



## SMALL GROUP SESSION ♦ MEETING MINUTES

**Group:** Food, Beverage & Entertainment

**Member Representation:**

- Apollo Cinema, Cara Watson
- The Yeti, Victoria Kent
- AOK, Steve Jenereaux & Danni Stock
- Marks Caribbean Kitchen, Roy Singh
- The Crazy Canuck, Liam Cameron
- Ellison's Bistro, Elvis Ellison
- Matter of Taste, Dawn & Phong Tran
- Sugar Run, Kypp Saunders
- Rich Uncle Tavern, Ryan Lloyd-Craig
- Crafty Ramen, Jared
- Walper Hotel, Mick
- Café Pyrus, Tori
- Rich Uncle Tavern, Julia Varga
- Grand Trunk Saloon, Kacy Wignall
- Legacy Greens, Jordan Dolson

**Meeting Discussion**

Linda Jutzi thanked the group for their time and acknowledged how difficult of a year (plus) it has been for this group. Ms. Jutzi provided background on spending during 2020/2021, highlighting the following line items in lieu of cancelled events and programming: DTK Art Walk, patio program enhancements, live entertainment, and the Business Sustainability Grant Program.

Additionally, Ms. Jutzi shared an overview of the 2022 budget:

- Attracting urban shops and restaurants (Priority #1)
- Graffiti removal, patio program, horticultural contribution, advertising, and promotion.
- Foster and support heartfelt urban experience (Priority #2)
- Special events, City of Kitchener events, December programming, holiday windows, community builder grant program, winter programming, DTK Art Walk, and live entertainment.
- Champion a caring and collaborative community (Priority #3)
- Changes to the discovery team, keeping downtown clean, new ambassador program, organic waste diversion program.

Following the budget overview, Ms. Jutzi opened the meeting to questions/discussion from the group:

- How are our comments and feedback shared with Board Directors? We are unable to hear the comments of other businesses and would like to see them. The BIA has a big budget; it is important to look at how it is being spent.
- Is there any programming in place to attract companies to lease office space? How are we getting tech downtown? What is the plan? We need to incentivize more Start-up companies to come back. Maybe it needs to start with the return of workers to City Hall.
- How much money has the city provided to places like Google? Now those people are not down here and working from home.

- Do we know office space occupancy? What have the data trends been? Can we calculate people going into office buildings? An investment in foot traffic density would be good and help me trust my intuition as a business owner.

**Priority 1 (Graffiti removal, patio program, horticultural contribution, advertising, and promotion.**

- The magazine is a great idea; however, ours was a very sanitized version of what Kitchener is. We should be profiling real places, who people are, and their back story. A great example is Bloordale Magazine.
- The patio program was incredible. No one could transform Kitchener. So happy with the BIA – downtown looked amazing. It took a big chunk but was put into the businesses and made an impact. Businesses would not have been able to invest otherwise.
- The BIA created profiles for social media. Those could be injected into the magazine for content.
- We do not have any planters where our business is located on Charles Street.
- Patios given to restaurants were often not open or empty.
- Our patio brought light to our business's existence and became a marketing tool – thanks so much for this support
- With the support from the BIA and neighbouring building owner, we were able to open our doors and offer customers a beautiful outdoor setting. We are very grateful!

**Priority 2 (Special events, City of Kitchener events, December programming, holiday windows, community builder grant program, winter programming, DTK Art Walk, and live entertainment.)**

