

**Westboro Village Business Improvement Area  
Board of Management Meeting  
April 23rd, 2020 4:30pm  
Video Conference call**

**MINUTES**

**In attendance:** Molly van der Schee, Darren Prashad, Rick Eisert, Jeff Leiper, Fiona Mitchell, Michelle Groulx, Alan Whitten, Steve Harding, Richard Bown

**Regrets:** Sheba Schmidt

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Molly van der Schee at 4:35.**

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Rick Eisert, seconded by Steve Harding, the motion was carried.

**Approval of March 26th meeting minutes**

Motion by Rick Eisert , seconded by Richard Bowen, the motion was carried.

**Advisement re: Pecuniary Interest or Conflict of Interest**

No pecuniary interest or conflict of interest

**Councillor's Report - presented by Jeff Leiper**

Not hearing much from the business community about the pandemic.

OCOBIA and others have written to the Mayor and councillors to ask that we provide a tax break. Not just a deferral. The Treasurer's Department is under the impression we cannot do that legally. Businesses must seek legal counsel for guidance. The city cannot just eliminate taxes. Reducing commercial taxes over several years is on the table but that does mean those taxes will have to be recovered on the residential side or increase fees. The City is different from the Province and Feds, we can't borrow against operating expenses. We can't offer a tax holiday and borrow that money to replace that money. The City is a cash business, cash in and cash out. We can borrow for major capital projects and they are paid through development charges. Losing a million dollars a day right now. The City is not allowed to run an operating deficit. We are asking the province if we can borrow against the deficit and there is reserve money for capital projects. The City is looking to see if they can move this capital to operating, to make up the deficit and ask the Feds and the province to give cash to the City to pay off the debt. If this runs to December the deficit will be \$270,000,000, you can imagine what Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal's deficits could be. Huge billion dollar whole, the Feds and the Province will be hard pressed to pay. The Treasurer continues to look at a number of different angles of how we can recover that funding but I am going to suggest, an immediate tax forgiveness to the commercial properties will just add to the debt we are already building. Jeff is open to hear ideas.

Q. Michelle Groulx asked for an update on the Scott Street detour.

A. Jeff Leiper: If there is a reopening from COVID at the beginning of July or August and the City immediately puts in place draconian parking restrictions, The businesses who are trying to recover on the main street will crucify us and the Mayor. Jeff has asked the Mayor office to go back with me to the Detour Planners to find some other way. Wellington West BIA has asked for no parking restrictions at all. I am not at the point where I can advocate that yet. If the Scott Street detour, which has to move forward, winds up creating big traffic backlogs that result in big traffic backlogs on residential streets my first priority has to be to the residents. We don't believe this will happen. The Mayor's office and myself are pushing the detour planners to come up with a plan B that does not immediately implement parking restrictions but leaves us with an option in the background to manage traffic is it starts backing up traffic on streets like Spencer or Lanark or streets that run in the vicinity East/west. Hoping to hear soon what the new plan B is, both myself and the Mayor's Office are very cognizant of not implementing really restrictive parking restrictions right off the bat, in a post COVID world.

Michelle's only ask is that there is no detour on to Richmond Rd during FUSE Street Festival weekend regardless of street closure or not plus allow for parking on Richmond Rd.

#### **Treasurer's Report - presented by Alan Whitten**

After reviewing the financial report, I have not seen any particular variances.

After we cut the budget, the expenditures are quite minimal, I will ask Michelle to expand on that but otherwise we are quite on budget.

Michelle Groulx on the budget: The budget remains the same and there are no changes since we spoke about it at the last board meeting.

Note: a lot of the advertising the BIA had planned to do in April did not happen as they were canceled by the publishers. Nothing surprising for March.

#### **Executive Director's Report - presented by Michelle Groulx**

Michelle reached out to the mural artist, Cassandra, to let her know what an important time this is for a new mural in Westboro. With the current shut down with the City it is not possible for the mural to begin before May 12th and our start date was for the end of May. She is currently residing in Florida and has suggested a June start date would be better. City permits are required for her to paint the mural, anyway. The BIA requires the City to sandblast the wall before she can begin, this is not allowed until May 12th. We do want the wall to be sandblasted as close to her start date as possible to prevent graffiti.

Q. Richard Bown - Do you think you should postpone the sandblasting until it is 100% when the artist will come in?

A. Michelle Groulx - Yes, it depends on the City's availability. We will book it as close as possible but nothing will happen before May 12th.

#### **Streetscape**

The other streetscape projects, the traffic box by Starbucks needs to be re-covered. The box was upgraded and a larger one is installed now.

Also hired Xactly Design to create a visual for the windows at Churchill and Richmond Rd. We've met with the team and are waiting on concepts from them. We've engaged a private contractor to install these for us; however, we have to wait until there is consistent temperatures of 10C. Flowers were installed in the concrete planters at Island Park and on McRae. Wreaths are not coming down before May 12th. The Landscapers are able to provide essential maintenance services as of May 1st. They are preparing for a street clean up.

### **Events and Marketing**

Shop the Village is cancelled. That budget will be rolled into the FUSE Street Festival. Currently preparing for an online Mother's Day Contest. The BIA is buying products from the business in advance and creating 5 gift packages, the contest will run daily for 5 days leading up to Mother's Day. May 1st to May 5th. The BIA has been brought on Jake from Whiskey Jack media to run the social promotion for the contest. His contract for FUSE was 75% paid already, the BIA asked him to run a 6 day aggressive Mother's Day Promo campaign for us. The BIA has met with Jake to talk to him about how FUSE is changing as well. This year will be a combination of Shop The Village and Wickedly Westboro a FUSE 'Lite". We will ask the merchants to host sidewalk sales and we will need barricades etc for the event. Sidewalk sales are still considered an event and require a permit. We will wait to request a permit until June 30th. Molly, Alan and I met with John Smit re: the Tubman property which has been sold. They were looking for guidance and feedback prior to developing plans. Great Escape Outfitters has a lease sign on the window. In talking with OCOBIA and TABIA there is a very strong request for rent abatement and funds to be given for rent relief. These businesses are not going to be able to catch up.

Q. Jeff Leiper - where do the Feds and the Province stand on this issue?

A. Alan Whitten - They are developing the program and have begun broad strokes but no details as of yet.

Michelle - I was on a conference call with Catherine McKenna, minister of Infrastructure and she is looking to the BIAs for ideas that would support the businesses in our area via infrastructure updates. If anyone has ideas that could support us, please let the BIA office know.

### **New Business**

The WVBIA bank account and credit card. BIAs don't normally have bank accounts, the City is their bank. However this needs to be considered now especially for the credit card. For the last 2.5 years the BIA has been using Michelle's credit card, the board should not have the same expectation for the new ED. The board will have to apply and submit the paperwork to the bank. Molly van der Schee and Alan Whitten will take the lead on applying for a credit card. Judy Lincoln, the new ED will start May 11th, 2020.

Porta Potties - Jeff Leiper comments - McNabb community centre has been open to service vulnerable residence, washrooms and showers. I have not heard about public urination. There are a few places that are still open line the DQ and other places. If there becomes an issue of public urination, Jeff is open to placing porta potties on Richmond Rd. No one is allowed to have a porta-potty on private property as per bylaw.

Q. Michelle Groulx - If there is a need for a phase 2 can the Senior Centre be opened?

A. Jeff Leiper - By opening facilities, we have to staff them. If there was a widespread issue in Westboro, yes the Senior Centre could be open but I would prefer a porta-potty in the parking lot of the centre first than the expense and risk of staff.

The meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm.

Motion by Alan Whitten, seconded by Rick Eisert, the motion was carried.