

**EXETER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA – BOARD MEETING**

**Monday, April 10, 2017 at 6:30pm**

South Huron Municipal Office, 322 Main St. S., Exeter, Ontario

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS – Chair Fred Godbolt, Vice Chair Janice Brock, Beautification Chair Mary Hulley

DIRECTORS – Directors Rose Glavin, James Eddington and Councillor Craig Hebert and BIA Manager Brittany Wise

ABSENT – Secretary / Treasurer Tejas Patel, Promotions Chair Lauryn Marion and Director Adrian Bakelaar

NON-DIRECTORS – Tira Wootton (incoming Director)

RECORDING SECRETARY – Brittany Wise, BIA Manager

## MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Mr. Godbolt welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6:32pm.

2. Changes to the Agenda and Approval of Minutes of March 13, 2017.

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

**MOVED BY: Mary Hulley & SECONDED BY: James Eddington**

**“THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

2.2 Approval of the Minutes of March 13, 2017.

Change Ms. to Mr. in section 3.3.

**MOVED BY: Mary Hulley & SECONDED BY: Craig Hebert**

**“THAT the minutes of March 13, 2017 be adopted, as presented with the change noted above.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

3. Chair’s Message

3.1 BIA Annual General Meeting

Mr. Godbolt commented that he is excited to officially wrap-up the 2016 year with the AGM tonight. The Municipal budget has been approved, which means that Council has also approved the 2017 BIA budget. Grants were approved as applied for.

Mr. Godbolt also stated that the BIA Executive is in place for 2017. As previously announced, Ms. Brock will move into the Secretary / Treasurer position, taking a more active part in the Treasurer role. Ms. Glavin has also agreed to step into the Vice Chair role.

Additionally, Mr. Godbolt welcomed Tira Wootton to the BIA Board as a Director, taking effect today. We are still looking to add a few more directors to the board; discussions are ongoing and will continue into 2017. Suggestions are always welcome.

3.2 BIA Strategic Planning

Mr. Godbolt stated that we're now into April, so our strategic planning process will be starting soon. Although it doesn't sound like an exciting endeavor, the end result will be a roadmap for the next 3 - 5 years, and having that updated and in place is exciting.

3.3 Website – Next Steps

Mr. Godbolt noted that it seems that we are making progress on resolving issues with the website developer. Hopefully a direction can be agreed upon and finalized in April.

**MOVED BY: James Eddington & SECONDED BY: Rose Glavin**

**“THAT the Chair’s Report be adopted, as presented.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

4. Delegation Nil

5. Councillor’s Report

Councillor Hebert stated that there was not much from the last meeting. He reported that since the last meeting, he followed up regarding the finance changes on the flower bill from the Municipality. He was told that everyone is charged a finance fee and that the BIA will not be given special priority over any other group.

He noted that Council passed the budget and the BIA received the grants as requested. Councillor Hebert also suggested that Council would be talking about committees and committees of Council in the future. He doesn't suspect that there will be any changes regarding the BIA.

**MOVED BY: Mary Hulley & SECONDED BY: Janice Brock**

**“THAT the Councillor’s report be adopted as presented.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

5. Discussion on Councillor’s Report Nil

**MOVED BY: Mary Hulley & SECONDED BY: Janice Brock**

**“THAT the Discussion on Councillor’s Report be removed from the agenda.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

6. Financial Report

6.1 Treasurer's Report – March

In March, we received our first levy installment of \$33,292.00 and the Welcome Centre grant of \$6,000.00. Awards Gala event coordination payment of \$7,926.00 was also received from the Chamber of Commerce. Expenses included the BIA Manager salary for December, January and February; payroll deductions; website installments (October to January); OBIAA Conference Registration; digital sign repair fees and a few other miscellaneous expenses.

6.2 Treasurer's Report – April

In April, there is no anticipated revenue. Expenses will include the March BIA Manager salary; payroll deductions; rent for March and April; \$8,303.51 for the outstanding flower-related costs from 2016; radio advertising from the holiday campaign; hotel and travel expenses for the OBIAA Conference and a few other miscellaneous expenses.

