



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 7, 2024, 7pm
Ristorante Rosina

AGM Called to Order at 7:04pm

Board Members in Attendance:

Andrew Kennedy, Chair; Andrea Belair, Treasurer, Byciclette Rouge; Melissa Good, Streetscape Chair, Casual Corners; and Lisa Mills, Coordinator

Regrets: Pier Doninni, Promotions and Events, Rachel Stack, Saugeen Shores Councillor

Members in Attendance:

Steve Harris, Ristorante Rosina, Victoria and Jan Watson, Claimed Vintage; Sharon Schwass, The Wildflower Company; Jon Hepplewhite, Rabbit Dash Coffee House; Jim Mondry and Katie Lutz, Smore Books

Others in attendance:

Diane Huber, Deputy Mayor, Town of Saugeen Shores

1. **Meeting called to Order**, 7:04 pm, Land Acknowledgement and Welcome
Andrew Kennedy, Chair
We want to acknowledge the Territory of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations. And further, to give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen and the Chippewas of Nawash, known collectively as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the traditional keepers of this land.

Welcome to the Deputy Mayor and Members!
2. Additions to Agenda
?name requesting signage for Coulter Parkette directing people to shops South of Waterloo
3. **Request for any Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**
Andrew Kennedy, Chair

None Declared

4. **Request for Motion to Accept the Minutes from July x, 2023 AGM**

Andrew Kennedy, Chair

Moved by Melissa Good, Board Member

Seconded by Andrea Belair, Board Member

Carried unanimously

5. **Chair's Report, What is a BIA?**

Andrew Kennedy, Chair

The Downtown Port Elgin Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within Downtown Port Elgin, who work in partnership with the Town of Saugeen Shores to create a thriving and a safe business area that attracts shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses.

By working collectively as a BIA, local businesses have the resource capacity (funds and people), to actively enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhood and the Municipality as a whole.

The mission of a BIA is a “collective good” – The work is “not to make any *one* business better, but to make the area a better place to do business”. BIAs do this through beautifying and maintaining the public realm and promoting the area as a good place to do business (description with thanks to the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association).

Open invitation for additional Board Members

Katie from S'more Book Store offered to sit on the Board and will be sent an invitation to attend the next meeting

Melissa Good commented that being a Board Member allows you to be better know in the business community and the community at large. These relationships, she's found, tend to drive traffic to her store and wholeheartedly believes this to be the case for other BIA Board Members as well. Together we can create new ideas and strategies to make the Downtown Port Elgin BIA a destination that is not only about business, but that is a lively, vibrant, creative and thriving place to be.

Andrea Belair indicated that while Board Members have ongoing responsibilities to the Board and to a committee, volunteers are always welcome to sit on Streetscape or Promo & Events Committees or to help with specific initiatives.

6. **Promotions and Events. 2024 in review and looking ahead to 2025 - Andrew Kennedy, Chair**

The Board deliberately chose to capitalise on events that had been successful in Downtown Port Elgin and add in some new ones, always with the intention of making the area a desirable place not only to do business, but for consumers to shop, dine and gather

Farmers' and Artisan Market

2024 saw the Market move away from Coulter Parkette for many reasons, not least being the opportunity to grow the number of vendors and attract more visitors. The move to the municipal parking lot on Green Street east of Goderich proved to be hugely successful under the stewardship of Market Manager Shawna Harvey. The number of vendors grew to approximately 50 with a waiting list for next year, and approximately 1,500 visitors attended the Market each week. The weather was terrific all summer and only 1 market day was missed due to weather.

The BIA made several one-time investments for this location including new bistro sets, directional weighted flags for the market area and for Goderich Street, a storage shed, and with the help of the town installation of electrical hookups. We also installed a portaloos for the season for the use of the vendors.

