

Minutes
Seaforth Business Improvement Area Meeting
Wednesday, January 8th, 2014 at 7 p.m.
At Municipal Offices

Present:

Directors: Chair Carolanne Doig, Herb McGowan, Maureen Agar,
Danielle Munro, Council Rep. Bob Fisher

Municipal Staff: Jan Hawley, Economic Development Officer

Guests: Brenda Campbell, Kim Blok

Regrets: Directors Cathy Elliott, Shelly McMillan, & Betty Small

Chair Doig called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for coming, and welcomed the guests.

1. **Minutes of the November 6th 2013 meeting were adopted as presented on a motion by Herb McGowan, seconded by Bob Fisher.**

Carried

2. **Business Arising from Minutes:**

2.1-A Brochure Distribution – Jan Hawley reported that there is still a box with about 500 brochures to be distributed and that she could use some help getting them out to border towns, community groups, such as the Legion and other distribution centres in order to promote our community. Although the brochures have 2013 dates for events it was felt that annual events for this year will be close to that date and an inexpensive insert with 2014 dates could easily be printed to create an updated version until new brochures are printed. Directly related to this is the need to do the annual update on the website, map, brochure, and g-mail account. This is a time consuming job that requires attention to detail so that changes can be made and then forwarded to Michelle at Artech Signs & Graphics, who will update the website accordingly. It is necessary that we have current email addresses so we can communicate with BIA members. We also need an accurate map of the business area on the website and accurate dates for special events so that all information is current. Carolanne Doig and Jan Hawley have done this for several years and asked if there was someone who might be interested in taking on this task. Director Herb McGowan volunteered to take on this project. EDO Hawley will orientate Director McGowan with the process. A meeting will

be arranged in the next few weeks. ***(Update since meeting: Both met briefly on Tuesday, January 14, and the EDO has forwarded the most current business listing to Director McGowan, who is proceeding to develop a data base for the BIA.)***

The other issue related to this is the status of Associate Members. It is important that the current Associate Members of the BIA are invoiced the \$120.00 fee, as this is much needed revenue. We discussed the need to recruit new Associate Members. Our guests came up with a list of potential associate members that included home-based businesses and even some businesses outside of town. Discussion was held on how best to approach these business people. Both Brenda Campbell and Kim Blok will approach some businesses that they believe may be interested in joining our BIA. ***(Update since meeting: EDO Hawley has submitted the list of associate members to date, including new member Freeze King recruited by Kim Blok to Barb Dalrymple, who will invoice accordingly.)***

2.1-B Mural Progress – Chair Doig reported that the mural at the Main corner was up on time for the Santa Claus Parade and Christmas celebrations. The mural came in under budget as the size had been reduced to accommodate the photo resolution as well as the wall section available. In addition, preparation of the wall for the mural had been funded with assistance from the Huron Economic Development Management Committee and OMAFRA. Huron East Finance Manager Paula Michiels is working on a complete reconciliation of the Mural Fund for the budget. In preparation of the installation, Facility's Manager John Hill removed the air-conditioner so it would not be in the middle of the actual mural. Prior to summer, the building residents will be consulted on whether or not the air conditioner needs to be re-installed in a different location. The building owner has had a new GT Mini Mart sign made that is more in keeping with our Heritage guidelines and this is a very positive outcome too. Herb McGowan expressed concern that without proper lighting the impact and value of the mural would be reduced. Maureen Agar and Jan Hawley are looking into installing a spotlight that would highlight the mural without interfering with residents in the upper floor of the building. If possible, the light will be installed by early spring.

Councilor Fisher once again advised that in the spring of 2014 there may be changes to the traffic lights at the Main Street intersection with #8 and at that time we might be able to make some aesthetic changes to the corner as well as accessibility improvements.

2.2 Christmas Promotion Campaign

Christmas Promotion Campaign (advertising) –Director Shelly McMillan was not at the meeting so could not speak to the actual measured success of the advertising campaign that she had put together. Since we had no one from Main Street at the meeting who focused on retail we really did not have a report on how the merchants felt about this year’s campaign. Our committee members said they would ask around and find out how the business owners felt about this year’s use of the advertising budget.

Order of Garland & Bows – The general consensus at the meeting was that everyone liked this project. The Main Street looked great, it looked coordinated, and it looked successful. This project built business for Blooms ‘n Rooms and Flower Magic, but more than that it built a sense of being connected. The ribbon is a combo of burgundy and gold and the bows looked great and held up well and at a cost of \$8.00 the price was great. It was agreed that we would do a similar program for 2014 and advise the florists early so they could stockpile matching ribbon. In addition, the Chair will send a thank you email to the businesses expressing gratitude for working together to make the Main Street look so good. At that time she will also remind them to please take down decorations by the end of January and store bows for re-use if possible. ***(Update: Email was sent to membership January 12, 2014.)***

2.3 Wine & Cheese Event – Chair Doig reported that a very successful Wine & Cheese Christmas party was held at the golf club with an attendance of over 100. Committee members commented on the ambience and atmosphere and it was very positive. There were 23 bottles of wine left over and they have been sold for \$4.00 each. The general consensus was that we would continue with this kind of event again for 2014. The presentation of the Historic Plaques and Appreciation Awards also helped to make this event special for many in attendance.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Historic Plaques – Easels – Jan Hawley reported that with the help of Cathy Elliott the plaques had been distributed to the proper businesses for display and that many were in the windows ready to be viewed by both visitors and residents alike. The final report for this major project was completed and submitted to the Ontario

Trillium Foundation on January 2, 2014, satisfying the funding criteria. Special thanks to Director Cathy Elliott for preparing the report and ensuring it was submitted on time. The next part of this project will be the establishment of a Self-Guided Heritage Walking Tour, which is part of the BIA's ongoing plans.

