

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES Tuesday June 28, 2022
9:00 a.m. JWL YMCA Community Room



Board Attendees:

Call to Order

Nicole Babineau called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Quorum was present and therefore it was a duly constituted meeting. Lynn McCallum was appointed as recorder of the minutes. Nicole Babineau, Frank Yunace, Karen Gardiner, Pino Pagnottella and Johanna Galipeau were present from the board. Paul Feaver-McGowan, **Bill MacAvoy and Nic Tacushi sent regrets. Kelly Chapman and Gada Garbar resigned from the board due to work commitments.**

Community Presentation:

Sue Uteck, E.D. presented a gift to Brian Cooper on behalf of the board and the Spring Garden Community. Brian is a retired teacher who takes it upon himself to come to the Spring Garden Area and pick up garbage every day. Thank you Brian.

Nicole asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Frank Yunace moved to approve; Frank Brophy seconded the motion. There were no objections. The motion carried.

She then asks for approval of the draft 2020-2021 AGM Meeting minutes. This was held June 20, 2021. The Minutes were approved by Frank and Karen Gardiner. The motion carried.

Report of the Draft Financial Statement and Audit

Nicole Introduces Jessica Prall, CPA, of Lyle Tilley Davidson.

Jessica presented the financial statement for Year-end 2022. . The statement shows the assessment of the Assets and Liabilities. The difference between this year's \$165,000 cash over last year, because the deposit for the HRM Levy was received a day early, March 31 instead of April 1. That is why you have a deferred liability of \$155,000. This will need to be recognized in next year's revenue. Term deposits are the same, accounts received include an ACOA grant. Inventory is up a bit, having purchased items to promote the 'We're Digging Spring Garden' campaign. Prepaid expenses are back to normal. The capitol assets are up about \$16,000 as new Christmas lights were purchased, offset by routine amortization. In total, the \$450,000 in assets versus \$319,000 last year was due to the cash.

On the liability side, accounts payable was \$17,000 this year as opposed to \$25,000 last year. This was a result of timing and ACOA expenses and vacation time that was cleared out this year.

Revenue and expenditures: The tax levy is down 5% due to two buildings coming down. However, that levy will be recuperated whenever the buildings are completed. The other lines are consistent, as projects with ACOA are on-going. Spring Garden profited \$4,000 from administering various grants for other bids. In total, the revenue is \$482,000 versus \$602,000, last year, largely because of the ACOA grant last year. On the expenses side, beautification refers to the banners that were installed, various signage, and planters.

In total, the expenses were \$500,000 versus \$533,000 last year, which brings us to a deficiency of \$17,000. Surpluses in 2018,19 and 2020 more than offset this loss.

Jessica finished by asking if there were any questions, and there were none.

Nicole motioned to approve the audit financial statements for the fiscal year of 2021-2022 as presented. Frank Yunace and Karen Gardiner approved the motion. There were none opposed. The motion carried.

Appointment of Auditors of Fiscal 2022-2023

Nicole motioned to appoint Lyle Tilley Davidson for the audit of the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Franck Yunace and Karen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Nicole then introduced the Executive Director, Sue Uteck. Sue welcomed members to the meeting and thanked the Board for their support. Sue recognized and introduced the staff, thanking them for their efforts. She thanked all the board members for their service this past year. She thanked the members for persevering through streetscape construction and beautification. She recognized Elora Wilkinson (HRM) and Brad Whebby (Brycon Construction Ltd) for their hard work. As the association, we prepared a strong marketing campaign and communications plan. The transit project will become a reality on July 4, and we are cautiously optimistic, and we will be reporting any complications that arise. Elora will take questions at the end of this presentation if there are any.

Reflecting on the last year: while we are slowly adapting to life with covid, it remains one of the greatest challenges to small business. Staffing, logistics and costs have risen along with interest rates. Businesses now carry an average of \$160,000 in debt. Loans from the government are coming due in 2023 while we are still in recovery mode. Sue has participated in over 160 meetings with fellow BIDs, Halifax Chamber of Commerce, the NS Business and Labour Coalition, the regulatory and modernization committee, Greater Halifax Partnership, the Canadian Urban Institute, HRM, the province and the federal government, just to name a few. The common theme is where are we now, what do we need, and how do we get there? We have helped with various government grants to businesses from beautification to digital marketing. Sue thanked Councillor Waye Mason who contributed \$15,000 in Capital Funding to help us market Spring Garden during the streetscape project.

