

**Unionville BIA – Board of Directors Meeting  
August 20, 2014**

**Board of Directors Present:** Sylvia Morris, Larry Mariani, Councillor Don Hamilton, Rob Kadlovski, Tony Lamanna, Tom Vasilovsky, Paul Vasilovsky

**Regrets:** Shauna Podruzny, Andrew Black, Regional Councillor Jim Jones

**Absent:** Keing Li

**Quorum:** Yes

**UBIA Members:** Elisabeth Mensher

**Staff:** Mary Pan

**Guests:** Kay Matthews, Wes Rowe, Ray Smylie

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

MOTION: Don/Rob

To approve the agenda as distributed.

Carried

**2. Approval of the minutes of July 16**

MOTION: Rob/ Don

To approve the minutes of July 16 with the motion that the UBIA bring a deputation, lead by Tony Lamanna, about the problem of lack of parking availability as a part of the approval process for the Unionville Revitalization Plan.

Carried

Tom Vasilovsky was away during last meeting and asks to address an item from the minutes under communications regarding the concerns that his business is cordoning off parking for paying customers. He shared and raised the on-going issue of not having parking available to their customers. He asks for support from the City because his business has invested and spent tens of thousands of dollars to upgrade their parking lot and yet it is very difficult for his paying customers to park. Visitors are continuously parking in his lot largely because of its central location and accessibility to the street.

Rob sympathizes with the Unionville Arms' predicament and expresses his support such that he hopes long term the City will build a parking facility because it is an on-going challenge. Larry feels that if we all close our parking and we deter more people coming to the street.

There was discussion around opening the access to Fonthill to open up the west side parking instead of taxing the east side parking. Don has approached the Board of Education (BOE) about this and they have declined. However, Jim has taken the task of looking into this further and it was agreed we'll wait to hear from Jim about this.

Rob points out that the issue with the BOE may be liability and suggests to address it again and take away the risk factors because there was a time in the past, where the BOE was agreeable to the idea.

Tony asks to have this issue put on the council agenda. He tables the idea about having pedestrian friendly Sundays as a unique attraction. For 2015, Tony proposes as a pilot project, providing that the parking situation improves, ongoing road closures on Sundays for June, July, and August. This will help to elevate the street, attract publicity, restaurants can offer street food, and merchants can showcase themselves. Tony further points out that by limiting the road closures to only Sunday reduces the impact on business. Response was favorable from the board members about the idea. Mary pointed out that in the City of Toronto the BIAs for Kensington Market and Yonge Street have pedestrian-friendly days where the street is closed.

Elizabeth raises question as to why is the street closed beyond the BIA approved events. Don points out that street belongs to the City and its citizens. If UBIA were to oppose street closure for the Markham Jazz Festival, as an example, the festival may decide to instead move it to the Main Street in Markham. Net benefit is that the events bring people to the street.

## **2. Guest Speaker Kay Matthews, Ontario BIA Association(OBIAA)**

Kay Matthews, executive director of the OBIAA, gave a presentation on who the OBIAA is, what BIAs are, shared and discussed info about some advocacy work they are doing including addressing the issue of vacancy rate.

She reminds us that BIAs are the core and heart of the community. We are helping our communities being revitalized. As well, our job as a BIA is not necessarily to improve our own businesses but to improve the whole environment for everybody. BIAs are a local board of council and we report directly to council. Municipalities gave BIAs life but they can also take it away.

On Oct. 1, the OBIAA have the opportunity to present at a PERL deputy ministers meeting (Planning, Economic Development, Resources, Land Use) five priority concerns 1) vacancy rate rebate 2) Govt agencies ie LCBO in downtown moving to power centres 3) Access to funding beyond our levy 4) Health Tax 5) What is definition of a small business. She shared that 74% of survey respondents felt the vacancy rate is a high priority and 90% felt it was important to a certain extent. Major themes: i) sunset clause on the rebate of 3 years to rent property before it disappears ii) property standards should be tied in with the rebate iii) and vacant properties are distracting from the vibrancy of the street.

Rob expressed concern about providing 3 years of rebate and thinks that 1 year is better. Tony suggests that in order to receive the rebate to consider as a requirement that the owner is active in listing property at market price. Rob thinks vacancy is healthy and it is a best practice with mall operators to ensure that a certain percentage is acceptable in order to refresh the retail mix. This helps to weed out retail operators who do not have the knowledge and experience. Kay pointed out that Niagara on the Lake does not have any municipal parking but it does not stop having people coming. People attract people.

