

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2022 8:00AM VIA ZOOM**

Attendance:

Chair - Earl Taylor	Y	Advisors:	
Vice Chair - Dave Thomson	N	Sean Dyke	N
Treasurer - Sarah Van Pelt	N	Tara McCaulley	Y
Beautification Chair - Grayden Laing	N	Adrienne Jefferson	Y
Promotions Chair - Susan Boldt	N	Megan Pickersgill	Y
Reza Alavie	Y	Paul Jenkins	Y
Russell Schnurr	Y		
Ian Gillespie	Y	Annette S'barra	Y
Duane Orth	Y Out 8:55	Guests - Renee Carpenter	
Mayor Joe Preston	N	Tammy and Mike Brown	
Tina Swaenepoel	Y		

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:03 am meeting Quorum.

Mission: To cultivate a community of all Downtown property and business owners and residents, while advocating, beautifying and actively promoting our businesses and authentic heritage in Downtown St Thomas.

Vision: To engage, inspire and welcome our community and visitors to experience Downtown St Thomas as a unique destination.

- 2. Declaration of Conflict:**

No new Declarations presented

- 3. Confirmation of Agenda**

Motion by Russ, Seconded by Duane, "To confirm the February 2, 2022 Agenda as distributed." Carried

- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**

Motion by Russ, Seconded by Paul, "To confirm the minutes of the January 5, 2022 meeting as distributed" Carried

Note: Meeting Minutes can be found at [www.downtownstthomas.ca/monthly-minutes](http://www.downtownstthomas.ca/monthly-minutes)

- 5. Deputations**

Roy Cleeves - owner of 244 Talbot Street attended to update our members on the construction occurring at 244 Talbot Street. The scaffolding is being removed and a new structure is being built at the rear to have a total of 19 residential and 3 commercial units.

## 6. Chair Report

Earl welcomed Tina Swaenepoel as a new member of our DDB. Tina's appointment has been approved by City Council and Tina has completed the Police check and training.

A surprise donation of \$20,000 has been received from Entegrus as part of their community involvement mandate. We will decide on a project for these funds. Many Thanks to Entegrus for their commitment to our Downtown. Announcement attached.

### COVID Restrictions

Earl reported that effective at 12:01am on January 31st, 2022, Ontario moved into the next phase of the modified "Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen". The January 5, 2022 lockdown caused Restaurants to close. On January 31, 2022 restaurants were permitted to open to a 50% indoor capacity. The February 21, 2022 date will allow all businesses to return to 100% capacity.

A DDB letter was issued on January 21, 2022 to MP Karen Vecchio and MP Jeff Yurek defining the inequities that exist where Big-Box stores were exempt from the 25% retail capacity restrictions implemented on January 5, 2022 as well as the 50% capacity limits beginning January 31st. A response from MP Karen Vecchio was received on January 25, 2022, no response was received from MPP Jeff Yurek.

### Business Changes

The Burger King, once thought to have closed, has been demolished and will be rebuilt and is rescheduled to open in March 2022.

### Social Media

Earl reported that our Twitter account @stthomasddb now has 542 Followers (was 541 last month), our DDB Facebook page [www.FB/downtownstthomas](http://www.FB/downtownstthomas) has 2202 Likes (was 2162 last month) and our Instagram/stthomasDDB page has 1161 Followers (Was 1146 last month).

### City of St Thomas Proof of Covid -19 Vaccination Policy

Earl advised that all City committee members must now adhere to the new Covid-19 Policy effective November 19th. To date excluding Advisors, Duane, Tina, Ian, Russell, Dave, Paul, Annette and Earl have completed their forms.

### Downtown Issues

Earl reported that disturbances at a couple of social services locations continue to interfere with Downtown business operations and that Mental health, homeless and garbage issues affecting our Downtown continue.

Earl also reported that a letter supplied by a number of merchants outlining their concerns was issued to SWPH. The SWPH memo and the merchants response letter will be published in the February 4, 2022 newsletter.

To date, it appears that SWPH has not distributed any supplies.

Earl reported we will work to assemble a list of phone numbers and email addresses of social services, municipal, police etc. that can be distributed to all Downtown members.

## Crime Prevention

Earl reported that the approved 2022 DDB budget now allows funds to cover the CCTV camera Internet fees.

## 2021 AGM

The January 26, 2022 online 2021 AGM was attended by 43 people. The AGM Report can be viewed at <http://issue.com/stthomasddb> or on our website at [www.downtownstthomas.ca](http://www.downtownstthomas.ca)

## 7. Finance Report

Earl provided an update on the financial status of the DDB accounts.