The Town (Jay Pausner), has suggested that they will support even greater growth of the Market and Shawna would like to sit tight for 2025 and keep this model growing strong. She has made some suggestions and we will continue to explore additional ways to feature this event:

1. offer BIA businesses a table for the season or occasionally
2. link up brick and mortar businesses with market vendors for cross promotions

Based on her great direction and growth of the market, the BIA Board did confirm that the Manager's remuneration will increase to \$5000 for the 2025 season

Steve Harris suggested that we approach Bruce Power to have an education table and also to sponsor a table(s) for interested BIA members. BP has an office in the Professional Plaza and Diane Huber also suggested approaching John Peevers, Bruce Power's Director, Community, Media Relations and Economic Development (519) 361-6583 or via email at john.peevers@brucepower.com

Another method of cross promotion between the Market and Goderich Street Businesses would be a punch card and gift card promotion for a draw based on x number of stores visited.

Moving forward, we look forward to the Farmers' and Artisan Market being a revenue generator as no large expenses will be required for the foreseeable future other than advertising (radio and social media).

Family Day, February 2024

This seemed like a good idea and while it was a hockey themed event at Coulter Parkette, the one blizzard of the year did affect attendance and we will re-think winter events for future.

Hello Card, Downtown Port Elgin Gift Card

A Visa gift card that may be purchased on-line and used at participating businesses. We intend to roll out the gift card in early 2025 and support it with in-store postering, social media and give the gift cards at prizes for draws, etc. It is a no cost programme to both the BIA and the business (except for the transaction fee charge by their individual POS systems.) For more information please click [here](#).

Public Art

The BIA undertook an art installation in the Alley between Great Huron Tattoos and Rosina's. The launch event in June was a great success with Rosina's back deck having a capacity crowd of people enjoying cocktails and live jazz music and the Alley was cleaned up, had Edison string lights installed along with a permanent backlit installation created by Great Huron. Six additional local artists were also set up in the Alley to show their work. We attempted another event in September however the weather went against us and we cancelled. We hope to do another June event in 2025.

Further, we will work closely with Amanda Monaghan at the Town to investigate funding for a possible large art installation (yet to be determined) at another location. We do have an artist in mind and Elyse Salon has suggested that their exterior wall facing Coulter Parkette could be used.

Coulter Parkette

The Parkette comes up in discussion often. We appreciate that it did have a transformation in 2018 with the addition of the pavilion and is a wifi hub, however, the starkness of it being entirely concrete and the plaque being rather inconveniently placed in the middle of the area along with the poor performance of the blue spruce tree, make us wonder if there aren't ways to make the Parkette more inviting as a meeting spot, place to enjoy a coffee or lunch, etc. Again, this is a long term position and will assess the viability of BIA involvement to "jeu" it up! It is such a valuable asset geographically, and is a great spot for our Easter and Shoppers' night events. There was a comment regarding homeless people staying in the parkette and this is a much larger question for the Town to address. Regardless, it would be great to add some additional seating and perhaps different heights of tables for people to use, keeping in mind that anything must be durable, and especially, heavy such as the recycled plastic Muskoka chairs. That particular type of outdoor furniture is great as it is usable all year round and is virtually indestructible.

Katie Lutz, Smore Books, also commented that mobility devices must also be kept in mind when considering changes.

Andrew noted that he believes there is infrastructure for a water feature.

Diane Huber advised that the Town has plans for the Police Parkette. Also, there will be roadworks for the length of Highway 21 from the 6th to the 10th Concessions in 2025.

Easter Egg Hunt At Coulter Parkette

2024 had another great day with many families converging at Coulter Parkette. The actual egg hunt was a little problematic as it was difficult to hide candy eggs prior to them being pounced upon by eager kids. The event also had a bubble station which was a delight. 2025 will definitely have another Easter event, with tweaks.

Summer Dance Party

Was held in August to celebrate the Saugeen Shores 25th Anniversary of Amalgamation. The party was a free event featuring two cover bands, food and alcohol in the Municipal Parking Lot on Green Street. We believe there were well over 1200 people and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive to host another such event next summer.

