

MEETING MINUTES
ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WEDNESDAY APRIL 3, 2024 8:00AM ROOM 304 CITY HALL / ZOOM

Attendance:

Chair - Earl Taylor	Y	Mayor Preston	Y
Vice Chair - Grayden Laing	Y	Russell Schnurr	Y*
Secretary - Jolie Inthavong	N	Sarah Van Pelt	Y
Treasurer - Tina Swaenepoel	Y	Dana Vanzanten	N
Beautification Chair-Vanessa Buckland	Y	Advisors:	
Promotions Chair - Dave Thomson	N	Elle Crevits	N
Reza Alavie	Y*	Sean Dyke	N
Renee Carpenter	Y	Adrienne Griffin	Y*
Jennifer Childs	Y*	Paul Jenkins	Y
Suzanne Faris	Y	Sarah Lynch	Y
Ian Gillespie	Y	Sarah Noble	N
Duane Orth	Y	Megan Pickersgill	N
		Tara McCaulley	Y*
		Annette Sbarra	Y

Guests - Maria Fallios, Wil Zufelt

* = joined via Zoom

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:08am 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 Declarations were presented

- 3. Confirmation of Agenda**

Motion by Renee, Seconded by Sarah Lynch, "To confirm the April 3, 2024 Agenda as distributed." Carried

- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**

Motion by Tina, Seconded by Joe, "To confirm the March 6, 2024 Minutes as distributed" Carried

Note: Meeting Minutes can be found at www.downtownstthomas.ca/monthly-minutes

- 5. Deputations**

None

6. Chair Report - Earl

Downtown Dollars Tracking - Earl

Earl reported that, thanks to Annette's data collection, \$3,935 DDB Dollars were redeemed in March. A total of \$14,680 DDB\$ have been redeemed YTD and of this, in the month of March, \$100 were redeemed from the 2021 DDB\$ promotion (total 2021 outstanding \$9,015), \$205 from the 2022 DDB\$ promotion (total 2022 outstanding \$12,590) and \$3,135 from the 2023 promotion (total 2023 outstanding \$25,780). A total of \$2,300 DDB\$ remain outstanding in 2024.

Earl made 18 DDB Dollar merchant pickups in March.

Since 2018, when detailed records began, a total of \$4,040 remain unredeemed in 2018, \$670 in 2019 and \$4,470 in 2020 totalling \$9,180.

Business Updates - new / relocated / lost

Earl mentioned that he and Grayden were invited to the Myrtle open house and delivered a bouquet of flowers. Potato Express has opened at 275 Talbot Street, Revarie Massage Therapy has opened at 563 Talbot Street, Harrison Pensa has opened at 470 Talbot Street and Yuppy Puppy has opened at 10 Elgin Street.

Social Media

Earl reported that our X account @stthomasddb has 582 Followers (was 581 in March). Our DDB Facebook page www.FB/downtownstthomas has increased by 29 Followers to 4182 (was 4153 Followers in March). Through the month of March, our DDB Facebook Reach was 48,355.

Our Instagram/stthomasDDB page has 1412 Followers (was 1406 in March).

MMS Community Activator Funding

Earl advised the board that with the help of Janette McDonald - former Chair of the London BIA, on March 25th, we have applied for \$179,000 in funding under the My Main Street - Community Activator Program. Funding centres around expanding and activating our Light Up Talbot / Tree Lighting Celebration event, purchasing 20 new LED Christmas lights to replace existing failed units, sufficient funding to purchase the DDB Coach and install windows and to provide free train rides scheduled one day every month for 6 months in 2024 plus funding to implement a Visa based Downtown Dollar gift card system to replace our labour intensive DDB Dollar system. The application was submitted on March 25th to meet the March 31st deadline. Winner announcements will be made between April 1st to May 30th.

DDB Structure

Earl reported a number of meetings have taken place to discuss how to structure the DDB after Earl's retirement which is effective April 30th.

Motion by Grayden, Seconded by Tara, "That the DDB move forward with entering into a Shared Services Agreement with the EDC, conditional on the EDC obtaining the necessary agreement with the City" Carried.

