Minutes
Thornbury Business Improvement Area

Meeting Date: August 5, 2020
Meeting Time: 8:00 a.m.
Location: Town Hall, Council Chambers
Prepared by Sarah Merrifield, Executive Assistant Committees of Council

A. Call to Order

Chair George Matamoros called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. with Board members Renee Desrochers, Melanie Johns, Tony Poole, and Deputy Mayor Rob Potter present.

Town staff present were Director of Community Services Ryan Gibbons and Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry. Director of Operations Shawn Carey joined the meeting following the call to order.

Regrets were sent by Board member Matthew Cundy.

A.1 Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Tony Poole Seconded by: Rob Potter
THAT the Agenda of August 5, 2020 be approved as circulated, including any additions to the agenda

Cundy, Matthew absent
Desrochers, Renee Yay
Johns, Melanie Yay
Poole, Tony Yay
Potter, Rob Yay
Matamoros, George Yay

The motion is Carried.

A.2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and general nature thereof

None
A.3 Previous Minutes

Moved by: Tony Poole          Seconded by: Rob Potter

THAT the Thornbury BIA Minutes of July 8, 2020 be adopted as circulated, including any revisions to be made

  Cundy, Matthew             absent
  Desrochers, Renee          Yay
  Johns, Melanie             Yay
  Poole, Tony                Yay
  Potter, Rob                Yay
  Matamoros, George          Yay

The motion is Carried.

B. Deputations and Public Comment Period

B.1 Deputations, if any

B.2 Public Comment Period (each speaker is allotted three minutes)

NOTE: Fifteen (15) minutes is allotted at the Meeting to receive public comments regarding Thornbury Business Improvement Area matters included on the Agenda. The speaker shall provide their name and address, and shall address their comments to the Chair. Comments shall not refer to personnel, litigation, or potential litigation matters.

NOTE: Board meetings are taking place virtually to assist with social distancing with respect to COVID-19. Comments received from the public that have not been included on the Agenda will be read at the meeting by the Executive Assistant.

None

C. Meeting

C.1 BIA correspondence

C.1.1 Deb Crosskill, Clarksburg, July 10, 2020

Thank you to council members for reconsidering the placement of the barriers in Thornbury.
Please note a special thank you to the two councillors who respectfully responded to my original call regarding this matter.

The first day of the partial removal, there was a noticeable change of activity on the street. Activity is a draw for potential customers (local or tourist) as the town looks open and welcoming for business.

The second change may still require some reflection by council. The initial reason given for the barriers was with regards to safe distancing due to Covid. Although there has not been a huge number of people on a regular basis on the street.

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Yet, this new setup appears to establish private patio areas. These areas take up parking spaces of potential paying customers for the general businesses.

A patio area is understandable for a business offering a food service. In this second configuration there are several non-food areas with barriers in front of them.

Two areas are extremely questionable, as there are barricades blocking the disability ramp to the sidewalk and the other is covering the right hand turn lane onto the highway. In both cases one would question WHY and the legality. Perhaps these should be removed.

During the discussion of these barriers the comment of attracting tourism to the Thornbury area was brought forward by a couple of the council members yet, no comments on encouraging and maintaining local residents in shopping. Tourism has been important but locals have always been the mainstay for many businesses during the tourist season and the shoulder seasons. Presently these are different times and the local taxpayers need to be respected and shown consideration by council.

Sustainability is extremely important now more than ever. Consideration to a staff study/survey of the local spending in the community over the past 5 years might be appropriate. A starting point could begin with members of Council along with the town staff. This study/survey could give insight into what is needed within the community and what is or is not working, how sustainable is the Town of the Blue Mountains. Perhaps shopping is happening in other communities.

There seems to be discussion and confusion within the community as to who is paying for these barriers, the BIA or the taxpayers. As a taxpayer I would request a written response to that question.

Also, could the monies spent on this, not, have been better used to improve the Little River Beach area. This beach area would have allowed for the enjoyment of both local residents and tourist as it has in the past. The enforcement of the pier and the playground could still have been maintained.

As a concerned taxpayer there is a major concern on how this decision of barriers has been managed. There has been a petition from many businesses affected, regarding the process and this needs to be addressed. A loss of faith is never a good situation.

Perhaps if the new mandate for these barriers is to act as private patio areas the businesses gaining from this should bear the costs. This council might look at how the neighbouring community of Meaford did this after doing a staff study. These are private patio areas within the restaurant areas and each restaurant was responsible for creating their space for paying customers.

Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry confirmed the letter from Ms. Crosskill will be provided to Council and noted the Town’s dedicated COVID-19 budget will cover the costs of the jersey barriers.
THAT the Thornbury Business Improvement Area receives correspondence item C.1.1 Deb Crosskill, Clarksburg, July 10, 2020 and requests the Chair to provide a response to Ms. Crosskill on behalf of the Board

Cundy, Matthew  absent
Desrochers, Renee  Yay
Johns, Melanie  Yay
Poole, Tony  Yay
Potter, Rob  Yay
Matamoros, George  Yay
The motion is Carried.

C.2  Bruce Street Barriers progress review

Chair George Matamoros requested the Board to comment on their opinions regarding the current jersey barrier situation in downtown Thornbury. It was noted that Community Services staff are reviewing the possible installation of bike racks in the Bruce Street Parkette. George emphasized that as soon as the jersey barriers are deemed redundant, they should be removed from the downtown core.

Tony Poole noted he is glad for the jersey barriers, especially on busy weekends when pedestrian and cyclist traffic is significant. Renee Desrochers requested confirmation regarding the timeline for removing the barriers; staff noted they will review this matter with the Community Recovery Task Force and follow-up with the Board.

The Board discussed whether beautification of the barriers is being considered. Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry advised that the Town has reviewed several options, including barrier wraps, which are costly and may not hold up to the elements, and allowing local artists to paint on the barriers. It was noted that businesses have taken it upon themselves to provide beautification of the barriers, including greenery and seating.

Chair George Matamoros noted it may be good to keep the barriers as they are, for the duration of their installation on Main Street. In their current form, they show visitors and residents that they are temporary.
D. Adjournment

Moved by: Tony Poole Seconded by: Rob Potter

THAT this meeting does now adjourn at 8:24 a.m. to meet again on September 2, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. at Council Chamber Town of The Blue Mountains, or at the call of the Chair

Cundy, Matthew absent
Desrochers, Renee Yay
Johns, Melanie Yay
Poole, Tony Yay
Potter, Rob Yay
Matamoros, George Yay

The motion is Carried.