

2020 Activity Report




spring garden

Table of Contents

Background	1
The Vision	1
The Mission	1
Board of Directors	2
Staff	2
Advocacy	3
Transit and Parking	4
Member and Community Engagement	5
Public Information Sessions	5
Social Media	6
Newsletters	7
Community Partnerships and Sponsorships	8
Communications and Events	9
2019 Clean Sweep	9
Spring Garden Harvest Festival	9
Yoga in the Park	10
7th Annual Spring Garden Children's Festival	10
Shopping Under the Stars	11
Internation Women's Week	11
Beautification and Streetscaping	12
Cleanliness	12
Summer Students	12
Flower Planters	12
Graffiti Abatement	12
Holiday Decorations	13
Navigator Street Outreach Program	13
Safety	13

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 key stakeholders in the community. The Business Improvement District takes the lead role in advocacy on important issues affecting the area.

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 business, retail and commercial mix, offering unique products, services and events.
4. Coordinate events and programs designed to promote the Spring Garden Area as the preferred place to shop, work, learn and live.

**Integrated Staffing at
SGABA's 7th Annual Children's Festival**



2019/2020 Board of Directors

John Young
Boyne Clarke, Chair

Bill MacAvoy
Cushman Wakefield, Vice Chair

Darrel Pink
Treasurer/Secretary

Martha Casey
Volta Labs

Nicole Babineau
Arrivals + Departures Agency

Christy Sanford
Studio In Essence

Jonathan Kirk
The Running Room

Dr. Andrew Emanuele
Paradigm Orthodontics

Debbie Starr
Lord Nelson Hotel & Suites

Morné Van Antwerp
Primal Kitchen

Frank Yunace
Pete's Frootique & Fine Foods

Staff

Sue Uteck
Executive Director

Darrel Pink
Acting Executive Director, February - May 2019

Kjeld (KJ) Mizpah Conyer-Steede
Policy Advocate & Operations Manager

Scott MacKendrick
Communications & Events Coordinator

Lynn McCallum
Administration Assistant

Eric Jonsson
Program Coordinator, Navigator Street Outreach

Sydney Snelson
Economic Development Intern

Advocacy

Advocating on the behalf of the area is at the forefront of the Association's mission.

In 2019, Spring Garden coordinated with the other Business Improvement Districts, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, CFIB, and the Construction Association of Nova Scotia around the proposed changes to the Construction Mitigation Administrative Order. Our advocacy resulted in more robust construction site management, timely notification of disruptions, and engagement with local businesses and community. A staff report is requested to establish a construction mitigation reserve. The fund would equal 1% of a project's overall budget and be used to market the affected businesses and local areas. The Mayor is also writing a letter to the Province to ask for an HRM Charter change for the power to allow direct compensation. We will continue to advocate HRM and the Province for direction compensation.

Spring Garden streetscaping begins in the spring of 2021, creating a pedestrian orientated street where businesses thrive. We are working closely with HRM to mitigate the impact of construction and ensure the best possible outcomes. We will be creating a marketing campaign to draw visitors to the area during construction, and working closely with HRM and construction crews to mitigate construction impact. During the summer of 2020 Spring Garden will also host events to showcase how a more pedestrian orientated street will be good for business.

We remain committed to reforming the commercial tax structure. In June 2019 Regional Council passed a staff recommendation for a three-year rolling assessment average. This will be implemented for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Spring Garden continues to advocate for a more fair tax structure for our downtown and main street businesses.

Halifax Regional Council approved Package A of the Centre Plan. This is the first part of a plan to regulate development and land use within the regional centre of the HRM. The aim of the plan is to create density in the urban core, directing development to where it can best be handled by municipal services. It also brought in measures aimed to protect heritage properties and increase the availability of affordable housing.

Package A excludes the boundaries of the Spring Garden Area Business Association, which continues to be under the Downtown Halifax Plan area, but it has significant implications for developments in the surrounding neighbourhoods. HRM has developed a helpful interactive map to demonstrate the changes.

Package B of the Centre Plan will be developed shortly, this will include the downtown area, such as Spring Garden. The Association will continue to engage with HRM planners and other stakeholders in as the Centre Plan moves into this next stage.

Transit and Parking

We continue to work with Leading with Transit, a coalition of organizations dedicated to a long-term strategy and investment for transit in HRM. LWT is connecting with the Regional Plan Review and hosted a series of public engagements in rural communities recently.