As a result of Chair Earl's retirement an election process took place.

The call for nominations to elect a new Chair was made. Grayden Laing was nominated, after 3 calls for further nominations, nominations were closed. Grayden Laing accepted the nomination and has been elected as the new DDB Chair.

Downtown Coach

Earl reported that the first payment of \$10,000 and the \$1,500 for annual maintenance and storage has been submitted to purchase and maintain the DDB Coach for the next 12 months.

7. Finance Report - Tina

Tina provided a monthly statement update on the financial status of the DDB accounts.

Motion by Tina, Seconded by Sarah Van Pelt, "To accept the financial report and to pay the outstanding bills" Carried

8. Reports

8.1 Promotions Report - Dave

Social Media Advertising

Earl reported that Nicole Van Pelt continues to create 2 weekly Facebook, Instagram and X social posts and highlighted these businesses in March:

March 4 - Studio 36, March 7 - Railway City Hobbies, March 11 - St Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, March 14 - Oh My Fur and Whiskers + Pup Scrubs, March 18 - Spindle Mercantile, March 21 Chef Bondi, March 25 - Shop Hop and March 28 - Myrtle.

Print Advertising

Dave provided a report that a 1/2 page Home Show ad has been placed in the April issue of Hometown St Thomas.

Radio Advertising

Dave provided a report stating that the Shop Hop ended Saturday morning, and we now have the full sing jingle and Shop Local spot airing in 50/50 equal rotation.

Dave also put together a new script to have produced, with a reminder to everyone who has Downtown Dollars to get out and spend them.

"ALL ABOARD!! [SFX: train whistle]

Take a tour and discover HISTORIC downtown St Thomas and all that it has to offer!! Make a day out of it and visit Old City Hall, Jumbo the Elephant AND all the AMAZING local shops and restaurants YOUR downtown has to offer!! Find GREAT local shopping and the BEST food St Thomas has to offer. And don't forget to use up your downtown dollars....they're just like CASH!!! There's no need to go anywhere else when you can discover and shop historic downtown St Thomas.

Tag: This message is brought to you by the St Thomas Downtown Development Board"

Welcome Packages

Dave provided a report stating that no deliveries were made this month.

Downtown VIBE - Reza

Reza provided a report that a 6 page March issue has been distributed with 8000 copies delivered. Earl uploaded The VIBE to https://issuu.com/stthomasddb/docs/downtownvibe_march2024, added it to the DDB website and posted the issue on the DDB Facebook page.

It was suggested that the report submitted by Dave last month be considered by publishing the July issue using either the Hometown St Thomas or Elgin This Month magazines.

Website

SarahVan Pelt reported that the membership database provided by Annette has been updated on the new website. The Draft website will be ready for beta testing soon.

Shop Hop

Annette reported that the Shop Hop event was well received. A total of 50 businesses participated on the passport which was uploaded to the Shop Hop website on March 22nd. Annette picked up 28 completed passports on April 2nd, noting that 24 families visited 20 or more businesses and 2 that visited 48 businesses. The 3 \$100 DDB Dollar prize packs will be randomly awarded to this group. 1 participant posted a photo to the DDB website and will qualify for the \$100 DDB Dollar prize pack. Winners will be published on the website www.downtownstthomas.ca/shop-hop.

Thanks to the Kim Destun and the St Thomas Fire Dept for offering the use of their side by side to transport the Easter Bunny through the Downtown from 11am - 1pm.

Home Show - April 12th - 14th

Annette provided an update on the search for volunteers to work the booth.

Annette also advised that 13 businesses including Jennings Furniture, Employment Services / Ignite Youth Centre, Opa's Pretzels, Lumberjack Pizza, Jancat, Pikkasso Art, Purely Wicked, Crock a Doodle, Lockwood Books, CTP Computers, Old School Pizza, From the Vine and MSM Fabrics have accepted the opportunity to display their business at the show.

As a Whistle Stop booth, we will give away \$250 Downtown Dollars on each day of the show.

Setup will happen on Thursday April 11th at 5:30pm and tear down will happen on Sunday when the show ends at approximately 4pm.

