

**MARKHAM VILLAGE B.I.A.**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 9, 2024 - 9:00 AM**  
**Via ZOOM Videoconference**  
**DRAFT V3**

Present:

Paul Cicchini (Chair)  
Michelle McDermott  
Councilor Karen Rea

Brian Rowsell (Secretary)  
Daniel Imbrogno  
Tony Paul

Staff: Heather Cook

Phil Howes

Guests: Savindi Jinasena, Michael Cha

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m. by Chairman Paul Cicchini.

**2. DECLARATION OF TAX AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBLIGATIONS**

The board was advised by the Chair that to the best of his knowledge and abilities the BIA meets all taxation and environmental obligations.

**3. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

The Chair requested that Board Members advise of any conflicts of interest as they arise throughout the meeting.

**4. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**a. 2023 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The final draft 2023 audited financial statements as prepared by KPMG have now been received and were presented to the Board for approval.

Motion to approve the 2023 audited financial statements and authorize the chairman to execute the management representation letter by Brian Rowsell, seconded by Tony Paul. Carried.

**b. INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT**

Interim financial reports for the period ended March 31 have been distributed. There were no unusual items to report.

**5. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF APRIL 4, 2024 MEETING**

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 4th meeting by Councilor Rea, seconded by Tony Paul. Carried.

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**6. EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS**

- a. Discussion was held on the general level of support for events that has been received from the city. Disappointment was expressed with the City's lack of support for businesses on Main Street Markham especially when Cities and Towns around us are providing support such as Sidewalk Patios and event support.

- b. **Markham Village Music Festival**

Heather reported to the Board that the Music Festival Committee is requesting \$18,000 from the BIA, the same amount that was provided last year. In discussion, some members expressed opposition to providing financial support this year based on the very large increases in costs for the Farmers' Market that were not budgeted for. Our 2024 budget provides \$10,000 for the MVMF, but subsequent changes in street costs for the Farmers' Market have resulted in an increase of perhaps \$23,000, which was approved at the April 9 meeting. The board was also advised that Destination Markham has approved \$10,000 which is primarily supposed to be for attracting tourism from outside the Markham area.

Motion made to approve 10,000, as budgeted plus a possibility for more by Tony Paul, seconded by Michelle McDermott. Carried

- c. **Farmers Market**

Brian reported that the city has now just advised that they will not allow us close to Robinson St. at all for the Farmers' Market, even though it has been done for every year for the past 25 years, and even though both Brian and Heather have completed all the required training. There was significant frustration expressed with the city's lack of support for something which has functioned perfectly well for over 25 years, and lack of support for the heritage district in general. Motion by Councilor Rea to hire the subcontractor ATS for the next 2 weeks of the market, pending further options being arranged for the future, seconded by Michelle McDermott. Carried.

**7. DELEGATIONS**

**Michael Cha - SIGN BYLAW ENFORCEMENT**

BIA member Michael Cha gave a delegation (Appendix A) regarding recent enforcement activities that the city is now taking on the use of signs in the Heritage District. Specifically, the use of simple illuminated OPEN signs. Business owners had been advised for years that these were allowed – so long as they were not flashing or using other special effects. Members are now being told that they are not allowed, and may face fines, and they are upset. Discussion followed and many Board members again expressed frustration and felt that the city has become increasingly bureaucratic

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and inflexible in many areas affecting small business. Specifically that the city does not provide adequate information to people considering opening a business when requested, that the city's recent heavy-handed approach to enforcement of a long, complex, and confusing bylaw is not fair, and that the city itself often violates the bylaw for its own signs, such as at the Markham Museum and Markham Community Center.

Motion by Tony Paul to organize a future meeting specifically to deal with this issue and to get as much specific information as we can to understand exactly what the Sign bylaw means, seconded by Brian Rowsell. Carried.

**ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at 10:27 am

**NEXT MEETING** – TBD

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**APPENDIX A:**

**DELEGATION – Michael Cha**

Dear Board Members of Markham Village BIA,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to bring to your attention the concerns of small business owners within the Markham Village BIA regarding Section 10.4.2 of the City of Markham Sign Bylaw 2002-94, which prohibits internally illuminated signs, specifically in many cases in the Heritage District, open signs.

Over the past few days, I have taken the initiative to speak with fellow small business owners in the area, and there is a unanimous consensus that this bylaw is having a detrimental impact on our businesses. Many of us believe that our ability to effectively advertise our businesses, especially during evening hours, is being severely hindered by this restriction.

The main issues highlighted by small business owners within our membership are as follows:

1. **Visibility:** In today's competitive market, visibility is key to attracting customers. With the prohibition of internally illuminated signs, especially open signs, our businesses are less visible to potential customers, particularly during darker hours.
2. **Economic Impact:** The inability to adequately advertise our businesses can have a direct negative impact on our revenue and ultimately on the local economy. Small businesses are the backbone of our community, and supporting their success is vital.

In light of these concerns, many small business owners within the Markham Village BIA are willing to take action. We believe engagement and communication with the Heritage Department, City of Markham, and our local Councillors could be effective in bringing about positive change.

Therefore, on behalf of the small business owners of Markham Village BIA, I am requesting that our elected BIA Board formally advocate on our behalf so we can have a say in amending or disputing this by-law. I formally request this issue be put on the agenda at the upcoming BIA Board Meeting and put forth to the Board and our members. I would also like to arrange a meeting to discuss this further and explore strategies for moving forward at your earliest convenience.

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It is crucial that our voices are heard and collective action is taken to address this matter, and we greatly appreciate your assistance.

Thank you for your attention and support. This is invaluable in helping our small businesses thrive in the City of Markham.

Sincerely,

Michael Cha

Washington Coin Laundry