Motion by Ian, Seconded by Russell, "To accept the financial report and to pay the outstanding bills" Carried

## 8. Reports

### 8.1 Promotions Report

#### Downtown VIBE - Reza

Reza presented a plan for a Downtown photo contest.

Motion by Reza, Seconded by Paul "To allocate \$1,000 for a Downtown Photo Contest" Carried. Past issues can be found along at <https://issuu.com/stthomasddb>

#### Radio Advertising - Dave

The Shop Local - stores open for in store shopping is now running.

#### LED Snowflakes

Earl reported that Entegrus removed our 62 LED Snowflakes during the week of January 17th and returned them to storage.

#### Website Design - Sarah

No report

#### Newsletter - Annette

Annette reported that she continues to produce and email a bi-weekly newsletter to 192 recipients.

#### Downtown Dollars Tracking - Annette

Earl reported that, thanks to Annette's data collection, \$12,025.00 DDB Dollars were redeemed in January, \$0 from the August 2020 VIBE and \$0 of Christmas Care DDB Dollars were also redeemed in January. The full report has been filed. Thanks to Earl and Annette for her dedication to responding to the many calls and picking up redeemed DDB Dollars and issuing cheques.

## 8.2 Beautification Report - Grayden

### Downtown Business Street Signs

Earl reported that no new signs were installed in January however a new sign for Employment Services Elgin at 400 Talbot Street is being developed and repairs to the Records and Relics sign at 347 Talbot Street will be completed soon. The business Arable has moved from 624 Talbot Street to 377 Talbot Street and changed to a new name called Revival Studios. A newly designed sign will be installed once the business opens. Tara also mentioned that a new Fabric store will be opening at 562 Talbot Street on March 1st.

A discussion about relocating an existing festival to St Thomas was discussed, more details will be available as they become available.

### Cross Street Banner

Earl reported that ERTH installed new cross street cables on January 6, 2022. Entegrus has expressed concern on the new design stating that it will make banner installations very tough if not impossible.

### Downtown Summer Students

Earl reported that a Canada Summer Jobs application for three 2022 Summer Students, 2 to be hired for 10 weeks from June 27th to September 2nd and 1 to be hired for 23 weeks from June 6th to September 23rd has been submitted with a revised funding amount of 50% of \$15,498.

### Downtown Banner

Earl reported that a new set of banners could be designed for 2022 or alternatively, the existing art banners could be reinstalled again.

## 8.3 Parks Dept Update - Adrienne

Adrienne reported that the winter greenery will be removed before the greenery turns brown and the protective covers installed.

The 2022 hanging basket plans include a silver/white and the 27 sidewalk planters will be pink with purple fountain grass with an install date in early June.

## 8.4 Council Update - Mayor Preston

No report

For City Council Agenda and Minutes visit <https://www.stthomas.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId=12189805&pageId=12517512>

## 8.5 Municipal Heritage Committee Update - Russell

Russell reported on the plans at 244 Talbot and 389-392 Talbot Street

Visit <https://www.stthomas.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId=12189805&pageId=13290088> for more information.

## 8.6 CIP Program - Russell

Russell reported that there are no new projects pending.

Visit <https://www.stthomas.ca/search/default.aspx?q=Cip&type=-1,12189805-12410,12189721-117,12189721-127&sortBy=Relevance&pg=0> for more information.

### 8.7 Railway City Tourism Report - Megan

Megan reported on a number of planned events including a Historic Bike Ride in May and a city wide mural project on July 16th. Tourism is planning to reopen their office in the L&PS Station soon. Visit <https://www.railwaycitytourism.com> for full details

### 8.8 Economic Development Report - Sean

Tara reported that the EDC was approved for funding and they have hired a Main Street Downtown Ambassador to start on February 14th, name to be announced soon.

### 8.9 SBEC - Tara

Tara presented a funding opportunity for the DDB to support the Horton Market in 2022. Investment: \$5000

- Downtown signage on the large west interior wall of the market
- Weekly social media coverage (26 weeks) for downtown businesses on the Horton Market/SBEC pages (for example "when you are at the market, pop by "insert business").
- Part of the social media coverage would be to work with the DDB and downtown businesses to come up with a special "Market Deal"
- Access to a vendor table throughout the market season (26 weeks) for a business or the DDB to set up and market their business/DDB

Motion by Paul, Seconded by Reza, "That the DDB allocate \$5,000 towards the sponsorship of this Horton Market initiative" Carried

### 8.10 Chamber of Commerce Report - Paul

Paul reported that he has been busy with distribution of the Covid Antigen test kits.