Earl reported that a new DDB booth display is ready.

Nostalgia Nights Car Show

Vanessa reported that a committee meeting was held on March 27th and provided an overview of the event plans. An application was submitted to the Special Events Committee and will be presented on April 3rd.

8.2 Beautification Report - Vanessa

Downtown Business Street Signs

Vanessa reported that a new sign for Elgin Realty has been installed, the Studio 36 sign was repaired and a new sign for Ignite / Steam Education was installed.

2024 Banner Program

Vanessa reported that a committee meeting was held and an overview of the new banner designs for were presented. Installation of 80 banners is scheduled for April 21st.

Summer Students

Earl reported that he has applied for Canada Jobs funding for 2 student positions and we are awaiting approval. The students that worked for us last year have expressed interest in returning this year.

8.3 Parks Dept Update - Adrienne

Adrienne reported that the hanging basket installation is scheduled for the 2nd week of June and the lighting system for the 2 entrance signs are being repaired.

8.4 Council Update - Mayor Preston

Mayor Preston reported on the new bus service to London and Dorchester beginning April 8th.

To view 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 submitted a report on a Fanshawe College project being held on Saturday April 6th 8:30am - 4:00pm at the CASO Station.

Be inspired with graphic designs and visualizations of the St. Thomas Railway Lands created by college and university students. Design themes include environment, community and placemaking. Beginning at 9:00 am, the lead judge, Walter Kehm will make a keynote presentation, followed by twelve student presentations. Complimentary refreshments, coffee and snacks are available when the doors open at 8:30 am and a light lunch will be served at noon. Cash prizes are awarded to winning designs for 1st, 2nd and 3rd along with people's choice and will be announced at 4:00 pm. Be sure not to miss seeing the future of the St. Thomas Railway Lands unfold.

Visit <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/fanshaweschoolofdesign/1182366> to join the guest list.

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

8.6 CIP Program - Russell

The DDB has an opportunity to have a member join the CIP Committee to replace our previous member Susan Boldt. Jennifer Childs volunteered to take on this position. 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 provided a report that a Bike Festival is planned for May 25th.

8.8 Economic Development Report - Sean

No report

8.9 SBEC - Sarah Lynch

Sarah reported that a Maple Fest is planned for April 20th at the Market. The market opens May 11th.

8.10 Chamber of Commerce Report - Paul

Paul reported that the February Business After 5 is scheduled for Wednesday April 17th with a return ride on the L&PS to Port Stanley leaving St Thomas at 5:15pm and a Kids Market is scheduled for April 19th at the CASO Station.

The April 12th Impact Award nominees have been announced - visit www.stthomaschamber.on.ca to view the nominations.

Tickets for the September 19th South Africa trip are now available to purchase.

9. Coming Events

- Home Show - Friday April 12th, Saturday April 13th and Sunday April 14th
- Nostalgia Nights Car Show - Saturday July 13th 4pm - 9pm
- Downtown Oktoberfest - Saturday September 21st 1pm - 8pm
- Downtown Pumpkin Prowl - Friday October 25th 5pm - 8pm
- Tree Lighting and Light Up Talbot - Friday November 15th 5pm - 8pm
- Optimist Santa Claus Parade - Saturday November 23rd 6pm
- Downtown Santa - Saturday December 7th 11am - 2:30pm

- St Thomas Railway Lands Environmental Design Comp - April 6 8:30am
- Horton Winter Market - Saturday April 20th from 9am - 1pm

Chamber Events:

- Business After 5 - Wednesday April 17th with a return ride on the L&PS to Port Stanley leaving St Thomas at 5:15pm.
- Impact Awards - Friday April 12th at Memorial Arena at 5:30pm
- MP/MPP Luncheon - June 27th at ECRM

Visit www.stthomaschamber.on.ca for full details

10. Adjournment

Motion by Sarah Van Pelt, Seconded by Suzanne "To adjourn the meeting at 9:50am"
Carried

Next Meeting: Wednesday May 1, 2024, 2024 at 8:00AM Room 304 City Hall.