- So much money is being put into events that do not help our businesses. People come down to support events, and there is an assumption that their experience has a trickle-down effect. There needs to be evidence that events are supporting businesses. I was so pleased with the BIA over COVID and the efforts you made in the patios and beautifying our streets. Events are not a good use of our budget.
- Like the idea of micro fest halls as a venue, it forces people into businesses rather than walking by. It's a better way of promoting the business, drawing people in, and the trickle-down occurs.
- We need to get a Ferris wheel down here!
- The BIA has put approximately \$130K into events and subsidies doing impactful things. These line items are part of the overall \$461K being spent.
- In addition to how much is going to the events, there is advertising spending on top of that.
- Before covid, we did not see a substantial increase in business during Blues Festival. When we have special events, we lose money – it does not translate into extra dollars. Flowers and beautification are good for downtown and were a good investment. We need a safe, beautiful place. Events are a lot of work, for little return. How can we improve on that?
- Imagine if you had a bigger fund for grants to support grassroots initiatives. These things work better when the money goes straight to the stakeholders. Something as simple as a fridge could prop up a business.
- I love the idea of supporting grassroots initiatives. If you look at the Community Builder Grant, though, only \$30K was used.
- The Community Builder Grant shouldn't be based on events; it should be based on the business's needs. It should be for capital expenses and big expenses like renovations.
- The purpose of the BIA is to beautify and bring people downtown.
- I loved how 12 Bar Blues has happened over the last couple of years; our business was booked every night. In previous years only 15 people would show up. A venue shouldn't have to fund the entertainment. The house can't lose money on something that is of benefit to the community.

- The DTK Art Walk was great but did not specifically benefit my business. Recognize it could be due to our location.
- The DTK Art Walk is good branding for downtown. It creates a year-round activation and is not a one-time event where they see it and then leave.
- I heard really positive feedback from a teacher and students about how awesome their art walk experience was. It was nice that it has expanded and is being used as an educational tool.
- The art walk was a good program to brand downtown. People will continue to talk about it.
- Please invest more in the art walk. It is making our Downtown a destination.
- I love the Gaukel Street pedestrian space!
- Can we decorate Victoria Park nicer? It is so embarrassing – it looks like someone through lights on the trees. The wagon display is also outdated and creepy. We went for a walk in Waterloo Park, and it was amazing. Victoria Park has the opportunity to be this nice. Additionally, can we remove the sponsor signs for businesses that no longer exist? For example, Petsche Shoes. It is outdated and needs to be improved as the park attached to our downtown
- We need to make Victoria Park nice – it will create a destination. Revive the Boathouse and turn the pond back into an ice rink. If there is a will, there is a way.
- Our business used the live music budget to support entertainment on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We take everything from the BIA with an open hand. We are grateful, especially since we are muted from the street. We wouldn't be in this position without the BIA.
- Use Jubilee Drive for events and programming.
- Our business was able to use dollars from the BIA to create a unique patio. We could not have done any of that without the BIA.
- We are also grateful for a patio.
- The patio canopies need to change. They are not rain proof.
- A typical comment we receive is on parking. It has always been a nightmare.
- There have been lots of break-ins at the Duke Street parking garage.
- Collaborate on more programs like Murder Mystery dinners.
- Will there be window painting again during the holidays?
- I enjoy doing my window decorating; could I borrow lights from the BIA?
- Do we know when the construction of City Hall will be complete?
- Can we limit the number of food trucks at events? It takes away from the restaurants. Why should we rent a booth when we rent space on King Street? It is upsetting that they get that revenue.
- Try coming up with a better plan on programming during the wintertime. There are more months of the year that we all suffer. Everyone should participate, and we could tie into it with downtown dollar giveaways.
- In a way, large events drive traffic to my business that is off of King Street.
- Some events hinder our business and force us to close. It depends on the event; some are a benefit. Family-friendly events help our business, where older/specific groups typically do not.
- There is no consideration for vendor placement. They often block off our business, segregate us from the event, and sometimes giveaway free products (i.e., coffee) that hurt our sales. ( Hometown Hockey event) . In addition to this, there is typically a lack of washrooms. Attendees will use our bathroom but do not support our business.
- Just because you have a mass of people in one area does not mean your business will do well. The headaches and trouble that come with a larger crowd isn't always what you want either. There needs to be more washrooms.
- Sure successful events draw 100,000 people downtown for the organizer, but what is the effect?

- I would love to see the BIA and city follow up with businesses after each event. Foot traffic does not always translate into business.
- I would like to see the live music program continue. It helped bring people into our establishment and offered something unique by having a DJ and live music.
- The larger events bring people downtown and impact my business; we should continue to support them.