6.3 HST Rebate

The BIA did not receive a HST rebate payment for 2015 – the paperwork was submitted but it was declined because it was not submitted in two installments, but we never received notification of this. We have now submitted for 2015 (\$9,151.97) and 2016 (\$6,653.14) for a total of \$15,805.11. We hope to receive this in April / May.

6.4 Website Payment

As was stated in an email from Mr. Godbolt to the BIA Board members last week, Ms. Wise and Mr. Godbolt had a very candid conversation with the head of Campus Creative pertaining to our dissatisfaction with the BIA website. The meeting was not at all productive on negotiating a reduced walk away price and it was made clear by Campus Creative that going this route was in contravention of the contract and would be challenged legally.

The Board was asked to review a series of options for moving forward previous to the BIA meeting. It was agreed that as much as there would be satisfaction in stopping payments and challenging Campus Creative to take us to court, this will most certainly be the least cost effective, win or lose.

Campus Creative would like to complete the website. The group agreed to support option 2B where the BIA will receive 88 hours of time at no additional cost to bring-up the quality of the website, spreading payments over 2017 & 2018 and then sever ties with Campus Creative.

Ms. Wise has developed a list of items to be completed by Campus Creative for Board review.

**MOVED BY: Craig Hebert & SECONDED BY: James Eddington**

**“THAT the letter to Campus be adopted as modified and presented.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

**MOVED BY: Allen Plant & SECONDED BY: Mary Hulley**

**“THAT the financial report be adopted as presented.”**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

7. Promotions

7.1 Marketing Initiatives for 2017

Co-op Radio Advertising:

Ms. Wise reported that despite receiving feedback from members wanted the BIA to invest money into radio advertising, the response to our co-op radio advertising package was dismal. The radio package provided by BX93 was valued at \$7,500.00. The BIA planned to contribute \$3,500.00, but required 10 member businesses to pay \$400.00 each to make up the balance owing. We only had 2 businesses interested in radio advertising, which was not enough to move forward. It was also felt that investing \$3,500.00 into radio advertising in the London market was not going to be effective.

It was decided that money previously allocated to radio would be spent in a different, more effective marketing tool.

Promotional Videos:

With the \$3,500.00, the Promotions Committee is exploring the option of doing promotional videos for the town of Exeter to be featured on our social media accounts and website. The videos will be short videos (15-60 seconds in length) that will include both general business promotion as well as community assets to highlight Exeter as a good place to live, visit and do business. Currently, the committee is thinking that since these videos will feature generic content, the BIA will foot the bill versus charging our members a participation fee.

If we proceed with this concept, we may approach the Economic Development committee to see if they want to join in the promotion as it speaks directly to the marketing mandate in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Exeter 360 Campaign:

Currently, the BIA has 7 businesses interested in pursuing the 360 videos. Although we are ultimately looking for 10 participants, this program does not require all 10 businesses to participate because pricing is done per video versus a set price for all 10. We are still accepting businesses until late spring with videos being shot in the summer.

BIA Neighbourhood Gift Card:

Ms. Wise discovered the “Gift the Neighbourhood” program at the recent OBIAA Conference. The concept is simple – this multi-store gift card would allow consumers to use it at any participating member business.

The consumer and participating business are not charged any fees in the process, but the BIA is charged 8%. This means that if \$10,000.00 in gift cards were purchased, it would cost the BIA \$800.00. The sign-up process is simple and the company comes out to help businesses get involved.

The Promotions Committee is looking to tie this into holiday shopping campaign and sees this as a way to promote spending across businesses in Exeter – which is a great way to hit our mandate. In theory, consumers could use to buy groceries, gas, service on their vehicle, clothing, etc.

The Board brought up some concerns with the card including if there was a minimum or maximum that can be sold? Is there a flat fee versus the 8% fee? Do they provide promotional materials? Ms. Wise will provide more details following her call with the company.

