

MEETING MINUTES
ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WEDNESDAY MARCH 6, 2024 8:00AM ROOM 304 CITY HALL / ZOOM

Attendance:

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

* = joined via Zoom

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:04am 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**
Earl requested the addition of one item to the Chair report titled "In Camera"
Motion by Dave, Seconded by Ian, "To confirm the amended March 6, 2024 Agenda as distributed." Carried

- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**
Motion by Renee, Seconded by Duane, "To confirm the February 7, 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, \$2,555.00 DDB Dollars were redeemed in February. A total of \$7,925.00 DDB\$ have been redeemed YTD and of this \$35.00 were redeemed from the 2021 DDB\$ promotion (total redemptions \$88,740.00 of \$93,365 sold), \$550.00 from the 2022 DDB\$ promotion (total redemptions \$89,740.00 of \$100,000 sold) and \$8,580.00 from the 2023 promotion (total redemptions \$8,580.00 of \$36,000 sold). Earl made 11 DDB Dollar merchant pickups in February.

Since 2018, when detailed records began, a total of \$59,745 unredeemed DDB Dollars remain in circulation.

Business Updates - new / relocated / lost
Reference Welcome Packages section below.

Social Media

Earl reported that our X account @stthomasddb has 581 Followers (was 579 in February).

Our DDB Facebook page www.FB/downtownstthomas has increased by 40 Followers to 4153 (was 4113 Followers in February). Through the month of February, our DDB Facebook Reach was 24,211

Our Instagram/stthomasDDB page has 1406 Followers (was 1401 in February).

DDB Structure

Earl reported a number of meetings have taken place to discuss how to structure the DDB after Earl's retirement.

Motion by Joe, Seconded by Tina, "To move the meeting into an In-Camera session"
Carried

Motion by Tina, Seconded by Dave, "To move the meeting out of an In-Camera session"
Carried

Motion by Joe, Seconded by Vanessa, "To accept the work of the committee and act upon the decisions agreed upon" Carried

Downtown Coach

Earl reported that he has confirmed a verbal agreement with the ECRM to purchase the DDB Coach at a price of \$20,000 payable in 2 annual instalments.

A quote from Provincial Glass & Mirror, to replace the 45 windows in the DDB Coach, was received at \$8,145.00 plus HST.

Historically, the DDB Coach was vinyl wrapped in April 2014.

Motion by Sarah Van Pelt, Seconded by Duane, "To defer the DDB Coach window replacement until another time" Carried

7. Finance Report - Tina

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

Motion by Tina, Seconded by Renee, "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 February:

February 1 - The Nook, February 5 - MSM Fabrics, February 8 - Angry Bear Barbershop, February 12 - Forest of Flowers, February 15 - St Thomas Public Library, February 19 - The Craft Hive, February 22 - Las Chicas, February 26 - Crocker's and February 29 - The Dough Box.

Print Advertising

Dave reported that a 1/4 page Shop Hop ad has been placed in the March issue of Hometown St Thomas magazine.

Also, a 1/2 page Home Show ad will be placed in the April issue of Hometown St Thomas.

Radio Advertising

Dave reported that 2 new Shop Hop ads have been produced, the first is now running through to March 22nd followed by a second ad advising that the passport is now available to print from the DDB website.

Welcome Packages

Dave reported that Annette assisted him to deliver a bouquet of flowers and a welcome package to 7 new businesses being The Razors Edge at 15 Arthur Ave, Hasty Market at 985 Talbot, Dough Box at 985 Talbot, Shimmer Nails at 965 Talbot, Zesty Desserts at 831 Talbot, Opa's Pretzels at 578 Talbot and Pikkasso Art at 471 Talbot.

Downtown VIBE - Reza

Reza provided a report that a March issue is being prepared.

Based on a previous discussion about finding an alternate method to publish The VIBE, Dave provided a cost comparison using Hometown St Thomas and Elgin This Month - see attached document.

Website

Annette continues to review the website membership database and providing updates to Sarah Van Pelt. The Draft website will be ready for beta testing soon.

Shop Hop

Annette is working to create a Passport for shoppers to use that day from 10am - 5pm for a chance to win 1 of 3 \$100 Downtown Dollar packages. 42 businesses have signed up so far. The passport will be uploaded to the website on April 22nd. Renee has sourced the Easter Eggs and Annette has ordered the Easter bunny costume.

Anyone interested in walking with the Easter Bunny are welcome - meet at MYFM at 10:30am. Visit www.downtownstthomas.ca/shop-hop for full details.

Home Show - April 12th - 14th

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

Annette also advised that 7 businesses including Jennings Furniture, Employment Services / Ignite Youth Centre, Opa's Pretzels, Lockwood Books, CTP Computers and MSM Fabrics have accepted the opportunity to display their business at the show with 3 spots remaining.