**Priority 3 (Changes to the discovery team, keeping downtown clean, new ambassador program, organic waste diversion program)**

- Make downtown a safe, clean, hospitable place. That will bring more people here, and businesses will see the trickle-down. Focusing on that and making sure it stays that way will see the biggest bang for our buck.
- We have so many services here – work towards dealing with that issue. If someone is not safe here, they are not coming back.
- I love the Organic Waste Diversion program!
- Safety is the biggest issue we face. There has always been a perception of safety. It is unfortunate that the program won't continue; understand that it is not a BIA issue, but it impacts the businesses. There is a need for support in that area.
- Calls don't always need to be placed to the police, especially if people are not doing something illegal. There needs to be a different option than calling the police; it is a mental health call half the time. To not have any other option.
- Downtown is not always the greatest at night.
- It's awesome that we are activating with murals, but it is not going to change things if it is not safe.
- Calling the police is going to boost calls to service and bring attention to the issues. The police should be here.
- Go to your Councillors, the Mayor, police, and the region with your concerns. They should be advocating for us. Safety is the number one concern downtown.
- Is there a way to engage condo owners to help us with this problem? These people will have a voice with politicians. There has to be a way to resolve this issue.
- Look at installing extra lighting to help with some of the evening issues.
- We should get live cams (CCTV) strategically placed downtown. It allows people to see the vibe of the area and deter negative behaviour. It will make people feel safer, encourage them to check out downtown. It will help get rid of the stigma that downtowns are not safe.
- You need to ensure downtown is properly lit when bringing families downtown.
- Downtown is not a destination place yet. After 6:00 pm is not a great place.

**There has always been a vision to make King Street pedestrian-friendly. What are your thoughts and feelings?**

- Not for another 3-4 years. This has been done before and was a disaster. When the population is downtown, maybe. Keep the patios on sidewalks for now. To close a long stretch will isolate businesses. It will be another 3+ years for the offices to build up again. It is way too soon; we don't have the walking traffic.
- Pedestrian-friendly spaces do very well and bring up vibrancy in European cities. People are not corralled by traffic. Try an experiment in the summer as a pilot program over seven weeks, maybe in August.
- Now is the time to do it. Get people in the condos to adjust and take different routes. Huge fan of closing the streets.

- Have we ever looked at why people in the suburbs are not coming here on a Friday night? What is stopping them?
- Wait until the condos are full and there is more pedestrian traffic. Fear closing King will give people another reason not to come downtown because of the existing parking situation.
- We haven't had the density downtown. It's finally coming, and our businesses will grow and be amazing once these places fill. We are a couple of years away from that.
- Would one-way traffic be considered? I would be in favour of this when construction is complete.
- Have dedicated parking spots that support run-in traffic. People will not come downtown if they have to walk 10-minutes to pick something up. Make accommodation for short-term parking.
- Close during certain times of the day, for example, evenings, to promote dining.



## SMALL GROUP SESSION ♦ MEETING MINUTES

**Group:** Retail & Service

**Business Representation:**

- Libro, Rebecca Coker
- Legacy Greens, Jordan Dolson
- Dogtopia, Xerxes Wanda
- A Second Look Books, Charles
- KW Health Connection, Colin Leis
- Cyclone Spin Studio, Erika Siegner

**Meeting Discussion**

Linda Jutzi provided background on spending during 2020/2021 and the shifting of funds to the COVID-19 Business Continuity Fund. Ms. Jutzi highlighted the following line items in lieu of cancelled events and programming: DTK Art Walk, patio program enhancements, live entertainment, and the Business Sustainability Grant Program.

Additionally, Ms. Jutzi shared an overview of the 2022 budget:

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Following the budget overview, Ms. Jutzi opened the meeting to questions/discussion from the group:

- We need more support directly from the City of Kitchener. When it comes to DTK, the main message is that we are growing and expanding and becoming a full-service city. As we continue to grow and evolve, I would love to see some more support for small business and the amenities that support and add value to bringing people downtown from our Municipal government. So when all the condo buildings go up and population increases we want to still be around to offer the great amenities we do. We are the early adapters so help us stay around.
- The City says that we are growing and becoming more like Toronto. We are no where close to being that big where parking becomes such a premium. The City needs to provide more free parking and relax on ticketing and charging to enable us to compete with our competition in Uptown and beyond, where free parking is available.
- The budget is focused on restaurants, and I understand their density at this time and that the patios add beautification and attraction, but health and fitness need more support.