7.2 Digital Mapping Initiative

Ms. Wise and Mr. Eddington recently presented to the Economic Development Advisory Committee about the digital mapping project. The presentation sparked a healthy discussion and committee members seemed interested in pursuing this with Municipal assets.

7.3 Marketing Workshops

Reminder that there is a Huron Small Business workshop called "Getting Online with Google and Shopify" on April 19 from 6-8pm at the Exeter Library. The cost to participate is \$20.00. To book, contact 519-524-8394 x 6 or [acresswell@huroncounty.ca](mailto:acresswell@huroncounty.ca).

**MOVED BY: Allen Plant & SECONDED BY: Mary Hulley**

**"THAT the promotions report be adopted as presented."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

8. Beautification

8.1 Bridge Flowers

The Municipal grant request for new bridge flower boxes was approved. Ms. Wise is in the process of working with potential manufacturers to develop the brackets, with the support of municipal staff to ensure success. The self-watering barrels are being ordered.

8.2 Banner Program

The banner program is being developed with decent interest. The package will be sent to members as soon as details are confirmed.

**MOVED BY: James Eddington & SECONDED BY: Allen Plant**

**"THAT the beautification report be adopted as presented."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

9. Member Events Nil

9.1 Breakfast with the Mayor

Ms. Wise noted that sponsorships have come in – we currently have one less presenting sponsor than last year. We have 5 table sponsors and welcome more. We currently have at 34 tickets sold, but we have not started actively promoting the event yet. The Mayor has asked Andrew Kemp, Director of Economic Development for the County of Huron to speak with her at the event.

The group suggested that we ask specific questions on a comment card.

9.2 South Huron Excellence Awards Gala

Ms. Wise confirmed that the sponsorship package was sent out at the beginning of March, allowing us to start confirming sponsors for this year's event. There are no other updates at this point.

9.3 Ground Breaking Ceremony – Jessica's House

The Board agreed that Manage, Brittany Wise, should be in attendance at this event to show the BIA's support for this great community initiative.

**MOVED BY: James Eddington & SECONDED BY: Mary Hulley**

**"THAT the member event report be adopted as presented."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

## 10. Economic Development

### 10.1 Ambassador Program

Mr. Plant noted that Councillor Vaughan presented on an Ambassador program – there was much discussion on the merits and non-merits of the program. In particular questions surrounding roles and expectations, who would be candidates, what are the qualifications, how many would we have, etc.

Councillor Vaughan presented on the ambassador program from Fredericton, New Brunswick, which has been in operation for years. The program has 720 ambassadors and is growing. Fredericton believes that the ambassador program has contributed immensely to the overall growth of their economic base in that community. Councillor Vaughan presented a "Newcomers Guide," and Mr. Plant provided a sample at the meeting. Vaughan also presented a "Community Profile" used as important information that all ambassadors would be given as a tool to promote their community at trade shows, etc.

In the end the Economic Development Advisory Committee voted to continue to investigate the merits of a similar program for Exeter.

### 10.2 Presentation from the BIA Re: Online Presence

Mr. Plant noted that there was a presentation from Brittany Wise of the BIA on the benefits of a wider approach to the online presence of Exeter and South Huron through active business participation that could be facilitated through the BIA and Chamber. This included businesses taking an active role in ownership of Google search information, as well as ownership of community assets linked to Exeter and South Huron.

The Economic Development Advisory Committee found the presentation to be very informative and enjoyed the presenter and information provided. This presentation resulted in spirited conversation and many questions, which lend themselves to an excited agreement among all members that this is an initiative we should get behind.

The BIA Board agreed that Ms. Wise should do the same presentation to the board or even the membership with a separate meeting because there will be lots of discussion.

### 10.2 South Huron Map and Guide

Following the presentation from the BIA, there was a brief discussion on a BIA "ask" to have a \$500 support of the South Huron Map and Guide, which is used to inform visitors about the community and its amenities. There were questions surrounding the initiative including "why a paper flyer" as it is something that has perhaps passed its usefulness. There were also concerns that the flyer is primarily about Exeter and the mandate of the Economic Development Advisory Committee is for South Huron.

