• The constitution will be reviewed to make sure that everything is completed as required</li> <li>• A discussion was held around whether to use the existing strategy video. Given the absence of a marketing team, it would be difficult to create a new video from scratch.</li> <li>• We ant to share why the future looks bright with an emphasis on when we look to the future together, we will make it better</li> <li>• A section for questions must be added during financials before approval of the audit</li> <li>• It was pointed out that all meeting minutes from 2024, and 2025 must be uploaded to the website</li> </ul> <p><b>Extra- business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Living has organized a Food Truck event to be held in the town square. This is a fundraiser for Community Living. This is not a BIA event as they have done all the organizing and permitting themselves through the town. It needs to be made clear to members that no BIA resources are being used for this event. They have asked if we can promote the event. The board agreed that we can share the event on social media. It was noted that a process for sharing events like this should be put in place.</li> </ul>	<p>Executive Director/ Board Chair</p>

<b>Part 7 – In camera session to discuss HR matters</b>	Board-Vice Chair
<b>9:20 pm a motion was put forth to move in camera- first by Janet, second by Susan, all in favour</b>	
<b>Out of camera- 10:05</b>	
A motion to adjourn was put forth; First by Susan, seconded by Janet, all in favour	
<b>Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm</b>	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Identify candidates for social/digital phone interviews	Lynette
In-person interviews for Sr. Marketing position to be confirmed	Lynette
Parking garage opening information to be shared with membership once confirmation of a date is received	Lynette & team
Request for questions for Halton Police Webinar to be collected and sent to chamber by May 15	Lynette
Holiday Season focus group to be created, and a meeting scheduled ASAP	Lynette
A full audit if the website needs to be had to ensure all information is updated. Site must be updated more frequently	Lynette and team
Investigation into ownership of google drive connected to website calendar so updates can happen regularly	Lynette
Confirm contact information with final members with outdated information in CRM	Lynette
Member social planning	Lynette
Begin planning for social action plan to improve engagement	Lynette
Monthly actual spending YTD to be compared with budget	Ed & Lynette
Review of all signed contracts for 2025 and a creation of a way to track all signed contract for the future	Lynette
Connect with town to compare audit and internal financial tracking	Ed & Lynette
AGM materials and agenda to be sent out as per constitution, presentation created and confirmed	Lynette, Chantal

**Next Meeting to be held is our AGM on Wednesday June 4, 2025**