

St. Catharines Downtown Association
Board of Management *Zoom Meeting*
June 16, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

Present: David Cooperman, Joe Critelli, Tracey Findlay, Brian Gasbarini, Sal Sorrento, Mike Mazzolino, Robin McPherson, Scott Wark, Tisha Polocko

Regrets: John Blanchard, Joe Viola, Jennifer Wallace

Item # 1 Call to order

The Meeting was called to order by Brain Gasbarini at 10:12 a.m. by Zoom conference call.

Item # 2 Approval of ZOOM Meeting Minutes from May 28, 2020

Moved: Robin McPherson

Seconded: Tracey Findlay

“To approve the Board Meeting Minutes from the Zoom Meeting of May 28, 2020 as presented.”

MOTION CARRIED

Item # 3 Approval of Financial Statement for January to May 2020

Moved: Brian Gasbarini

Seconded: David Cooperman

“To approve the Financial Statements for January to May 2020 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Item # 4 Downtown Street Closure and Pop ups Patios

The Board discussed in length the possibility of closing down a section of St. Paul Street to vehicular traffic on the weekends as proposed by the City of St. Catharines in order to help facilitate outdoor patio spaces for the restaurants. Concern was raised with the need for curb side pickup locations in the vicinity during the street closure times.

The membership was surveyed one question asking for input to a street closure.

The results indicating a slight lean in favor of the street closure.

A meeting with City staff was requested by the Board to clarify soft closures and to determine exact time frame for the weekend closure, as well as increase in Curb Side Pickup locations.

Moved: David Cooperman

Seconded: Robin McPherson

“To have the Downtown Association participate in weekend street closures of St. Paul Street (from William to Carlisle Street) as outlined by the City of St. Catharines proposal, and with the Association reviewing the effects of the closures after two weeks and having the option to terminate this weekly closure if the desired positive feedback is not being seen by the membership”.

MOTION CARRIED

Item # 5 **Marketing Update**

Since the start of the pandemic in March when businesses were being ordered to close, our office has been diligently tracking who is open and offering what types of alternate services (takeout, delivery, consultations, etc.) and reporting the ever-changing details on our website as well as on social media (mostly Facebook and Instagram, but also Twitter). These updates have been being made on a daily basis, including most weekend days, since the middle of March. Some social media posts are shared from the original source (our downtown businesses), some are original content.

A new radio ad was recorded on March 18 informing listeners that downtown businesses are now offering alternate ways to offer service during these unusual times; a subsequent radio ad was recorded on June 3rd and is now in circulation citing those businesses now open, as well as advising listeners to check our website for updates.

Additionally, we have been listing in our events section the many online webinars and online performances being held by our downtown members.

During April, it became clear that shutdowns would be here for a while and we would need to do more to support and promote our downtown businesses, not just provide updated information about changes in our core. On April 28, we had a Zoom marketing strategy meeting with the team at Loud + Clear (Stan, Chris and Lisa). A new mini-campaign “Bring the Core to Your Door” was developed, with new logo and marketing message created to attach to any posts being made on social media. The intent was to inform the public that much of downtown was open and still doing business and there were many ways to bring the downtown to you. Our social media posts then began to include this marketing message with the hashtag #BringTheCoreToYourDoor

Gift Box giveaway

There already existed plans to hold our annual Spring Giveaway Contest similar to Last year, so in light of the new situation we are in we still wanted to get the marketing message out that people could still buy from their favourite downtown stores (by curbside pickup or delivery), so the idea for the **Gift Box Giveaway** was born. We approached a number of our downtown retailers, with plans to contact more, for the purpose of buying items from them to fill our gift boxes that are being given away every Friday. The 4th week of the contest is now taking place.

Contestants can enter on Facebook and Instagram by following our accounts, liking our posts, and sharing the contest post by tagging up to three friends. Results from marketing this contest promotion on social media since this past Friday are as follows: (Total spent on prizing to date on this promotion \$1,900; this is for 19 boxes)

Facebook (overall budget of \$20 spent on boosted posts)

Week 1 contest posts reached 7,081 people

Engagement of 183 likes, 130 comments (contest entries) and 32 shares
Total Facebook followers at May 29 = 5,007 people (up 270 since Feb. 26)

Week 2 contest posts reached 3,998 people

Engagement of 192 likes, 142 comments (contest entries) and 22 shares
Total Facebook followers at June 5 = 5,069 people (up 62 since May 29)

Week 3 contest posts reached 4,972 people
Engagement of 141 likes, 123 comments (contest entries) and 21 shares
Total Facebook followers at June 12 = 5109 people (up 40 since June 5)

Instagram (overall budget of \$28 spent on boosted posts)

Week 1 contest posts reached 6,004 people
Engagement of 296 likes and 119 comments (contest entries)
Total Instagram followers at May 29 = 4,999 people (up 749 since Feb. 26)

Week 2 contest posts reached 5,170 people
Engagement of 250 likes and 172 comments (contest entries)
Total Instagram followers at June 5 = 5,112 people (up 113 since May 29)

Week 3 contest posts reached 8,075 people
Engagement of 227 likes and 83 comments (contest entries)
Total Instagram followers at June 12 = 5,165 people (up 53 since June 5)

Possible Events

I have been speaking with the Organizers of Open Street to see if we can bring that back in September, as this event is possible to achieve with social distancing measures in place.

Have had preliminary discussions with the Grape and Wine Office who would like to explore the possibility of a Downtown street Festival at the end of September. Will be meeting again this week to look at various concepts.

Outdoor Murals

A large outdoor area has been secured at Court and St. Paul (South Side) to have a mural put in place. We are hoping that we can actually have our new Downtown Logo along with other visuals representing St. Catharines and our downtown businesses incorporated in this mural.

Item # 6 **Strategic Plan**

Tisha indicated that she will have a meeting with Jennifer Wallace to discuss the Strategic Plan moving forward.

Item # 7 **Other Business**

There were not additional items discussed

Item # 8 **Termination of meeting**

The meeting was terminated a 11:33 a.m.