**Priority 1 (Graffiti removal, patio program, horticultural contribution, advertising, and promotion.**

- Will we be required to repair any of the patios after 3-years? What does storage look like?
- Did not like the companies branding on the patios. It makes it feel as though taxpayers are being taken advantage of.
- We do not have much retail. We do have two of the best used bookstores in the region. What if there was a seasonal book fair? Authors could sell books on the street as a way to support retail and promote shopping downtown. Would visualize the City of Kitchener or BIA running this program – not an opportunity through the grant program.
- The DTK Instagram account mostly shares stories. There are no comments/context to go along with the re-share; we need a hook - give something for people to look at. It appears lazy, and that not a lot of effort is being put into it – quantity is there, but not quality for stories. The posts are, however, high quality; the collab with Byte Size was awesome.
- Happy that the BIA is re-sharing our content but take more time to make and generate content for the businesses. For example: make a video; I want you in my store sharing video content once a month. I do not want static photos – Instagram wants video content.
- Will the footprint of the existing patios remain the same? It would be helpful to have a loading area or a 20-minute parking spot for deliveries.
- People sitting in front of our window while eating on a patio is great
- The assistance and support from the BIA programs and grants during COVID were game changers for my business.
- We add value through health and fitness to those that live and work here. There is not enough support for small businesses. When the condos fill don't you think the developers will want services for their buyers? Support us now.
- We could use help being discovered/promoted. Social media is not working like it did in the past.
- Patio program was a game-changer for DTK - great work.

**Priority 2 (Special events, City of Kitchener events, December programming, holiday windows, community builder grant program, winter programming, DTK Art Walk, and live entertainment.)**

- Our business offers customers a \$25 discount when they support a downtown restaurant. They must show proof of purchase. Could we apply for funding through the Community Builder Grant Program for this?
- How (and can) retailers apply for live music funding?
- The DTK Art Walk was very well done. Fortuity timing of the program. Brilliant.
- I'd love to see some more direct supports for retail and fitness from the BIA.
- The grant you provided during COVID really helped our business. We felt supported even by the few thousand dollars we received.
- I LOVE the Art Walk – please keep adding and changing. We see people with the books walk by our window frequently.

**Priority 3 (Changes to the discovery team, keeping downtown clean, new ambassador program, organic waste diversion program)**

- It is disappointing that the Discovery Team is not returning. Our businesses use them frequently. In the interim, we need to find backup support.
- At night, and when it's dark doesn't always feel safe downtown.
- Feels like we should be investing more resources (Discovery Team), rather than less.
- We have lost staff due to safety concerns. As a result of these issues, we have had to install a door striker.
- Can we offer businesses de-escalation training?
- Biggest concerns we are facing as a business is the safety and parking downtown. The City of Kitchener should be looking at the safety hazard of vehicles driving the wrong way down Ontario Street, rather than ticketing my customers during drop-off and pick-up. We have tried to resolve this issue, but no one will speak with me at the City of Kitchener.
- When the KPL is closed, our business sees an influx of people. The Discovery Team is perhaps out of the BIA's hands; however, we do not need more police officers. We need more social workers.
- We don't call WRPS a lot. In the time it would take to call dispatch and sit on hold, I could spend that time to lead a person out of the store. But that means I am not running our store.
- Social service is not the responsibility of the BIA.
- The streets look good.
- There is an increase in comments about DTK not feeling safe. We took some backward steps here. Beautification is important, but safety is right up there.
- Very frustrated with calls to WRPS. We understand that they are not emergency calls, but the wait time makes it impossible, so we stop calling, but we know that affects the stats. Very frustrating and very disappointing that we are not seeing our engagement officers as we did in the past.
- We should all be calling our councillors. Do they know how bad it is?

**There has always been a vision to make King Street pedestrian-friendly. What are your thoughts and feelings?**

- All in support of having the street closed, but things have to happen – it cannot be empty. It must be fully activated to close it. The more people walking on the street, the better.





## SMALL GROUP SESSION ♦ MEETING MINUTES

**Group:** Developers

**Developer Representation:**

- Vive Developments, Lindsay Bett
- Perimeter Developments, Craig Beattie
- Europro, Crystal Heenan
- Momentum Developments, Brian Prudham
- Ridgewood Holdings, Bernie Nimer
- Zehr Group, JD Zehr

**Meeting Discussion**

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- Changes to the discovery team, keeping downtown clean, new ambassador program, organic waste diversion program.