3.2 Smart Money- Danielle Munro came prepared with a spreadsheet showing where the redeemed Smart Money had been spent to date. This proved to be interesting as in the past the bulk of the money was spent at Seaforth Foodland. Since the Seaforth Foodland was out of commission until just a few weeks ago, the Smart Money appeared to be more evenly distributed among the various businesses in the community. There is still just under \$4,000.00 of Smart Money available for purchase and it was decided that we continue to sell the Smart Money until it is gone rather than put an end of January deadline on the sales. After much discussion, it was decided to continue with the same amount of Smart Money, in the two launches this year in a different colour. We also learned that not all business owners are familiar with the program so we will have to increase our efforts to get as many on board as possible. One suggestion was to do a YouTube video of how the Smart Money is handled in a business and get this info out to the business owners. There is still money at CIBC to be collected and added to the spreadsheet so Danielle will keep us updated as this comes in.

3.3. Ciderfest Event Partnership Update – EDO Hawley reported that she spoke with Mrs. Streutker and will follow up on how the Van Egmond House Board, its sub-committees and the BIA might partner in 2014.

3.4 Sprucing Up Main Corner & Goderich Street East – Herb McGowan was able to expand on his idea that not just the Queen's Hotel side of the street needed a boost, but also the south side, particularly the building hosting Seaforth Plumbing and Heating as well as the old gas station property. After some discussion about how best to approach this, Chair Doig agreed to speak with the owners to find out if there was a plan for any outdoor aesthetic improvements and how our BIA might assist – “simple landscaping, awning, grill work” – all were suggested. We will have to be cautious so as not to set a precedent, but we need to open up some dialogue in an effort to complete the enhancements of our Main Corner.

3.5 Aqua Fest support was dismissed at this time

4.0 Correspondence – there was no official correspondence

5.0 New Business

5.1 Christmas Decorations

The need for new Christmas lights was once again discussed. Chair Doig reported that one of the merchants brought to her attention the fact that many bulbs were out on the white light wreaths on Main Street and that some of the wreaths were misshapen from handling. A lot of time has been spent on refurbishing and repairing our current Christmas street lights with little success. The need for light replacement – either with new lights, used lights, or something entirely different will have to be addressed this year. Looking for funding, partnerships, and good ideas is a priority as we prepare for our upcoming budget and pursue our strategic plan. Purchasing something now while they are on sale was suggested, but a project of this magnitude needs to be well thought out. Perhaps a subcommittee may need to be struck to work on this.

While we talked about Christmas lights we also touched on some other Christmas related items:

- BIA Chair will send a thank you to Deb Bailey of Huron Song and ask if they would like to be a part of the Christmas celebration and parade night in 2014.
- BIA Chair will advise the Municipality of Huron East that we are planning to continue with the BIA Wine and Cheese and therefore suggest that the Huron East employees plan to host an alternate Christmas celebration in Seaforth for 2014. ***(Update: Email sent to municipality January 11, 2014.)***
- BIA Chair will speak with Wendy Hutton of the Seaforth Community Hospital Auxiliary regarding their Tree of Lights program. It was felt that better advertising, communication, and perhaps a few new ideas might help revitalize this formerly successful program and that the BIA could certainly help in some way. ***(Update: Email sent to Wendy Hutton January 11, 2014.)***

5.2 Budget 2014 – The EDO and the BIA Chair along with input from Councilor Fisher discussed the need to keep our 2014 budget basically the same as 2013. Chair Doig will meet with Huron East Finance Manager Paula Michiels to go over the various budget areas and come up with a draft plan taking into account the discussion at this meeting and input from the Finance Manager. This will be circulated as per guidelines and presented at the February meeting.

5.3 The Strategic Plan was projected on the big screen for review and we were happy to highlight that several things had been completed – mural – garbage cans – wine & cheese etc. We will continue to work on promoting and educating re. the BIA, as well as work on the directional signage coming into Seaforth from all four corners as well as enhancing our Main intersection. We also discussed moving the Info Center and will continue to review this.

5.4 Website Updates and Brochure Distribution – had been discussed earlier.

6.0 Other

- The need for “Welcome to Seaforth” boxes had been presented to Carolanne Doig by Barb Dalrymple because there are currently none available for new residents. Brenda Campbell and Kim Blok also saw the merits of this program and so a call will go out to the various business owners asking if they have something – either a gift or information or whatever - that can be put into a “welcome” package. The Chair and the EDO will work on this with assistance from other committee members. *(Update: Email sent to Barb Dalrymple January 11, 2014 informing her of the BIA’s future plans.)*
- OBIAA Conference – the conference will be held in Hamilton at the end of April. It was recommended that the BIA Chairperson and one other committee member attend the conference and that this be funded in the budget. Jan Hawley recommended that a room be booked in advance, so the Chair agreed to book a room and then our BIA will decide who will attend. *(Update: Room at the Hamilton Sheraton has been reserved at the preferred rate, which can be cancelled one day before the conference with no penalty if the BIA decides not to send any delegates.)*

A motion was made by Maureen Agar and seconded by Bob Fisher that we renew our membership for 2014 in OBIAA. Carried

- Jan Hawley will arrange to have this membership paid. *(Update: Application was prepared January 14, 2014 and sent to treasury for payment.)*

7. Next Meeting – will be Wednesday February 12, 2014 at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall. *(Update: At the Call of the Chair, the next meeting, which will be the AGM, has been changed to February 26, 2014 at 7:00 pm and will be held at the Maplewood Manor.)*

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm on a motion by Maureen Agar.