

Unionville BIA Board Monthly Meeting – November 24, 2010

Board Members in Attendance:

S. Taylor Wood, T. MacKinnon, G. McCormick, Councillor D. Hamilton

UBIA Members in Attendance:

J. Lai, E. Mariani, M. Tiano, P. Vasilovsky, T. Lamanna, D. Lai,

Regrets: S. Iles, C. Hunter, S. Morris

Staff (UBIA has no staff)

The Meeting of the Unionville BIA was held on November 24, 2010 at 6:00p.m., in Unionville Pizza Co., 175 Main Street, Unionville. UBIA Chairman G. McCormick presided. Called to order at 6:13pm.

1. **DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST** - none declared
2. **MINUTES** – That the minutes of October 27, 2010 be approved.
Moved by S. Taylor Wood, seconded by D. Hamilton. **CARRIED**
3. **PRESENTATIONS** - none
4. **DELEGATIONS / DEPUTATIONS** – none
5. **PETITIONS** - none
6. a) **REPORT 2010-1.11.24 - Chairman's Report (November 24, 2010)** *attached*
b) **REPORT 2010-2.11.24 – Unionville Festivals & Events, Promotions (November 24, 2010)** *attached*
7. **MOTIONS** - none
8. **COMMUNICATIONS** – none
9. **NEW/OTHER BUSINESS**
 - A. **Expanding the Unionville BIA area**
Option to look at expanding the UBIA, which would add more contributors, those benefitting from Main Street UBIA activities, with the many businesses on or just off Main Street.
 - B. **Parking**
An issue for the last 20 years in Unionville. UBIA would like to act on the ~\$65000 confirmed by the Mayor which would allow us to use the money to gain about 40+ more spots in the lower east side of Main Street. UBIA has already researched and met with contractor to reline and repave parking in the lower east side.
 - C. **New store @ 193 Main Street - Dunning Sportswear**
Beautiful new store just opened on Main Street.
 - D. **Bistro Laneway**
Paul Vasilosky noted that this year he will not be plowing the Town owned road. Councillor Hamilton noted that he has been speaking to Parveen at the Bistro on this issue.
 - E. **Lighting in the Bistro Laneway and the Stairs to Lower East Parking**
Councillor Hamilton looking into this and noted to Paul Vasilosky that part of the issue is light fixture at 160.
10. **IN-CAMERA ITEMS** - none
11. **ADJOURNMENT** Motion to adjourn. Moved by S. Taylor Wood, seconded by T. MacKinnon.
Meeting adjourned at 7:26p.m. That the meeting do adjourn. **CARRIED**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: 2010-1. 11.24

Streetscape: Tracy has successfully completed the streetscape project for Unionville and has been working on this for the last four years. New benches and regular garbage cans will begin to be replaced in the Spring of 2011. Thank you to Tracy, who has been working on this for the last several years, and to Sharon, who assisted this year.

Environmental: The new environmentally friendly "Big Belly" recycle compactors are expected soon. Thank you to Councillor Hamilton, Sharon and Tracy for working on this project.

MPAC: UBIA assistance program has now had consultations with members about their increased tax assessments and what to do about it.

UBIA Accomplishments in the last 8 years: As we move forward to new things happening with the UBIA we thought it would be helpful to outline just a few things: Please see attached.

UNIONVILLE FESTIVALS & EVENTS, PROMOTION REPORT: 2010-2. 11.24**Christmas Trees on Main Street:**

Greg and Tracy have got the street trees and lighting, designed, installed, decorated, and lighted – a huge effort again. Thank you to Councillor Hamilton for getting the electrical fixed so that all of the trees will be lit this year by Unionville Olde Tyme Christmas.

Unionville Santa Hut:

Thank you to Sharon at What Girls Want for offering to cover the Unionville Santa Hut and Main Stage for the Unionville Olde Tyme Christmas weekend.

Unionville Olde Tyme Christmas Parade:

December 3rd Parade @ 7pm – one of only two street closures , so please tell your staff and customers.

Details were sent to members.

A REVIEW OF WHAT UBIA HAS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE LAST 8 YEARS.

Initiated a first ever street-wide \$5000 Shopping Spree Campaign with a coordinated, regional media and marketing campaign to counter the negative effects of the SARS outbreak in Unionville. Ensured Unionville was included in special grant created by working with the Town and York Region to support rebuilding after SARS outbreak.

Established close links and liaison, with regular communication with our local schools – primary, secondary, public, Separate, Montessori, and other private schools.

Helped in expanding the unique role of UVA, as the only residents/business cooperative ratepayers association anywhere. Both Greg McCormick and Tracy MacKinnon have sat on the board for years. UVA has developed into a great resource for expertise and support for the businesses in Unionville.

Act to protect the Stiver Mill from being demolished and rebuilt as a Medical Office complex. Joined with UVA to form a Stiver Mill Defence team including a legal defence team which was successful in preserving Stiver Mill from destruction.