The Acting Chair recommended that the Economic Development Advisory Committee support the initiative. The CAO said the flyer does not represent South Huron. There was a decision to "table" this request.

Councillor Hebert said that the committee's responsibility is to think on behalf of all of South Huron, so if we approach them again, we need to think from a South Huron lens, not just about Exeter. Mr. Eddington stated that although he understands that perspective, thinking needs to change to be about the target audience. For instance, with this project that is geared towards tourists, promoting the hub of Exeter and tourism assets surrounding Exeter, makes the most sense.

**MOVED BY: Mary Hulley & SECONDED BY: Rose Glavin**

**"THAT the Economic Development Committee report be adopted as presented."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

#### 11. Digital Sign Report

Mr. Godbolt noted that Consolidated Signs provided the BIA with a quote for a new digital sign. A new 12Mm LED installed is \$17,250.00 US dollars + HST is billed at Canadian conversion date of invoice (approximately \$23,000 US dollars). Consolidated will remove and dispose of existing sign and install new sign completely; a service they will provide a no additional charge. It was noted that this unit will never be cheaper than this. Consolidated Signs requested that we work out complimentary advertising for Consolidated Signs on the sign for the next few years.

Mr. Godbolt noted the options to proceed:

- a) Leave the sign as is – do not spend any additional money to repair.
- b) Replace the computer in the current sign – even though the sign is not the quality we want it to be. Ballpark price = \$1,500.00 to replace the computer.
- c) Purchase a new sign that is better quality.

Mr. Godbolt advised that before the board decided how to proceed, it would be best to collect feedback from members about their thoughts on the sign. Send out a survey monkey survey link to members, then target specific members about their thoughts.

If members are supportive, then the BIA will make a business plan for the sign. This could include farming out the sales to Barry Johnson who could sell ad space when he's out doing the Grand Bend Visitor Guide sales.

**MOVED BY: Craig Hebert & SECONDED BY: James Eddington**

**"THAT the BIA to send out a survey to members to collect their feedback on the digital sign before making a decision regarding the future of the sign."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

**MOVED BY: James Eddington & SECONDED BY: Mary Hulley**

**"THAT the Digital Sign report be adopted as presented."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

## 12. BIA Manager's Report

### 12.1 2017 OBIAA Conference

Ms. Wise shared key learnings with the BIA Board of Management from the OBIAA Conference held in Toronto on April 3 / 4, 2017.

OBIAA's Return on Investment (ROI) Report:

Ms. Wise stated that OBIAA recently completed a "Return on Investment (ROI) Report," which collected information from BIA's across Ontario to:

- Develop common performance indicators;
- Understand what's happening across BIA's in Ontario;
- Create tools and metrics for BIA's;
- Understand the information gap.

The report showed that most commonly, BIA's offer the following:

- Street appeal (physical and experiential);
- Economic development (jobs, tourism and revenue);
- Support for local businesses (impact, visitation and marketing);
- Community building (internal and external relationships).

The study also shows that BIA's are integral to municipal, provincial and federal growth and data collected is being used for investment attraction in other communities.

At the conference, there was discussion about how the mandate of BIA's are changing to be less about beautification and marketing and more about business retention / attraction and economic development. There was mention that the Municipal Act regarding BIA's needs to be reviewed to re-align with the current role of BIA's. There was also discussion about how BIA's need to be thinking more strategically. They should have a strategic plan with annual business plans to ensure deliverables are met.

Ms. Wise noted that unfortunately, rural BIA's were poorly represented in this report, likely because small BIA's with limited staff and financial resources do not have the capacity to collect the type of information being analyzed.

For more information on the report, BIA members can visit: <http://obiaa.com/return-on-investment-of-bias-study/>.

Vacancy Unit Rebate:

Next, Ms. Wise reported that the Vacancy Unit Rebate was discussed at the conference. Currently, under the provincial Municipal Act's Vacant Unit Rebate policy, if you own a commercial or industrial property that is partially or entirely vacant, you may be able to get a partial rebate of provincial land tax and education tax for the period of the vacancy. This system essentially provides an incentive to property owners to keep properties vacant instead of seeking positive investment.

