



Working together with our community

Downtown Revitalization Meeting Minutes The Corporation of Norfolk County

July 31, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.

AmCan Board Room, 185 Robinson Street, Simcoe

Present: Michelle Balan (Simcoe BIA), Linda Branderhorst (Simcoe Chamber of Commerce), Cam Carter (Simcoe BIA), Chris Garwood (Norfolk County), Ken Handsaeme (Delhi Chamber of Commerce), Clark Hoskin - Chair (Norfolk County), Heather King (Norfolk County Public Library), Shannon VanDalen (Norfolk County), Heidy VanDyk (Haldimand Norfolk Social Housing), Ted Willey (Norfolk County).

1. Updates

A. Downtown Simcoe BIA

Cam provided an update. BIA held a brainstorming session. Clean-Up Day scheduled for August 7, 2019, at 6:00pm at the Kent Street Parkette.

- **Follow Up:** Clark will alert Downtown Revitalization list ([subscribe](#)).

B. Simcoe Secondary Plan

Shannon provided an update on the draft policy document presented to Council in March 2019. Open houses for community feedback are scheduled for September 2019, with a report back to Council by end of 2019.

- **Links:**
 - [Draft Secondary Plan](#)
 - [Staff report](#)
- **Follow Up:** Heather requested the list of ideas from the Imagination Walks to be circulated.

C. Norfolk Inn

Heidy provided an update on Indwell's redevelopment of the Norfolk Inn. Construction is projected to begin September 2019 and last one year. New commercial space will also be available in the redeveloped property.

D. Library

Heather reported on services the Norfolk County Public Library provides in response to community needs in the downtown:

- RISE group's "Little Free Pantry" of personal hygiene products

- Community Wellness Council spearheaded by Jean Montgomery and Gord Rolo, which is discussing emerging housing demands and interest in pick-up recreation for youth
- Basement renovation in Simcoe branch will allow for events
- New film studio and sound studio
- English language classes for Spanish-speaking offshore workers presented by Frontier College students in Simcoe and Delhi
- Melinda's Enchanted Cottage Halloween Event on Oct 5 on Governor Simcoe Square
- Library willing to help coordinate storefront window loan-outs for non-profits, similar to what was done at Budds when it closed
- Library working on Social Services Tool Kit to help people in need

E. Budget

Clark provided an update on the budget available for the 2018-19 project, which was shared equally by Norfolk County and the Province of Ontario. About \$107,000 has been spent on initiatives to date: Win This Space (\$25,235), BIA Christmas decorations (\$12,448), garbage cans (\$31,828), festivals (\$3,376), Community Improvement Plan incentives (\$35,000), and Food Truck Fridays. The remaining amount must be spent before the end of 2019. Some is already earmarked for street-scaping and landscaping. Michelle reported that work will soon be completed.

2. Incentives, Events and Partnerships

A. Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Incentives

Chris reported that four properties in downtown Simcoe benefitted from the grants. The program has a fivefold multiplier effect.

B. Vacant Building Registry

Chris reported that an initial inventory of vacant properties has been prepared. GIS mapping of the inventory should be complete in fall 2019. A policy and by-law is being drafted for Council approval which would encourage absentee landlords to be more accountable of their vacant properties.

C. Food Truck Fridays

Shannon reported on the food truck events started in 2018 and continued this summer. The food trucks were situated by the former Maliboo property, this year on Court Street by the County Admin Building. One or two trucks appear weekly in summer. Picnic tables have been brought in. There is positive feedback.

D. Empty Storefront Tour

Ted reported that the tour was held on July 23. Three property owners participated. There was lots of interest in dozens of people toured the locations. Some property owners refused to participate. Others signaled they wanted to

participate, but then did not respond when contacted. A debrief meeting will be held. Cam suggested holding the open houses more often. Linda suggested utilizing staging.

E. Downtown Mural Project

There will be an update on this project at the next meeting.

F. Win This Space

Chris reported that the Win This Space tenant, Groundswell Coworking, would like to continue. The building is for sale.

G. Imperial Oil Property

Shannon reported there has been communication with the owner of the property at the southeast corner of Norfolk Street South and Water Street. Some environmental testing has taken place because the property was formerly a gas station.

H. Downtown Makeover initiative

Clark shared information about 7-Day Makeover (<http://7day.com.au/>) based in Australia, as a possible model for a similar project for downtown.

I. Save Your Town Videos

Heather offered to host a "Save Your Town" watch party at the Library for the committee and others to attend. More info at <https://saveyour.town/>.

- **Follow Up:** Heather to determine a date.

3. Policing / By-Law Enforcement

Clark will invited representatives of OPP and By-Law Enforcement to the next meeting. Discussion followed around parking blitzes discouraging merchants and staff from parking on the street, signage and "painless" parking tickets.

4. Public Works

A. Landscaping / Street-Scaping

Michelle reported that Hockley Landscaping is working on parkettes. There is a need for bike racks. Heidy said Michelle Lyne at the Health Unit could be a contact.

B. Garbage Collection

Clark explained he will follow up with Public Works about assigning a staff member to attend these meetings. Cam reported there are still issues around merchants and tenants not respecting the pickup schedule.

- **Follow Up:** BIA will look into a dumpster for food premises only.

5. 2020 Budget - Delhi

Clark updated the group on the 2020 budget request to Council for downtown revitalization. The plan will be to transition from initiatives in downtown Simcoe to the Delhi community, subject to Council approval. Ken reported on positive actions in Delhi, including the new energy at the chamber of commerce. Business After 5 events have been popular. Street reconstruction is scheduled to begin in August.

6. Other Business

A. Strategic Priorities

Clark reminded the group about Council Strategic Priorities approved in July 2019 around “vibrant, creative communities” as well as the new Economic Development Strategy directive related to “Support downtowns as attractive places to visit and invest”, approved in June 2019.

B. Beautification of Square

Heather asked about beautification of Governor Simcoe Square, and mentioned there are no longer any park benches there.

- **Follow Up:** Public Works to look into status of square upgrades, possibility of including new park benches.

C. Pedestrian Area

Cam reported on discussions related to a pedestrian area in downtown Simcoe that could be used for outdoor events and other activities to increase traffic to the downtown.

D. Business Network Meeting

Clark reported that the Chambers of Commerce, BIAs and Board of Trade of Norfolk County will be invited soon to a joint meeting with Haldimand’s Business Network on September 11, 2019.

7. Next Meeting

September 12, 2019, 8:00am; Location: AmCan Board Room, 185 Robinson St, Simcoe.