



Keith indicated that there is not enough structure in how the BIA operates and he cannot work in that environment. George expressed his disappointment in Keith's departure since the goal is to improve the way that the board conducts its business and he was looking to Keith's expertise in helping achieve that goal.

Tony has spoken to Keith regarding strategic planning and Keith has indicated that he will work with Tony to that end.

Nicole commented that she would like a more detailed agenda to help her decide whether she should be attending the meeting. George agreed and indicated that he would endeavor to make future agendas more informative.

## **C.2 Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) update: Tony Poole**

EDAC has created a sub committee for strategic planning and the groundwork has been laid out with regards to the organization and the structure. Tony will represent the BIA on this committee. They hope to have something by the end of the year to fit into the budget process.

A retail gap analysis is identifying where there might be opportunities to be created or fill a gap from professional services to retail.

Parking was also discussed and the issues of parking in spots that could be deemed dangerous. More signage was discussed enhancing the visit while people are here and further ways to support the infrastructure.

The east side of Highway 26: gateway signage and to do something to enhance it. There have been positive comments regarding the Thornbury sign on the Foodland building.

Tim stated that the Town has hired a Communications and Economic specialist and his position will be in guiding the development of the economic strategy. The vision of the BIA will be incorporated into the strategy and it is the opportunity for the BIA to add input into the strategy. Also to identify what role does the BIA play. An email will be coming, identifying open houses and surveys allowing public and businesses participation. What businesses are facing and what the vision is for the BIA for the next 3 to 5 years will be included.

Renee asked if anything was resolved regarding the Pop-up stores and Tony mentioned it is worth the discussion to hear from the membership, it is not just a BIA problem but much broader and also questioned if they are going to exist is there a way to generate revenue or at least contribute towards the ongoing costs of the BIA. Ryan stated that there is no way to collect fees from these type of businesses at this time. They are reviewing what other municipalities and BIA's are doing.

George stated that at the September meeting one of the agenda items will be to review the Procedural By-laws. When the BIA reviews the by-law, something regarding popup fees might be included so that Finance has a legal basis for collecting additional fees.

## **C.3 Committee Reports:**

The Indigenous life festival committee met on July 19<sup>th</sup> and includes Melanie Johns, Matt Cundy, Ryan Gibbons, and Riley Smith from the BIA, along with Lisa Farano and Jillian Morris from the Indigenous Life Festival. One of the criteria developed by the events committee is that each event be properly promoted. With only 5 weeks to go before the proposed event date of August 24, the committee determined that the criteria could not be met, and the decision was made to cancel the event for this year. The committee still believes that the event is a good one for Thornbury and decided to start planning for having the event in 2020. A budget will be brought back to the board along with a recommendation for the 2020 budgeting process.

The committee will be meeting soon to review the Apple Harvest Festival (AHF).

Membership committee: Renee mentioned the welcome letter that the Welcome Committee has put together.

Village Plaza committee: nothing reported.

Tim spoke on how he was working with Keith and Councillor Potter regarding the BIA video. He is inviting a BIA member to come onboard but this needs to happen as soon as possible due to funding deadlines. Tony volunteered to work on the committee.

Discussion ensued regarding the BIA's presence on social media and the need for someone to handle this, which would include items such as the promotions of the video/s. It remains a work in progress. Tim mentioned that they have free access to training resources and classes from the RT07 specific to social media marketing that the BIA could tap into.

**C.4 Music in the Parkette:** Discussion took place regarding the music this past Monday. George explained that during the budget review meeting money was approved for music in the parkette for weekends and holiday Mondays. Leslie Lewis originally coordinated this and continued on after she retired from the board. The concern/issue is not with the music in the parkette itself but the location, quality of equipment/sound.

**C.5 Strategic Planning:** George lead the discussion stating that there are restrictions regarding meeting and he and the board would welcome anyone from the membership to take part. Tony has agreed to head the Strategic Planning committee. Nicole Craig has offered.

What are the BIA strengths: as a BIA, a board, a destination, and what are the issues/shortcomings? i.e. lack of a staff person which is a weakness and the follow through isn't there.

Renee stated that on a positive note the town's getting busier and busier enjoying the animation and it looks good other than the Gateway sign. Renee does get feedback regarding how good the area is. It's been noticed that the town is vibrant, more business every year in the summer for example.

Matt agrees with Renee.

Tony felt that infrastructure: watering of plants, the lights and the parking are key to the visitor experience. Once you get here what's the experience like? Are we happy

with it, or do we need to do enhancements? And how to get people here? i.e. social media that the BIA needs to look at. How can businesses tap into that? The free WiFi project will enhance the experience. Events: not looking to expand the number of, but to ensure the ones we do have are promoted well, are first rate, pristine, and significant and create a reputation for the town. Many people know Thornbury because of the Olde Fashioned Christmas and that it is time to bring someone on board, representing the members, working and organizing things realizing that the potential is there and that the status quo cannot continue.