Ontario's BIAs have continued to raise the Vacant Unit Rebate (Municipal Act 364) as a deterrent from their beautification and revitalization efforts. Vacant and deteriorating buildings can and do result in a decrease in the marketable lease rates or the overall 'lease-ability' of a BIA area.

The Province is undergoing a consultation process with Municipalities to consider changing the wording to allow Municipalities to opt in or out of the Vacant Unit Rebate. As of November 2016, the Ministry of Finance is allowing municipalities to tailor the vacant rebate and reduction programs to reflect



community needs and circumstances. Municipalities will be required to submit a response to a Ministry of Finance Checklist and a Council Resolution indicating how they will be implementing the changes to the Vacant Rebate and Reduction Programs. DEADLINE: July 1 is the last day for Municipalities to submit their responses.

OBIAA would like to see that the Vacant Unit Rebate be renamed and used as an Economic Development Tool. OBIAA is suggesting a new business classification of "Main Street Business" that would assist BIAs and Property Owners around the province to apply for an "Attraction Rebate". The OBIAA Board is suggesting the following timelines and guidelines:

**MOVED BY: Allen Plant & SECONDED BY: James Eddington**

**"THAT the Vacant Unit Rebate information be shared with the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Chamber of Commerce in order to recommend a position to Council on this matter."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

Digital Main Street Initiative:

Ms. Wise also reported that the City of Toronto has an initiative called "Digital Main Street" that helps get Toronto businesses on the digital map. They are investing in this project because 85% of people do research online before visiting a store in person. Consumers want a seamless personalized experience – and their experience with business is changing to increasingly include online impressions.

The "Digital Main Street" initiative includes the following tools that Exeter businesses can access:

Digital Assessment

- Exeter businesses can access a FREE Digital Assessment tool that will identify the right digital tools and technologies that can help their presence, tell their story and make money online.
- As part of the Digital Assessment, businesses receive a personalized to-do list with simple recommendations on how to reach their business goals.

DMS Academy

- Businesses can access free workshops and training on topics relevant to their learning needs.
- Organizers are happy to share content with any interested groups. Ms. Wise will reach out to the Huron Small Business Centre to see if they can provide the training locally.

Ms. Wise explained that when she approached the organizers for more information, they were surprised to learn that a small rural community is also working on enhancing the digital presence of their local business. It was re-assuring to hear that we are on the right track with our "Finding Exeter" project.

Overall Impressions:

Ms. Wise reported that overall, this conference is a great opportunity to network and learn. However, information is always skewed to urban areas. There was discussion amongst some of the smaller BIA's about the need for a rural BIA network that would allow BIA's to learn from each other directly.

## 12.2 JCP / Summer Student Positions

Ms. Wise stated that we still have not heard back about any of the positions, but are hopefully we will receive the funding. She stated that we have a taken on a new 8-week placement (started as a volunteer, but Tine Buechlar was able to get funding for her). She is working on initial work for the Finding Exeter digital mapping project as well as other admin jobs in the office.

**MOVED BY: Allen Plant & SECONDED BY: James Eddington**

**"THAT the BIA Manager report be adopted as presented."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**

13. Non-Director Comments Nil

14. Upcoming Events

**Next Regular Meeting: \*\*\*Monday, May 8, 2017 at 6:30pm at the Town Hall**

**Strategic Planning Facilitated Session #1: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 6:00pm at the Town Hall**

15. Adjournment

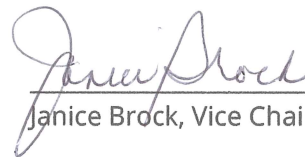
**MOVED BY: Mary Hulley & SECONDED BY: James Eddington**

**"THAT the BIA meeting does now adjourn at 7:47pm."**

**MOTION: CARRIED**



Fred Godbolt, Chair



Janice Brock, Vice Chair



Brittany Wise, Recording Secretary