Prevented the installation of speed bumps on Main Street from Highway 7 to Carlton Road. Researched, designed and created an alternative to speed-bumps using a combination of Raised-Intersections and Centre-Median-Rollovers, which was accepted by both residents and businesses and installed on Main Street from Railway tracks to Highway 7.

Participated in multiple Unionville Galas, including the establishment of the first Unionville Gala to fundraise for community projects including: the Unionville bandstand, the Unionville Bandstand Landscaping, the Unionville Bandstand Playground, The Varley Art Gallery, the Eckhardt-McKay House restoration, the Eckhardt McKay House garden project. Tracy MacKinnon was Chair of two of the three Unionville Galas, which raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in a cooperative effort of residents, businesses, our councillor, local sponsors, and the Town.

The UBIA took a lead role in creating a successful format for the establishment of “Doors Open Markham” as a large and successful promotion of tourism and heritage. Tracy MacKinnon acted as Chair of Doors Open Markham for four years, creating a Town-wide event which became the third largest “Doors Open” event in Ontario.

Incorporated the Heritage Railway into events in Unionville including the successful “Santa Trains” which saw thousands of visitors come to Unionville each Christmas for “sold-out” train rides and shopping. Both Tracy MacKinnon and Greg McCormick were asked to join the Heritage Train Board and sat as members of the board for years to help to completely restructure its operations to successfully save the Heritage Railway from bankruptcy.

Both Greg McCormick and Tracy MacKinnon sat on the Board of the Unionville Historical Society to save it from dissolution. Along with local residents, they worked to reclaim money and historical assets which had been given away. They also worked to rebuild this important organization and re-establish its viability for the future as a repository for Unionville artefacts and a chronicler, protector and preserver of Unionville’s heritage.

Formed a coalition of the UBIA, UVA, and our Councillor with the assistance of the Town, to prevent a takeover of UBIA and UVA by the group known as the “Friends of Unionville”. Ensured group Trillium funding was properly allocated and dispersed to the community as outlined in the Trillium Grant Proposal, in spite of objections by the group known as the “Friends of Unionville”.

Stopped the Town of Markham from continuing to charge the UBIA for street flowers while other areas of Markham got similar street flowers for no financial contribution. This was a multi-year lobbying effort which now saves the UBIA approximately \$15,000 per year. from street flowers

Created a combination of highly marketed and branded events incorporating the largest number of festivals and events north of Toronto (which has also lead to an increase in Varley Gallery attendance.)

Re-established a traditional Village of Unionville Remembrance Day service. Emphasis of involving local youth with a "Class A" ceremony with handmade wreathes, etc.,....)

Creation of the only Simcoe Day festival in Ontario.

Creation of largest Celtic Festival in GTA.

Creation of only Oktoberfest in GTA.

Increased visits to Main Street to over one million per year.

Created a desirable business atmosphere, with a zero percent UBIA tax increase for over six years.

Raised property values in Main Street Unionville and surrounding residential areas to new record heights.

Successfully attracted new retail to area with the current Main Street Unionville vacancy rate now at one of the lowest levels ever,inspite of the worst economic downturn since the depression.

Created a strong voice and advocate for the interest of Unionville merchants at the Town, and with local residents groups.

Created and operated two successful Unionville International Canadian Open Street Parties" in cooperation with Angus Glen and the two Canadian Open Golf Championships held in Unionville.

Created the largest Merchant/resident Halloween children's tour- with over 1500 children participating in 2010 alone.

Developed a year long program for streetscape decorations include flags, banners, furniture, posterings, brochures, lighting, for an all-season street.

Attended at, and contributed to, numerous Town committees and meetings on behalf of Main Street Unionville merchants. Unionville has been represented at more Town meetings than ever before.

Successfully lobbied Tourism Toronto to become the first ever member of Tourism Toronto from outside of the city of Toronto.

Cooperated with businesses,local residents, and the Town to create a progressive and successful "No Office on the Ground Floor" bylaw for Main Street Unionville, to protect the retail shopping environment and prevent Unionville from becoming just another a strip of ground level offices. Offices are supported on the upper and lower levels of the street. Cooperated with UVA, UHS, the Town and resident retail experts to form a legal defence to a challenge of this bylaw at the OMB. Successfully defended this bylaw at the OMB, with the OMB judge declaring the Unionville's bylaws are an example of "good planning". In the words of John Kuri of the Toronto BIA, "God Bless Unionville", for its restaurant and office bylaws – ahead of their time in the Toronto area and the envy of other municipalities and heritage destinations that are interested in protecting and promoting their retail base.

Created and operated the first dedicated tour bus system in Toronto. Received accolades and requests from numerous other tourism areas looking to emulate Unionville BIA in this regard.

Created European-style wide-boulevards by getting cars off the boulevards in the spring/ summer/fall months. Created wide walking, shopping, café-friendly area. This concept was first of its kind in all of the GTA.

First “open street festival concept” in GTA. As noted by John Kiru, of the Toronto BIA, closing streets for festivals is a growing problem. Unionville has already solved this problem. Now street festivals operate with no street closures to maximize parking and include the whole street in the festival.

