

MEETING MINUTES
ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WEDNESDAY APRIL 15, 2020 at 1:00pm
By ZOOM

Attendance:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Chair - Earl Taylor | Y | Advisors: | |
| Vice Chair - Dave Thomson | N | Sean Dyke | Y |
| Treasurer - Sarah Van Pelt | N | Tara McCaulley | Y |
| Beautification Chair - Grayden Laing | Y | Adrienne Jefferson | Y |
| Promotions Chair - Susan Boldt | Y | Megan Pickersgill | Y |
| Secretary - Jazz Staddon | N | Barry Fitzgerald | Y |
| Reza Alavie | Y | Annette S'barra | Y |
| Russ Schnurr | N | | |
| Mayor Joe Preston | Y | | |

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:02pm

2. City Update - Joe

Joe announced that the City has extended the tax due date to June 1st with no penalties or interest, portable washrooms and Sharps containers have been installed at Hepburn Parkette, Cannon Parkette, 230 Talbot Street and the L&PS station. Tune into the daily Mayors Update for current current information.

3. Radio Advertising:

Earl played the new radio ad which will begin airing on MYFM today.

During these unprecedented times, The St Thomas Downtown Development Board would like to remind you that we must still support our local downtown small businesses. Yes, stores may be closed but you can still support these businesses by shopping online or calling their store. Whether it's for clothing, shoes, pet supplies or food, many downtown businesses are offering delivery, with no contact. Let's all try our best to support our downtown St. Thomas Businesses.

This message brought to you by the St Thomas Downtown Development Board

3. Video's

Grayden reported that he has completed his second of many to come, 2-3 minute ZOOM type interview videos, first was with Peter Yurek of Yurek Home Health Care and the second was with Kim Goodhue of Purely Wicked. These video will be posted on Facebook and our website to explain how, even though closed, our Downtown businesses are "Open for Business".

4. Downtown Newsletter - Reza

Reza announced the development of a new, hard copy type newsletter that once produced will be distributed in the Chestnut Street / Hwy 3 Bypass / Stanley Street / First Ave area. Topics include 1. Art and Culture - discovery murals and art 2. Activities and Events (What's Happening) 3. Meet Your Merchant - a weekly interview of a business owner 4. Historical and Architectural Findings - a discovery of the history of a

Downtown building 5. Sales and Bargains - a weekly list of BOGO etc, 6. Jumbo Hide and Seek - find a tiny Jumbo statue somewhere Downtown for a DDB Dollar giveaway and 7. Police Beat - what's happening on the Downtown Police patrol.

5. Website / Newsletter Updates - Annette

Annette describes the website updates including a new tab for "Restaurants Open During COVID-19" and "Non Essential Businesses - Operating Virtual".

An enquiry from a Downtown Restaurant business who is experiencing the stress of this crisis, has provided us with an opportunity to promote these two new categories in this weeks online Newsletter and our social media channels.

Adrienne mentioned that today was, coincidentally, National Take-out Day.

6. Downtown Survey - Earl

Earl described the survey that he sent to 9 Downtown businesses and that only 5 were returned. The survey provides information on:

1. On what date did you actually close your doors to the public?
2. Have you had to lay-off any employees?
If yes, how many?
3. Have you temporarily closed your business or are you still operating using other means?
4. Do you have an active on-line website presence such as Shopify?
If not, are you working to develop an e-commerce site?
5. Are you actively using your social media presence to promote, sell and distribute product?
if Yes, what platforms are you using and what works best?
6. What is your biggest concerns, what keeps you up at night regarding this COVID-19 crisis?
7. Have you applied for or received funding from any of the following programs?
 - a) The Canada Emergency Response Benefit will provide a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months to all self employed and unemployed workers who have lost their income due to COVID-19. Apply using one of two methods:
 1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/apply-for-cerb-with-cra.html#how>
 2. Or by phone with an automated phone service:
1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041
 - b) The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to cover 75 per cent of salaries for qualifying businesses, for up to 3 months, retroactive to March 15, 2020.
https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html#wage_subsidies
YES NO I will be applying soon
 - c) The Canada Emergency Business Account to provide, by working with your bank, an interest free loan up to \$40,000 with a \$10,000 amount that could be a grant.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html#businesses>
YES NO I will be applying soon

8. If not, what challenges have you experienced with these programs?

9. Any thing else?

The results show that problems are many, stress is high and many can not or will not be able to take advantage of the federal programs.

Earl reported that he has a scheduled call with MP Karen Vecchio on Thursday to discuss these concerns as well as problem where our Downtown businesses have been deemed non-essential, yet big-box stores have been able to remain open, selling products which the Downtown businesses can't. I will be asking for help to have these stores close their "non-essential" departments so that we have a level playing field.

7. New Business - Sean / Tara

Sean and Tara described a new program that is under development to assist our Downtown businesses fast track to a new way of doing business online using programs such as Shopify which now has a 3 month free trial.

Sean and Tara are also starting a fund raising program to produce 100 baskets of 100 items featuring products from local businesses which would be sold to raise funds for the promotions program.

Since many of our DDB Dollar programs have been cancelled, a decision was made to help:

Motion by Barry, Seconded by Grayden "To contribute 100 packs of \$25 Downtown Dollars to the fund raising program" Carried

8. Other Business

Earl mentioned that the Toronto Area Business Improvement Area has developed a new platform that allows consumers the ability to donate funds to their favourite businesses to help them weather this crisis - Reference www.distantly.ca

9. Adjournment

Next Meeting

The next ZOOM Meeting - to be announced