



2018/2019
Activity Report

BACKGROUND

The Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA) is the voice of business in the Spring Garden Area, representing member businesses to various levels of government and other key stakeholders in the community. The Business Improvement District provides a lead role in advocacy on important issues that affect the area in which it represents.

THE VISION

Preserve and enhance the essence and experience of the Spring Garden area for members, residents and visitors by supporting business success through community partnerships and resources.

THE MISSION

To create a vibrant and dynamic business district, the SGABA will:

1. Build effective partnerships with businesses, institutions and property owners to maintain a clean and safe community.
2. Attract, retain and promote quality businesses and retail segments to support local economy.
3. Promote Spring Garden Road as a renowned destination point with a business, retail and commercial mix, offering unique products, services and events.
4. Coordinate events and programs designed to promote Spring Garden Areas. the preferred place to shop, work, learn and live.



2017/2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Juanita Spencer, BA, MPA – **Executive Director**
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Emily Bent, BPR – **Communications and Events Coordinator**
Lynn McCallum – **Administrative Assistant**
Sacha Curran, BSW, MSW – **Program Coordinator, Navigator Street Outreach**
(Maternity Leave)
Eric Jonsson, BSW - **Program Coordinator, Navigator Street Outreach**
(Contract)

ADVOCACY

One of the main pillars for the Spring Garden Area Business Association is advocacy. It is our responsibility to advocate on behalf of our members at all levels of government and to identify and work with the many stakeholders in our community. In 2016, the Association, in partnership with the seven other Business Improvement Districts in Halifax, made positive steps in commercial tax reform by working with both the provincial and municipal levels of government. Changes were made to the Halifax Charter opening the door for meaningful reform. In the year ahead, the BIDs will continue to work with the city as we strive for a more fair and equitable tax structure for Halifax's business community.

SGABA remains committed to the Navigator Street Outreach program. The program employs a social worker to connect our street-involved population to the programs and services they need. Under this program, the Association has been strongly advocating at both the municipal and provincial levels of government for changes to social programs, government legislation and regulation. Through its on-street delivery of service, our program is able to provide a unique perspective on the effectiveness of government programs and is able to identify where gaps exist and improvements can be made.

The Association was pleased to be chosen to represent the other BIDs on the joint HRM/Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness Advisory Panel. Work on this panel will continue into 2018. The Association will also continue to provide input on important municipal initiatives and provincial/federal pieces of legislation/regulations. We continue to focus on issues like bicycle lanes, commercial tax reform, streetscaping, the Spring Garden sidewalk bump out pilot project, and transit initiatives.

In 2018 SGABA was a founding member of Leading with Transit, a coalition of over 20 business organizations and community groups advocating for better transit. The goal of this group is to develop the long term (50+) year vision for transit in Halifax. It is not about creating routes, it is about creating an integrated system that will serve Halifax into the future. With guidance and input from the public, we are aiming to have our report complete within the next 12 months. It is our intention to present our findings to government and other stakeholders.

There are many things happening in Halifax and SGABA is monitoring all of them to see if they will impact the Spring Garden area and our members. We often engage in stakeholder sessions and provide input where needed. Aside for those specific items mentioned above, we are also monitoring work on issues such as the Centre Plan, Cogswell Street redesign and Accessibility legislation.

The Spring Garden Area Business Association is undertaking an extensive data collection initiative to determine how visitors are arriving to our area and the impact this has on our membership. Collecting this data will be crucial to our advocacy and promotion work moving forward because it gives us a better understanding of our streets and their users. The SGABA is working, as a stakeholder, with HRM on a downtown parking strategy. The data we collect is essential to informing our recommendations.

MEMBER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SGABA recognizes that we exist to serve our members and that our members provide a unique and valuable perspective on Halifax's business landscape. As such, the Association is increasing its efforts to engage with our members to better understand how best to meet their needs. Member surveys, face to face meetings, networking events and information sessions are just some of the tools we will continue to use to engage with our members. The Association is also increasing our efforts to forge alliances with the Spring Garden community. We recognize that working together on areas of common interest will give us a stronger voice to advocate for positive change. The residents and local community have been very receptive and we will make every effort to strengthen that in the year ahead.

MONTHLY MIXERS

In 2018, our monthly Morning Mixers switched over to quarterly Member Mixers that are hosted at a business in the Spring Garden area. Attendees will get the chance to meet one another and connect with Association staff. In 2017, we began opening our mixers to the public in effort to continue to strengthen our ties within the community.

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

In an effort to keep our members and the public informed of events, issues and activities in our area, SGABA will also host public information sessions with engaging guest speakers. These sessions will vary in topics from planning and development to streetscaping and beautification. Creating meaningful and relevant engagement opportunities for our members is important to the Association.

MEDIA

We continue to do an annual media review. In 2018, we will continue our radio partnership with 96.5 FM, Metro Guide Publishing, and The Coast for the promotion of specific events. New this year, we have reached out to @HalifaxNoise to promote job postings and events. We have continued our enhanced marketing outreach, started in 2017, by booking billboards for the holiday season. We want to grow our current relationships with media partners and look to provide our members with beneficial cooperative opportunities for advertising. We have a full year plan in place to achieve this goal.

We continue to see a significant growth in our social media. As of April 10, 2018 our Instagram and Facebook page each have over 1,000 followers and likes, and our twitter page has well over 13,000 followers. Our social media channels have become a successful avenue to promote our members sales and events as well as keep the community updated with Association events and information.



LUNCH AND LEARNS

Lunch & Learns are held on an ad hoc basis over the course of the year with subjects of interest to our member. Our aim is to host at least four events a year, primarily in the Spring and Fall, when members are most likely to be available to attend.