HRM presented a staff report to Regional Council on November 26th, 2019 concerning By-Law 500 Parking Meters. On-street parking will now be divided into zones, with Spring Garden as Zone C. This zone defined by Barrington to South Park, and Sackville to South. It will be adjacent to Zone D (approximately the area of Dal and VG) and Zone B (Barrington to Lower Water, including down to the Seaport).

Parking rates in these zones will be \$2/hour for the first 2 hours, and then \$6/hour for hours 3 & 4. Parking will be for a maximum of 4 hours in one zone. These changes will be implemented with the new pay by plate technology, slated for spring 2020. The rate increases are designed to encourage turn over in on-street parking and the use of off-street parking.

New pay by plate technology should allow more on-street parking, as spaces will not be determined by meters. The BIDs continue to advocate for parking revenue to be reinvested into the area through streetscaping, beautification, and marketing initiatives.



Yoga in the Park, 2019



Yoga in the Park, 2019

MEMBER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SGABA exists to serve our members who provide a unique and valuable perspective on Halifax's business landscape. The Association is increasing its efforts to engage with members to better understand how best to meet their needs. Member surveys, face to face / virtual meetings, networking events, and information sessions are just some of the tools we will continue to use to engage our members. The Association is also increasing efforts to forge alliances with the broader Spring Garden community. 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.

Public information Sessions

In an effort to keep our members and the public informed of events, issues and activities in our area, SGABA will host public information sessions with engaging guest speakers. In 2019, a majority of these sessions focused on the 2021 Spring Garden streetscape project. From looking at functional to detailed design plans, we will keep our members and the public engaged and up-to-date on all aspects of this project. Public input will directly influence the final design and construction plans.

Media

We continue to complete an annual media review. Through 96.5 FM weather sponsorship we promote our events, local community events and offer ad space through event sponsorships. We are evaluating this expenditure to see if it provides the best marketing exposure for Spring Garden. For our print advertisement needs, we use Curated Magazine, The Coast, and Halifax Magazine for the promotion of specific events. We had success promoting our events with local social media juggernauts, Halifax Noise and Discover Halifax on Instagram in 2020 and intend to use them for specific events in the future. Billboards will be booked to promote Spring Garden during the Holiday season. With a full-year plan in place, we will continue to grow our current relationships with media partners and provide our members with beneficial cooperative opportunities for advertising.

Our social media channels promote members' sales and announcements, as well as the Association's events and community updates. We see growth in our connections through social media. To connect the businesses to the greater Spring Garden community we have launched a new online campaign called Faces of Spring Garden. The weekly campaign showcases a new Spring Garden business owner and the story behind their business. Our social media channels as of March 31, 2020, our Instagram and Facebook page each have over 1,400 followers and likes, and our Twitter page has almost 13,700 followers.

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Pete's at Shopping Under the Stars, 2019



YMCA Team at Pop-up in Spring Garden Place, 2019

Newsletters

The newsletter continues to be distributed monthly. MailChimp, our distribution tool, has proven to be very helpful as it tracks who opens the email and how they engaged with it. Along with distributing newsletters, we send mid-month updates to our members with important dates and information. In 2020 we determined to increase our communication efforts with our businesses keeping them up to date on vital information as it becomes available. Having our emails come at a consistent time with relevant information is a great way to build trust and connection between SGABA and our members. We continue to hand deliver newsletters to 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 through the year including the Pride Festival, 5TH Annual Colour Festival, Giant Bike – Hit the Deck and the Downtowns Atlantic Conference. While we are unable to financially sponsor all events, we promote them through social media channels, our monthly newsletter, radio ads and on our website's event calendar.

We continue to be a sponsor of the Chronicle Herald Parade of Lights and SWITCH Halifax. As well as entering into new partnerships with Halifax – Dartmouth Natal Day Celebration, FIN Atlantic Film Festival, Teens Now Talk: From Passion to Professional. Participating in these events is of great benefit to our members and surrounding community. We plan to continue these partnerships in the coming years. As for our non-financial sponsors we continue to support Make Music Day, and The Victoria Day Tea Party. As well as extend our support to other organization and events such as Make-A-Wish – Rope for Hope, 3rd Annual East Coast Kite Festival, Bridging the Gap and The Halifax Wanderers. We plan to continue the support of our current sponsorship and look to other events we can support next year 2021.