Larry is interested using marketing to attract new businesses to the street.

## **3. Financial Report unavailable**

## **4. Communications**

Sylvia shared that the Sarum Room business is for sale. She is working on tenant for the space next door. Linea Intimae is leaving. Sylvia heard rumour that the landlord is trying to dislocate all tenants and there is a lot of vacancy in the Queens Hotel. Rob shared that there is a tenant replacing Linea and it is a Math school. Stiver House is being painted and being cleaned up. 144 Main Street sold under the power of sale and is now for lease.

## **5. Human Resources**

Mary reports that Terrilyn Chao has resigned because she has found full-time work. Intern, Melissa Pineda, is also no longer working with the UBIA because she has also found full-time work. Mary says that unfortunately we pay only minimum wage and the young adult employees use the position as a stepping stone. Going forward she will try to seek more mature candidates because she is frustrated by the invaluable time she invests to train staff who end up leaving. Without advertising the position, Mary has received six resumes and there are some good candidates. Tony asks what type of support is required to offset the workload. Mary explains that the nature of events is very paper-work administrative and operationally intensive.

Also, since she has been in this role for the past 7 months, Mary has been very reactive and tactical rather than spending time strategizing, analyzing, and addressing the more important issues such as attracting feet to the street in the challenging winter period. Reacting to recent issues such as

programming for the dark nights on the Fridays and Saturdays in the summer has taken time away from developing the marketing plan, website development, Heritage Festival and strategic planning. It also creates problems such as additional burden on the budget, human resources, and it drains energy. Tony reminds that there was to be a liaison from the City, which was promised to help facilitate better communications. Mary points out that she had repeatedly ask the City about the availability of Friday and Saturdays at the bandstand and had been told that it is reserved. Recently, she asked again and was advised it was still reserved. But within the next day she was subsequently informed that it was not reserved.

## **6. Streetscape**

Decades we have been told about having washrooms. There was a discussion about the motion on washrooms. Main St in Markham has beautified their street and has a washroom yet they do not have the traffic we have in Unionville. We have the people on the street but we do not have parking and washrooms. This causes frustrations on the street and visitors alike

## **7. Marketing**

Mary is working on the marketing plan but has been short staff and distracted by tactical programming for Fridays and Saturdays. As a strategy, she has worked out with Central Counties Tourism a plan that will allow her to leverage their buying power to obtain better media rates and save money.

## **8. Events**

Mary reports that Heritage Festival is on the Sept. 1 from 12noon to 5 pm and street is closed. It is supported by marketing and advertising including online advertising in the Toronto Star and Globe and Mail. Restaurants are encouraged to sell street food and merchants have street sales. Recommendation going forward that there are no outside food vendors for BIA events because it takes sales away from merchants. Mary reminds the board that it is an unwritten rule during events that merchants have the first rights in front of their storefront to market. Tony recommends that the festival is moved to one week later after Labour Day because on Labour Day the street is busy regardless if there is an event.

Discussion around buskers and that it is illegal and contravenes the bylaws even if they are busking on private property. It was also discussed about food/ice-cream truck vendors cannibalizing on merchant sales by parking in areas on Carlton Rd and at the Crosby Arena.

MOTION: That a bylaws officer be dispatched to Main Street on festivals and events days including specifically Sept.1 to monitor and enforce unwanted vendors.

Rob/Larry

Carried

## **9. Other business**

Wes understands the frustration about washrooms because it has been in discussion for the last 10 years. He is concerned about Jim Jones' comments from the last meeting that the washrooms will go to budget and we will get the money because the budget is not until 2015. Also, he reiterates that there is already money set aside for the washrooms. He suggests that the BIA work together with the Unionville Villagers Association to agree to have the washrooms behind the bandstand similar to Main St in Markham.

Rob feels that we need to show the membership that progress is being made and development on the idea of the washroom change is occurring. Jim has taken this upon himself to drive this change and let's support him on this. The city has supported us with quarter million to effect change with the charrettes and believes they will provide us support on the washrooms. He tabled to get council to approve it with the motion that it is completed by the date of March 31, 2015 so that it happens in time for the Pan Am Games in July.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:21 am**