NEWSLETTERS

We continue to distributed the monthly newsletter through MailChimp, an online platform. This resource has proven to be very helpful as it tracks who opens the email and how they engaged with it. Along with distributing newsletters we often send reminder emails and information on public and internal events. We will continue to use this platform, but the format of the newsletter will be changing to a layout in summer 2018. We also hand deliver our newsletters to the retail businesses as a way to connect with them face-to-face on a monthly basis.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS/SPONSORSHIPS

The SGABA supports a variety of different events and initiatives thought the year including Open City, City Harvest, Word on the Street and the Pride Festival. While we are unable to financially sponsor all events, we are able to promote them through social media and our monthly newsletter and on our new website's event calendar.

We were very pleased to continue to be a sponsor of the Chronicle Herald Parade of Lights as well as Switch Halifax. Participating in these events are of great benefit to the Association and our members and we plan to be a sponsor of both again this year. New in 2018, we are also a non-financial sponsor of Make Music Day, being coordinated by Alliance Française, and The Victoria Day Tea Party.



COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS

2018 CLEAN SWEEP

Our 8th Annual Clean Sweep event will take place in Victoria Park on Wednesday, June 6th. This event has become a favorite with over 21 participants last year, providing our members the opportunity to meet one another and take pride in their area. It's a great event to get the businesses involved with the cleanup and beautification of Spring Garden. We continue get support from Clean Nova Scotia, Great Nova Scotia Pick-Me-Up program, and our graffiti removal partner Atlantic Graffiti. This year, Tim Horton's will be providing the teams with breakfast on Clean Sweep day.

2ND ANNUAL SPRING GARDEN HOSPITALITY MIXER

The 2nd Annual Spring Garden Hospitality Mixer is the SGABA's way of saying "Thank You" to the hospitality industry that helps keep our businesses flourishing. Each year we invite hotel and tourism staff from around the HRM to join members for a night of food, drinks, music and more. This is a great way to show off the best of what the Spring Garden area has to offer and keep our businesses top of mind for the summer season. This year's event is being held May 23 from 6-8 p.m.

YOGA IN THE PARK

Yoga in the Park started in 2017 with Yoga classes held by Shanti Hot Yoga in Victoria Park on a bi-weekly basis in the summer months. This year, we happy to announce that we will be continuing our partnership with Shanti Hot Yoga and expanding Yoga in the Park to a weekly basis, every Thursday from 12:05-12:55, in July, August, and September. This event is free for the public and helps us stay connected to the community.

6TH ANNUAL SPRING GARDEN CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Each year in Victoria Park, we host a fun-filled family day with bouncy castles, train rides, music, cotton candy and more! To celebrate our 6th Annual Spring Garden Children's Festival, we are planning to expand on our previous programming and include additional live entertainment and exhibitors. Several of our members participating in the Children's Festival this year, which is a great opportunity to have them engage with the community in a fun, public setting. As in previous years, this event will be free and we will be accepting donations for the Children's Wish Foundation. This year's festival will take place on Sunday, August 12th.

SHOPPING UNDER THE STARS

Shopping Under the Stars (SUTS) is Spring Garden's way of kicking off the holiday season. Taking place at the end of November, many holiday activities such as extending shopping hours on two designated SUTS nights, carolers, contests, hot chocolate and weekly appearances by Santa come to the streets. During this year's events, we hope to expand on the shopping and make it a special night downtown by reaching out to restaurants, the local hotel and movie theatre about creating a holiday promotion package.

BEAUTIFICATION

Cleanliness

We are committed to ensuring that the Spring Garden area is a clean and friendly place for visitors, residents, and employees. Throughout the year, we will continue to encourage our members to be active in cleaning the areas surrounding their businesses. Association staff will also monitor the area to make sure that any damaged infrastructure or dangerous situations are reported and taken care of in a timely manner.

Summer Students

The SGABA is hoping to receive Federal funding again this year for a summer student. The student is a great asset to the SGABA in helping to keep the streets clean, provide visitors with information and offer support with our summer events.

Flower Planters and Beds

Beginning at our Clean Sweep event in early June, and continuing through the summer months, Association staff will plant and maintain the flower beds in the area. We purchased 9 additional planters in 2017 and 10 more in 2018, bringing our total to 29 planters to bring colour and beauty to our sidewalks. This year we are continuing our contract with Blooming Gardener to plant and maintain the flower beds. Additionally, we are responsible for the upkeep of the flower planters on the sidewalk bump out pilot project. The expected day of planter arrival for 2018 is May 31.



GRAFFITI ABATEMENT

The Spring Garden Area Business Association is pleased to provide our members a cost sharing program for the removal of graffiti. Members who notice graffiti on their buildings are encouraged to contact the Association as soon as possible for a quote to have it removed. Working with Atlantic Graffiti Removal Company, Association staff also survey the area and contact members who have a significant amount of noticeable graffiti on their property.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Over the holiday season, we will continue to install seasonal lighting along Spring Garden Road and the neighboring side streets. To further encourage the holiday spirit on the street, we lend out our decorations and lights to businesses for the season.

STREETSCAPING

NAVIGATOR STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM

The SGABA, in partnership with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, oversees the Navigator Street Outreach Program. The Navigator works with street involved individuals to provide them with assistance and help connect them to available services. Our Program Coordinator is currently on maternity leave. While they are off on maternity leave, we have hired a Program Coordinator for a 6 month contract with the possibility to extend to one year.

SAFETY

Ensuring the safety of the Spring Garden area is of utmost importance to the Association. We continue to have a great relationship with the HRP and our Community Response Officer, Constable Jen McPhee. We regularly liaise with Constable McPhee to remain updated on any major safety concerns.