Humani-T Café at Open City, 2019

COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS

2019 Clean Sweep

Our 9th Annual Clean Sweep event held in Victoria Park, provided our members the opportunity to meet one another and take pride in their area. This event has become a favorite with over 20 participants last year. It's a great way to get the businesses involved with the cleanup and beautification of Spring Garden. We intend to look for support from Clean Nova Scotia and their Great Nova Scotia Pick-Me-Up program as well as our graffiti removal partner Atlantic Graffiti. Last year, muffins and coffee were donated by Tim Horton's and hot tea was provided by David's Tea.

Spring Garden Harvest Festival

On October 26, 2019, we introduced a new event Spring Garden Harvest Festival held at The Worthington Place Hotel. This family friendly Halloween themed event featured an evening of pumpkin painting and an outdoor movie screening of Hotel Transylvania. The pumpkins were available to participants to purchase by donation, with the proceeds going to Feed Nova Scotia. As a first-year event it proved to be a success with potential to grow in the year to come. We are planning to continue this event in our 2020 event plan and are excited to explore avenues to help elevate it.

Yoga in the Park

Since its inception in 2017, Yoga in the Park has been a massive success in the Spring Garden area. In 2019, we continued our weekly classes with special guests Cove Kombucha and Sage Natural Wellness attending when available. Indochine Banh Mi also took part in this activity by donating free cups of their special mint lemonade. Shanti Yoga is back to host the sessions in Victoria Park this year, holding classes 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.



7th 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! This year during our 7th Annual Children's Festival we received the largest turnout to date, and we are excited to continue this momentum in 2020. Celebrating our 7th Annual Spring Garden Children's Festival, we are excited to introduce a new multicultural music piece with Halifax's own Burundi Drummers. We had a large turnout from our members as it is a great opportunity for them to engage with the community in a fun, public setting. As in previous years, this event will be free.

Shopping Under the Stars

Shopping Under the Stars (SUTS) is Spring Garden's way of kicking off the holiday season. For two nights of holiday fun, the SGABA coordinates carolers, contests, hot chocolate and an appearance by Santa Claus. This year for our annual holiday shopping event we brought in several new attractions to dress up the street including, new light fixtures, two caroling groups with and an additional hour of performance, one stationary Santa and one Santa roaming from business to business, a winter wonderland theme patio at the Garden Food Bar, a drivable present to create awareness and the first ever elf gifting machine.

For our promotion we continued our work with several media outlets such as Halifax Noise, The Chronicle Herald, The Breeze 96.5 FM, and Salt Wire.

International Women's Week

We reinvigorated a past event called Women Rock Spring Garden for our new event International Women's Week. The Spring Garden Business Association kicked off the week of events on Sunday March 1 and ending on March 8, International Women's Day. The associations with the help of surrounding businesses and community partners were able to host 11 events throughout the week. Events included a celebration breakfast with guest speakers, free yoga sessions, a historic walk through the Public Gardens, live musical performances, and much more. We are looking forward to planning next years week of events and continue to grow our participation on all fronts machine.



BEAUTIFICATION AND STREETSCLAPING

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 encourage members to clean the areas surrounding their businesses. Association staff also monitor the area to make sure any damaged infrastructure or dangerous situations are reported and taken care of in a timely manner.

Summer Students

Spring Garden received Federal funding to hire three summer students for the 2019 seasons. The students keep the streets beautiful, provide visitors with information, provide research assistance and offer support with our summer events.

Flower Planters

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 currently own 29 planters that bring colour and beauty to our sidewalks. 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 Spring Garden stoplet pilot project that will return to Spring Garden Road in 2019.

Graffiti Abatement

We 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 purchased new seasonal lighting fixtures for along Spring Garden Road and distributed the older lighting fixtures to the side streets. To further encourage the holiday spirit on the street, we lend out our decorations and lights to businesses for the season.

Navigator Street Outreach Program

The SGABA, in partnership with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, oversees the Navigator Street Outreach Program. Eric Jonsson, The Program Coordinator, Navigator Street Outreach Program, works with street involved individuals to provide them with assistance and help connect them to available services.

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 Halifax Regional Police and our Community Response Officer, Constable James Bennett. We regularly liaise with Constable Bennett to remain updated on any major safety concerns.