Note: Sabrina from Rosina's may be able to help with the organisation of this event

Shoppers' Night

Came back in grand style in 2023 with record numbers of people, particularly families, coming downtown to enjoy the Tree Lighting, Santa, hot chocolate, entertainment and free horse drawn wagon rides, gift wrapping, a petting zoo and shopping! 2024 will stick close to a similar plan and the event is being supported on social media with shared and boosted posts as well as a small radio campaign.

Photography and videography for member businesses in 2025

Part of our promotion budget will be dedicated to the development of digital assets for use on socials and possible other advertising along with any Town initiatives. We would like to create "Member Highlights" featuring business owners in their premises. This would not be a time consuming endeavour, likely a 30 minute visit from a team. The BIA and the business owner would then have full access to these assets for their own use.

To summarise, the BIA will continue to build on its shoulder season plans with one large summer event. We will roll out the gift card programme and support the Farmers' and Artisan Market under the direction of Shawna Harvey.

Volunteers to the Committee or for specific events are welcome!!

Other 2025 Priorities: Develop a strategic plan to help guide the Board in staying on track with successful initiatives and for the development of new ones.

7. **Treasurer's Report**

Andrea Belair, Treasurer

2024 promotions and events all took place on budget and the budget was mostly exhausted. As there were significant reserves, we realised that we needed that cushion to carry on and this led the Board to discuss how best to move forward with our levy of \$33,000, which has not increased since the BIA's inception in September of 2014. Based on numbers supplied by the Ontario Business Improvement Area, we learned that Port Elgin's Levy is in the bottom 10 of BIA's of similar size and demographic. To that end, the Board has voted to increase the levy to \$66,000 and will present this to Council on November 25, 2024 for review and approval.

We have based next year's initiatives on that figure.

The second way to increase the BIA levy is to enlarge the boundary and the Board believes that, like Southampton, commercial properties in all of Port Elgin should contribute to the BIA levy and we will be exploring how best to accomplish this with the help of Amanada Monaghan at the Town and with the Clerk. It isn't a difficult process, but it is a democratic one - we will need to advise all commercial property owners in the Port Elgin area of the BIA's intention. If there is no negative response, we can go ahead however there is a 30 day period in which any property owner may respond and if we receive 30% negative response, we may not enlarge to the degree we hope for. We will try to expedite this for early to mid 2025.

In summary, we will hope to enlarge our boundary, capitalise on successful events of 2024, increase Farmers' and Artisan Market Manager fee,

Please see draft 2025 Budget attached.

8. **Streetscape and Beautification Report, Melissa Good, Chair**

Banner Programme: The BIA invested in new banners in the Spring of 2024 that featured the Farmers' and Artisan Market as well as generic BIA banners, Shop Fresh, Homegrown, Shop Downtown, Dine Downtown.

The BIA is very grateful to the Town Works Department for their sourcing of the gorgeous hanging baskets and arranging their installation and care, as well as the ground plantings throughout downtown.

With the Town, we will investigate the feasibility of purchasing new street planters and decide whether we stay with the existing model or move to something new that can be integrated over time (as these large, commercial grade planters tend to be very costly).

Wayfinding - it would be great to investigate the possibility of having some sort of directional at Coulter Parkette, in particular, to indicate that there are stores to the south!

9. **Deputy Mayor Huber** apprised the Membership of some Town initiatives:

- a) The 12 month ice pilot at the Plex over three years - possible opportunities to drive waiting parents downtown to dine and shop

Addendum: Lisa and Amanda Monaghan will investigate opportunities to place a visual prompt with QR Code at the Plex, hopefully in a prominent spot.

We will also get a listing from Community Services to see what's coming up at the Plex, Coliseum, etc

- b) Community Calendar: Please post events to Explore the Shores - this will become the hub for information for all of Saugeen Shores regarding, promotions, events etc sponsored by the Town, BIAs, service clubs, etc

10. Additional Discussion

Summer music event - have more food options/food trucks

Lighting in store and on street - try and discourage any sort of flashing lights as they can be disturbing, if not harmful to some of the population

11. **Request for Motion to Adjourn Meeting**

Andrew Kennedy, Chair

Moved by *Steve Harris*
Seconded by *Andrea Belair*
Carried unanimously