Created the concept of Tourism Unionville along with successful branding of Unionville, one of the most heavily visited websites in the GTA, a regular system of press releases, and the Unionville Info line phone line which receives an average of over 80 inquiries about Unionville per day.

Creation and development of local walking tours, tour bus parking and tours, merchant offers for tour groups, hotel packages, “Unionville Shopping Dollars” campaign.

Creation of the Unionville Hotel Group, linking Unionville to all local major Hotels with Tracy MacKinnon as coordinator and leader.

Creation of local Golf packages

Inclusion of Unionville in the Downtown Toronto Concierge network

Linkage with the partnerships and marketing directives of Tourism Ontario as a new partner.

Improving and re-establishing good relations with local residents groups including active membership in UVA, URA, UHS . Local Community relations never better.

Normalizing UBIA business practices –regular minutes-regular meetings- quorum of directors,etc.,....

Transitioning the UBIA through all of the new requirements of the new Bill 130.

Developing a sponsorship program for Main Street Unionville.

Branding –marketing plan- business plan- paid off debt from previous board.

In house creation of the Unionville Brochure – now break even and including area tourism ventures as the lead tourism piece north of the GTA.

All artwork, designs, posters, new releases, marketing, television, radio, newsprint, news conferences, promos

Branding-street name- postal codes-

Street signage

Unionville Banner Program

Unique heritage sign bylaws for Unionville

Tracy MacKinnon developed parking solution with full budget and contractors ready to go for east side parking

Tracy Mackinnon instrumental in helping town and groups redesign speed bumps on north end of Main along Carlton and Village Parkway.

Tracy has completed work for new garbage cans that will be appearing this spring on street

Tracy has finished work on new street furniture that will be appearing on street this spring

Created the Unionville Summer concert series with over 1258 concerts/performances of mostly local performers.

Busker program developed and in place on street boulevards

Tracy MacKinnon redesigned flowers on street – new species selection now standard – reduced water and greater size to fill towns reduction .

Tracy Mackinnon Chaired the Markham Jazz Festival and lead the effort to save it from collapse. UBIA saved the Markham Jazz Festival.

UBIA saved Unionville Heritage Festival from collapse after it was abandoned by the disbanding Unionville Historical Society.

Established excellent relations with local schools, churches, associations, cadets, seniors centres, retirement homes, developers, musicians , artists, performers,

Street lighting program –change street to all to natural white lighting through sponsorship and free installation for entire street.

Created a series of high-definition tourism videos for Unionville.

Chaired Doors Open Markham for six years, creating the third biggest Doors Open event in Ontario, town wide in scope, with Unionville as its focal point. Created a model for its continuing sustainable future.

Offered alternate quotes to save the Varley Gallery thousands of dollars on quotes it received for Eckhardt House fence project. Offered Gallery concept of recreating fence to replicate original design found in old photographs.

Advised Gallery on changing its hours of operation to match those of the street, in particular, requested that Varley Gallery open during BIA Street festivals and events to boost gallery attendance.

Initiated investigation into which businesses are included and which businesses are not included in UBIA levy. Corrected list to include numerous new contributors to share levy burden more equitably. Requested Town add non-contributing members to pay their share of levy.

Created first ever Unionville Information Phone line. 905 477 0117 as the source for all tourism and business related info for Main Street Unionville and area tourism. Phone line "manned" 12 hours per day including weekends and all holidays with "live" assistance.

Created first ever expert review, appeal, and assistance consultation service for MPAC – free of charge to all members of UBIA.

Created, and installed first ever Unionville Gateway Sign at Main and Highway Seven after a nine year effort against numerous municipal roadblocks. Sign erected by UBIA, December 2010.

Initiated steps for creation of a special tax area for Unionville which will bring in drastically lower tax rates.

Initiated work on designating Unionville as a National Heritage Site, to provide greater protection for Unionville's heritage, have Unionville nationally recognised, and gain access to new, substantial federal grants/funding programs specifically designed for recognised heritage areas.

PREPARING FOR NEXT STEPS:

Next step is setting up a street wifi system to link up Point of Sale systems into a software management system designed for tracking visits and sales on the bus – along with a transmitting system for guiding tourist and visitors to sites with feedback and tracking of history, sales, menus on the street

Need for expansion of BIA boundary south of tracks on Main south to encompass existing businesses outside boundary yet benefitting from work of UBIA. Also need to expand UBIA boundary along Station Lane to include new Stiver Mill commercial tenants. Need to expand UBIA boundary to include Fred Varley Plaza (to be redeveloped soon). All these commercial areas benefit from or will benefit from their proximity to Main Street Unionville BIA. They should contribute, thus lowering share of levy for all contributors.

Public washroom work needs to be completed.

Trade show presence and travel industry writer liaison, as well as FAM tours must continue and expand. In particular, downtown concierge networking and membership in association is priority.

UBIA must apply for a large, multi-year Trillium Grant in 2011.