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 - volunteers required.

Earl reported that a new DDB booth display has been ordered to replace the old unit.

Nostalgia Nights Car Show

Earl provided a background report on the 10th Annual Nostalgia Nights Car Show scheduled for Saturday July 13th, 2024. The previous committee will be unable to plan and run the 2024 show. After a discussion a new committee consisting of Vanessa - Chair, Jolie and Sarah Lynch was established.

8.2 Beautification Report - Vanessa

Downtown Business Street Signs

Vanessa reported that a sign for Studio 36 at 636 Talbot Street is scheduled for repair. Elgin Realty has asked for a new sign due to a logo change and a new sign for Zesty Market and Ignite / Steam Education is being worked on.

2024 Banner Program

A committee of Vanessa, Sarah V.P., Russell and Grayden was established at the February 7th meeting. The committee has been unable to meet but they have talked about a few ideas for a planned April 23rd installation date.

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 supplied the following written report:

"All annual beds throughout the downtown will be planted as well as Greens Parkette (across from City hall) will be maintained.

We are currently in the process of reviewing and replacing some hanging basket hooks attached to the light standards from Ross to Alexandria, additional hooks will not be added at this time. This is to ensure the poles have the strength to hold the baskets when they are at their fullest late summer.

We are also reviewing the current locations of the planters and whether some will be moved back now that construction is completed on Talbot Street, however with the new design of the street the previous locations may be restricted.”

8.4 Council Update - Mayor Preston

Mayor Preston reported that a new Regional bus system will begin on 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

No report

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

8.6 CIP Program - Russell

No report.

The DDB has an opportunity to have a member join the CIP Committee to replace our previous member Susan Boldt.

No one offered to take on this position at this time.

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 that a Bike Festival is planned for May 25th.

Earl reported that a letter of support was provided to St Thomas Tourism in support of their application for a Tourism Growth Program grant application.

8.8 Economic Development Report - Sean

No report

8.9 SBEC - Sarah Lynch

Sarah provided the following written report:

Applications for Starter Company Plus are open, deadline is March 24th at midnight.

For businesses who are interested, here is the link to the eligibility criteria <https://www.sbecinnovation.ca/starter-company-plus.html>. An advisor will be in touch once the form has been received and reviewed.

We are still accepting applications for our Summer Company program for students returning to school in the fall, between the ages of 15-29 years old who are interested in starting and operating a business this summer. If you know a student who may be interested, please have them reach out to Sarah at slynch@stthomas.ca

Horton Farmers Market : Winter At Horton will wrap up on Saturday April 20th from 9am-1pm. This is also our first annual Maple Fest which will be a celebration of all things maple!! Musical guests, entertainment for the kids as well as some delicious

maple treats. Applications for Regular season can be found here <https://www.hortonfarmersmarket.ca/info-for-vendors.html> if you know of any vendors or farmers who may be interested.

Visit www.SBECinnovation.ca for full details

8.10 Chamber of Commerce Report - Paul

Paul reported that the February Business After 5 is scheduled for Wednesday March 20th at Railway City Brewing at 130 Edward Street.

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

- Shop Hop - Saturday March 30th - 10am - 5pm, Easter Bunny 11am - 1pm
- 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 22nd 5pm - 8pm
- Downtown Santa - Saturday December 7th 11am - 2:30pm

- Horton Winter Market - Saturday April 20th from 9am - 1pm

Chamber Events:

- Business After 5 - Wednesday March 20th at Railway City Brewing
- 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 Tara, Seconded by Tina "To adjourn the meeting at 9:52am" Carried

Next Meeting: Wednesday April 3, 2024, 2024 at 8:00AM Room 304 City Hall.

Distribution/Cost Comparison							
(based on (4) pages three times annually)							
Publication	Pages	Printed	Distribution	Locations	Cost		
					Print & Mail		
VIBE	4 pages	8000	No mailing	Various In-Store	\$1,798.91		
	(March)			locations			
			4000 mailed		\$1,031.33		
			(assumed based on	Various In-Store			
			other months)	locations			
Total--VIBE		8,000	4,000		\$2,830.24		
					per issue		
					\$8,490.72 annual		
Comparison Based On Quotes Received							
Hometown							
St Thomas	4 pages	8,600	7,000 residences (mailed)				
			1100 businesses (mailed)				
	Placed in	pages 2-5	500 pick up				
Total--Hometown St Thomas					\$2800 plus tax		
					per issue		
					\$8,400 annual		
This Month In							
Elgin	4 pages	6,500	2000 businesses (mailed)				
			2200 select homes (mailed)				
			2000 (distribution locations hand delivered)				
			300 Port Stanley residences (mailed)				
Total--This Month In Elgin					\$1398 plus tax		
					per issue		
					\$4,194.00 annual		