



**Downtown Simcoe BIA Board of Management
Planning Meeting
Wednesday January 14, 2026 at 11:30 am
Riversyde 83**

MEETING NOTES

Present: Tiana Moe, Laura Downey, Morgan Xiola, Marianne Ward, Stephen Khalla, Vince Gallea, Joe Botscheller, Karen Matthews, John Regan, Councillor Doug Brunton, Councillor Adam Veri, Councillor Alan Duthie

Regrets: Nathan Kolomaya, Clarence Burke

Staff: Les Anderson, Josh Parsons

Planning for 2026

Beautification

- Marianne Ward, Chair of the Beautification Committee, provided an overview of the work completed by the committee in 2025
- Some of the highlights in 2025 included the new rope lights on the light posts and adding 22 new planters for a total of 30 planters in the downtown core
- In 2026, plans include expanding the rope lighting to Peel and Colborne St., possibly more planters, and a review of what we put in the planters
- Our priority will continue to be “clean and safe streets” and concentrating on the beautification of our downtown
- There is \$20,000 from our reserve funds included in the 2026 budget to be used for beautification purposes

Communications

- Laura Downey, Chair of the Communications / Events Committee, provided an overview of the work completed by the committee in 2025
- In 2026, we will be continuing to use our regular forms of advertising and communicating including newspaper, radio, digital billboard, and our social media platforms
- In 2026 we will be adding the radio station 101.3 in Tillsonburg
- The web site is an ongoing project and will be updated on a regular basis
- Possibly doing a survey of the BIA the members to gather information and receive their input into what the BIA is doing (a sample survey was included in the agenda package)
- There is \$48,000 from our reserve funds included in the 2026 budget to be used to purchase and install a digital sign on Norfolk St. South

Events and Promotions

- Laura Downey provided an overview of the events and promotions that took place in 2025 (a schedule was included in the agenda package)
- One of the goals for 2026 is to get more member involvement in the events similar to Mobilemends Easter Egg Hunt and the Speech Hens Treats in the Streets
- The **Downtown Friday Nights** were discussed and some of the suggestions were:
 - Reduce the number from 3 to 1 Friday Night
 - Consider changing the location or have two locations
 - Increase the number of volunteers for the events
- **Applefest** was discussed and the need to either improve the event, possibly changing the event, or consider cancelling the event
- The comment was made that “**we should do one event and do it well**” as opposed to doing the number of events we do now

Top Priorities of 2026

- Complete and distribute the information packages for new and existing businesses in the BIA area
- Increase the number of board members and volunteers
- Possibly surveying our members to let them have input into the priorities
- Keep the emphasis on beautification
- Clean and safe streets

Possible Uses of the Reserve Funds

1. Downtown Simcoe BIA Façade Improvement Program

The group discussed the DRAFT Downtown Simcoe BIA Façade Improvement Program that was included in the agenda package

Some of the highlights are:

- To supplement the funding provided by the Norfolk County program
- To assist with additional expenses not funded by Norfolk County
- The program would follow the format of the Norfolk County program
- The total cost would be \$20,000 funded from the reserve funds. This would have to go to Council for approval.

The group was asked to provide any feedback that they have. The DRAFT program will go back to the board meeting in February.

2. Part Time One Year Contract Position “Downtown Revitalization Coordinator”

The group discussed the pros and cons of hiring a Downtown Revitalization Coordinator, the need to work closely with Norfolk County’s Economic Development staff, and the need to develop clearer goals and expectations of the position.

Some of the highlights are:

- The contract position would be dedicated to assisting with the assessment and development of potential changes, and implementing recommendations from the board, Norfolk County, property owners, and the general public
- Work collaboratively with the Norfolk County Economic Development staff and other stakeholders
- Apply for funding from the Ontario Rural Economic Development Fund to offset some of the costs
- The position could be supplemented from the reserve funds if necessary

The group was asked to provide any feedback that they have. The DRAFT position will go back to the board meeting in February

Committee Structure

- It was decided to keep the committee structure the same without any changes

More Coordination Between Norfolk County's Economic Development Department, the Simcoe & District Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Simcoe BIA

The suggestion was made that there needs to be more coordination between the three organizations that would include information sharing, planning, identifying strategic measures that will assist with attracting new businesses, filling vacant store fronts, and providing assistance for significant properties that are for sale.

Meeting Adjourned