Tony stated he was disappointed with a lot of what came out of the 2018 Strategic Planning meetings and it wasn't what he'd been expecting. The lack of involvement from the membership at large when there were numerous opportunities slotted to engage members. The vision and what the mandate was but mostly what came was a discussion of the events and it came down to prioritizing and what to spend the money on.

George stated that the board walked out with a vision. The starting block was to develop a vision for the area so the direction was how we are to operate, and what we are trying to achieve.

Nicole asked about considerations on how fees are paid and mentioned that other BIAs have a different structure.

George stated that the Town had done some investigations on collecting the levy under a property tax based format rather than at a fixed rate per business. The challenge is that a large percentage of the members would end up paying more and it would be difficult to get the 66% majority vote required to change the basis. This is an issue that can be addressed during the strategic planning.

Nicole stated that the need to change the structure in order to increase money to pay for someone since most of the BIA money goes to flowers and watering.

George said that possibly what may come out is that beautification is a first priority and events, a second priority. Beautification also includes gateway signs and more.

Tony need to qualify, and to quantify the need for hiring and it only becomes an issue when people don't understand what they're getting.

Rob felt that a dedicated person at least on a weekly basis is needed since social media is the window to the world.

Tim mentioned there are grant opportunities to assist in developing a strategic plan and stated he would volunteer his time to do some research to address this for the BIA.

George stated it was one area the BIA would like to move to with greater use of the Town staff resources to apply for those grants. It might be time to have the BIA be part of the Town's budgeting process identifying specific support in some areas.

Tim would like to work collaboratively and help to schedule a meeting to have this discussion regarding the grants and assistance. George clarified the grants were to help develop a strategic plan, and Tim added to also help implement items identified.

**C.6 Letter of Support for Bruce Street Technologies:**

Moved by: Tony Poole

Seconded by: Matthew Cundy

That the Thornbury BIA write a letter of support for Bruce Street Technologies proposal to install WiFi in the Thornbury area. Carried.

Tim thanked Rob and it is strongly supported from Council and the Economic development and it is beneficial for the entire community.

George mentioned that Rob answered the questions that the Board members had asked prior to this meeting.

Tony spoke that it is not just about WiFi on Bruce Street but it's for the BIA area Rob stated it is from the Chamber of Commerce office to Tim Horton's and from the harbor and up to The Dam Pub.

**D. Adjournment**

Moved by: Tony Poole

Seconded by: Matthew Cundy

THAT this meeting does now adjourn at 9:17 a.m. to meet again on September 4, **2019 at 8:00 a.m. at The Town of The Blue Mountains Council Chamber or at the call** of the Chair.

## Thornbury Indigenous Life Festival Meeting July 19, 2019

Present: Lisa Farano, Melanie Johns, Matthew Cundy, Ryan Gibbons, Riley Smith, Jillian Morris, and George Matamoros.

The initial discussion was around cancelling this year's event and postponing it to 2020. One of the criteria for going ahead with this event was to have proper promotion to attract visitors and being barely six weeks out without any marketing plan in place the consensus was to postpone the event to next year.

The meeting then turned to planning the 2020 event with a goal to come back to the board with more details and a budget looking for a pre-approval so that the committee can move ahead and organize the event early.

One of the issues which needs to be resolved, not just for this event, is to figure out who is looking after the BIA's social media platforms.

One of the suggestions, given the lack of staff that we have, is to hire an outside agency to handle the marketing and promotion of the event. It would be appropriate to look for a local indigenous firm. The goal would be to target social media ads at the appropriate audience.

The event will be centered at the Town Hall. Being a summer event, the hall could serve as a cooling station and provide washrooms. The council chamber would be ideal for the elders part of the event.

Music would be a good draw to the event and we should budget for a band to put on a concert possibly to close the event. We would be looking for an indigenous musical group such as The Jerry Cans, Digging Roots, or Stoic.

Other parts of the event such as the craft demonstrations and vendors could be located on Bruce Street North, or possibly Bruce Street South in order to get visitors moving through town.

Ryan will look into providing maps of Thornbury in order to plan physically plan out the event.

Lisa will suggest an August date in 2020 that doesn't conflict with other indigenous events in the area, such as Pow Wows.

Lisa and Ryan will look into the availability of grants that we could apply for.

Jillian Morris has been brought on board to assist with the event. Jillian has previously worked with Lisa on events and is connected to the local indigenous community.

The next step is to put together a framework of the event together with an updated budget. The thinking is that to be effective the event needs to have enough happening to attract visitors. With an early approval from the board we can ensure that the event is properly planned and promoted.