

St. Catharines Downtown Association
Board of Management *Zoom Meeting*
July 23, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

Present: John Blanchard, David Cooperman, Tracey Findlay, Brian Gasbarini, Sal Sorrento, Mike Mazzolino, Robin McPherson, Joe Viola, Jennifer Wallace, Scott Wark, Tisha Polocko

Regrets: Joe Critelli

Guests: Councillors Porter and Siscoe, Brian York, Samir Husika, Mario Ciccarelli, Adam Hynam-Smith, Sarah Jarvis, Mike McKenna

Item # 1 Call to order

The Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Scott Wark at 10:04 a.m. by Zoom conference call.

Item # 2 Approval of ZOOM Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2020

Moved: Robin McPherson

Seconded: Michael Mazzolino

“To approve the Board Meeting Minutes from the Zoom Meeting of June 16, 2020 as presented.”

MOTION CARRIED

Item # 3 Approval of Financial Statement for June 2020

Moved: David Cooperman

Seconded: Robin McPherson

“To approve the Financial Statements for June 2020 as presented.”

MOTION CARRIED

Item # 4 Downtown Street Closure Updates

Downtown Association member Mario Ciccarelli, owner of The Works Burger, asked to address the Board. He would like to see James Street closed each weekend similar to the St. Paul Street closure. Parking for curbside pick-up and Summer Street access are currently an issue, but an option for a partial closure should be considered. It was determined that City staff will review options for a James Street closure and will advise the Downtown Association.

Tisha Polocko indicated that the Association has spent approximately \$11,000 to date on St. Paul Street weekend closure expenses. This includes signage, boosted social media posts and payment for barricade supervision. Funds have been reallocated and additional reallocation of accounts will have to be approved by the Board to accommodate the weekly closure costs.

The pedestrian camera has indicated that the first Saturday had the largest number of pedestrians to date and the highest peak time is between 6 – 7 p.m. each evening. More restaurants have started to participate with outdoor patios. The majority of restaurant owners have all expressed the positive benefit the pop up patios have had for their businesses and would like to see this continue as long as possible.

Downtown Association member Sarah Jarvis, owner of Craft Arts Market, indicated that it was not possible for her to consider any outside product placement or sidewalk marketing for her business due to cost restraints, but felt more seating (such as picnic tables) should be considered for the area during the street closure. Downtown Association member Mike McKenna, owner of Little Chief, indicated that unless he could see the ROI he would not do any sidewalk activation as the cost was prohibitive.

Brian York indicated that the Performing Arts Centre will be adding outdoor programming that will take place on the back side of the building.

Item # 5 Marketing Updates

The Board received the Marketing Report for the past four weeks noting all social media platforms increased followers over the last few months and newsletter open rates have averaged 33 %. No questions were asked of the report at this time.

Item # 6 Strategic Plan

The Board will be meeting on July 28th to start discussions on the updated Strategic Plan. Once the Board discussions are completed the membership engagement will take place.

Item # 7 Discussion of letter sent by various downtown Members dates July 12

Scott Ward indicated to the member guests that they do take their concerns seriously, and that the Board did want the opportunity to discuss the concern and it would be appreciated and helpful to receive the list of members indicated in the letter.

Mike McKenna felt that more engagement with retailers was needed and that the Board of management should be more approachable. He felt that key performance indicators are not being utilized.

It was requested that term limits be considered for our Board of Management and that this be discussed at our Strategic Planning meeting.

It was noted that our Board is reflective of our membership complement; the highest concentration is of professional businesses and that the retail sector is actually one of the smallest segments of the membership.

Downtown Association member Adam Hynam-Smith, owner of Dispatch Restaurant, expressed the need for accountability and concerns with many restaurants currently in crisis due to the pandemic.

It was concluded that a Town Hall Meeting will be coordinated as soon as feasible.

Item # 8 Termination of meeting

The meeting was terminated at 11:58 a.m.