February 22nd - Mayors Happy Hour is an online event - sign up soon

April 14th - Impact Awards at St Anne's with Brent Butt

April 21st - Job Fair at the Elgin Centre

Visit <https://www.stthomaschamber.on.ca> for full details

## 9. **Coming Events** - dependant on COVID restrictions status.

- Shop Hop - Saturday April 16, 2022
- 2022 OBIAA Conference, Niagara Falls - April 24 - 27, 2022
- Nostalgia Nights Car Show - Saturday July 9, 2022
- Downtown Pumpkin Prowl - Friday October 28, 2022
- Tree Lighting Celebration - Friday November 18, 2022
- Downtown Santa - Saturday December 3, 2022

February 22nd - Mayors Happy Hour is an online event - sign up soon

April 14th - Impact Awards at St Anne's with Brent Butt

April 21st - Job Fair at the Elgin Centre

May - Historic Bike Ride

July 16th - City wide mural project

## 10. **Adjournment**

Motion by Russ, Seconded by Paul, "To adjourn the meeting at 9:26am." Carried

**Next Meeting: Wednesday March 2, 2022 at 8:00AM via ZOOM Meeting**

Received January 25, 2022 via email

Dear Earl,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and thank you for your continued support and dedication to the DDB.

I agree with you and I do not support the lockdowns of our local businesses. I believe we must continue to use all of the tools we have available. After 2 years, we must move forward and learn to live with COVID-19 in our society. We must find alternatives that allow our economy to thrive and allow Canadians to have a choice.

Thanks again for reaching out. Hearing from you helps me better represent all constituents of Elgin-Middlesex-London.

Sincerely,

**Karen Vecchio**

Member of Parliament, Elgin-Middlesex-London



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January 21, 2022

MP Karen Vecchio and MPP Jeff Yurek

Hello Karen and Jeff,

As Chair of the St Thomas Downtown Development Board I thank you for everything you and your teams are doing to get us through this crisis.

The recent lock down announcements continue to punish our Downtown St Thomas small businesses by limiting the number of customers that can visit their establishments. Yes, the restrictions are moving from a 25% capacity limit to 50% on January 31<sup>st</sup> and hopefully ending on February 21<sup>st</sup>, but still, the unfairness remains. This not the first time that the province has failed to enforce any capacity limits on the "Big Box" stores which has created an un-level playing field. The province continues to reward the big box retailers with zero restrictions and punish our small businesses, the lifeblood of our struggling downtowns.

I'm extremely proud of how our Downtown St Thomas small businesses have stepped up their game and are working tirelessly to adapt to the many changes being forced on them. Please understand that we agree that changes are required in order to end this insidious pandemic. But, the restrictions must be fair to all parties.

We are asking for your help to ensure that your governments understand that they need to treat all retail businesses fairly and force the large one-stop businesses to enforce the capacity limits in their non-essential retail sections. Only then will our Downtown small businesses feel that everyone is following the same rules and working towards the same goal.

If you would like to talk further, please contact me directly at 519-670-9223 or earl.taylor@sympatico.ca

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Earl Taylor".

Earl Taylor  
Chair - St Thomas Downtown Development Board

## Entegrus Donates \$265 000 to Community Organizations this Holiday Season

Entegrus, along with its Shareholders, have announced the recipients of this year's charitable donations.

Indwell, an organization that provides supportive, affordable housing, is the recipient of a \$200,000 donation that will go towards the redevelopment of St. Agnes school in Chatham that will ultimately support 35-45 residents.

"We work with our shareholders and community partners to determine where our support can provide the most impact," stated Jim Hogan, President and CEO of Entegrus. "We are proud to be able to provide funds that will help support the housing shortages we see firsthand in our communities."

Additionally, Entegrus is providing \$58,000 to organizations in St. Thomas dedicated to meeting local community needs. The organizations that will be receiving financial support are the Seniors Center, Downtown Development Board and the St Thomas Economic Development Corporation.

Entegrus has always been a supporter of health care and will continue to do so this year with donations to the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital Foundation and the Four Counties Health Services Foundation in Newbury.

"Our customers and communities have stepped up during these unprecedented times to support our most vulnerable," continued Hogan. "We hope our contributions will help them continue to provide these essential services."

Throughout 2021 Entegrus also provided funds to Salvation Army Organizations in Chatham, Strathroy & St. Thomas, Habitat for Humanity, and to the Chatham-Kent & St. Thomas Elgin United Way.

Additional 2021 support was also provided to the Chatham-Kent Children's Treatment Centre, Opportunity Village Community, local food banks, and various registered charities on behalf of employees.

Total donations throughout 2021 exceeded \$445 000.

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Media inquiries:

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