Following the budget overview, Ms. Jutzi opened the meeting to questions/discussion from the group:

- BIA is doing a great job, and we are pleased that you take the time to keep us connected.
- It is going to take a couple of years to attract new retail, but we believe it will come when the density increases from condo dwellers.
- Big TBD on returning of in office work. There will be a normalization of flexibility; it is easier for people to stay away and not select DTK for their office or hub.
- The Kitchener BIA made big strides and capital improvements during the pandemic – very well done.

**Priority 1 (Graffiti removal, patio program, horticultural contribution, advertising, and promotion.**

- Will there be an opportunity for new patios? Is it possible to turn a portion of Goudies Lane (one-way) into a patio for a potential new restaurant at 1 Queen Street South?
- A publication (similar to Own It Magazine)/welcome package would be beneficial for residential tenants. Happy to help and distribute.
- Great improvement on the street, and with the investment of flowers this year, however, it is still feeling used and tired. Things are old, i.e., moluks and pavement.
- Why not go back to Own It Magazine? It will be hard to accomplish offering a standard advertising template. Still have stories about downtown, the who and why – same feeling, and story telling.
- Maybe businesses could pitch a story for a full-page ad to the BIA.
- The patios created a new look to our streets. Great project.
- The patio program was very good for branding, beautification and it helped two of my tenants greatly – thank you.
- I love the concept of a welcome magazine for those that are making DTK their new home.

**Priority 2 (Special events, City of Kitchener events, December programming, holiday windows, community builder grant program, winter programming, DTK Art Walk, and live entertainment.)**

- Have we (and will we) cap the number of pieces for the DTK Art Walk? It's a large budget.
- How many businesses were recipients of the Business Sustainability Grant? It would be interesting to do a follow-up and collect data.
- Is there any planning going on at the Kitchener Market?
- We regret not participating in the Art Walk. The partners are eager to provide building space in 2022. They were so impressed with the outcome and the art.
- The Art Walk has so much potential to grow – a great concept.
- Great visionary efforts during COVID – wondering what this City Council's legacy will be coming out of the pandemic – more investment from the City is required to move it forward as a destination – your budget is too small to do this alone – need a much better streetscape beyond City Hall.
- Make Christkindl a longer festival through the core. It brings life during the holiday season. Find a way to link the condo owners

**Priority 3 (Changes to the discovery team, keeping downtown clean, new ambassador program, organic waste diversion program)**

- We need to give ourselves the best opportunity to drive more of the daytime office population back here. People will only put their time into things that feel good. Coming out of this, that needs to be more important. Beautification needs to be a top priority; it is such an important piece of the puzzle and has been a complete afterthought for the last number of years. The BIA is responsible for a small portion of that. We need to set a basic standard of how we operate as a city.
- The city needs to do what they are doing, but at a higher level. Have pride and respect. Property owners have left derelict spaces that need to be fixed. The city needs show by example and

make property standards a priority. This will retain tenants and prevent them from leaving after 12-months due to their negative experience. Take whatever means necessary, this is not acceptable in our city anymore; basic things need to be established. The BIA should be advocating to the City for higher standards.

- Really concerned about safety. It is an issue for renting office space. Companies need to know that their employees will feel safe if they choose DTK as their location. This is so important, fundamental before anything else.
- DTK has to look its very best to attract at the second-floor level and street level. It was not easy with few tenants to spend funds on improvements, but we have to. I wish all would.
- The condos are not filled today. I think that focusing on being safe, clean, and beautiful should remain on course.
- Troublesome to see that many funds are going towards garbage pick up – must be a better solution that involves City/Region. We pay taxes for these services.
- Many of the building fronts facing King need to be fixed up – a few properties are becoming an eyesore.

**There has always been a vision to make King Street pedestrian-friendly. What are your thoughts and feelings?**

- What is the objective of closing the street? We need more density; we are a long way from feeling our streets and sidewalks are congested. What is the plan/program to deal with the space if closed? To do this when there are many things to be taken care of is pointless.
- Most certainly not today or soon. We need density before that happens.