Partnerships are a key to success, and we have no better partner than Downtown Halifax Business Commission. For the past 2 years we explored the possibility of a merger of our associations. This did not materialize as Downtown has no taxation cap, while we in Spring Garden do. Removing the cap would have resulted in extensive tax levy adjustments, raising taxes in the middle of recovery. We will continue to partner with the Downtown on things such as commercial guides, events, and other promotional materials and activities.

Sue described seasonal beautification activities, not limited to planters and Christmas Lights. She thanked Judith Cabrita, in attendance, for her contributions from the public gardens on light displays.

Public Safety is top of mind in Spring Garden. Homelessness, lack of affordable housing, and renovations are all driving people to the area. This issue continues to grow. It is refreshing to see all levels of government working together to solve this issue. However, according to our Navigator, Erik, these

solutions are 5 years away. The lack of police presence has hurt our reputation. This has led to aggressive panhandling and theft. We will continue to work with regional police to search for more workable solutions. It is clear that a lack of mental health services has led to many of the issues we see in the Spring Garden Area.

Covid struck down our activities due to restrictions and guidelines. This included our Children's Festival, the Harvest Festival and Clean Sweep. We were able to modify Shopping under the Stars events and we were able to hold our signature events such as Yoga in the Park, and International Women's week. Our biggest campaign was the 'We're Digging Spring Garden' campaign. We engaged Burke and Burke marketing firm. The elements included wayfinding signage, a t-shirt campaign, decorative and informative hoarding, and social media campaigns, including radio. As an Association, Sue felt we did an excellent job of keeping businesses and residents informed of the changes to come and how to cope with complications.

Membership and community involvement are one of the priorities for the next year. We would like to engage more of the residents. The community is what makes us different from downtown. We are now providing full graffiti abatement to our members. New partnerships include the Halifax Asian Food Festival. This event has been delayed until October due to Covid restrictions. More participation is expected. We also supported various celebrations this year, such as the Burger week, Open City, the Evergreen Festival, Patio Lanterns festival, and Tea in the Gardens. We are grateful to Scott MacKendrick, our media coordinator, for his hard work on this coordination.

Presentation of Navigator Program

Eric Jonsson spoke about assisting the street affected population. When he started this job almost 5 years ago, he notes that it was so much easier to find housing for people. What he sees on Spring Garden are more people who require mental health or addiction services. Last August, the tent city evictions complicated efforts for rehousing people. It brought the city's attention to the forefront of this matter. This year, there were 529 people who were homeless, and at the previous count in 2018 there were 220 people unhoused. He thanked both Sue and Pau Mckinnon of the DHBC for this position. Sue comments that we need more navigators. We are the only BID in the country that funds a social worker.

Report of the Outgoing and Incoming Directors of the Association

Nicole returns to the podium. Guided by eligibility requirements of community resident, business owner or employee of an area business, the following were nominated to election of the Spring Garden Area Business Association: for election. Louise O'Haran, Ryan MacIssac, Chris Jiang and Robbie Kavanaugh. Ideally we would like to have 2 more members.

The incoming Executives are as follows: Incoming Chair, Frank Yunace. Incoming Vice Chair, Johanna Galipeau; Incoming Secretary/Treasurer, Karen Gardiner. She asked to move for appointment: Moved by Pino Pagnottella and Sarah Purdy, Roots District manager. She thanked the outgoing board members for their commitment and service to the board.

Nicole asked if there was any new business. No new business was brought to the floor. However, Sarah Purdy, District Manager of Roots, raised a street scaping question. She inquired that she didn't see how tourists and guests to the city would know that the Spring Garden Transit Only Zone was only accessible by cars during certain times of the day. Elora Wilkson of HRM answered that it would be a matter of communication and signage. She pointed out that this is a pilot, and that if necessary, adjustments would be made.

On Birmingham and Brenton street, the traffic has been very chaotic and challenging. Loading zones are frequently full and supply trucks can't access the streets set aside for them, Car and pedestrian conflicts are very difficult, and backups are long and frustrating. Elora reported that they are studying it, and working on a solution. Sue suggested emailing us at the association, and we will be sure to forward them.

A business owner reported not hearing about Shopping under the stars until it was too late. The information is distributed via email, and as the association, we are frustrated that emails are not being read. There will be 3 months of notice after dates are selected.

Upcoming events are the Children's festival and FIN outdoor film festival, and a September street-closed event. It will be expensive to close the street, around \$7,000 and we do not want to do that until the street is done. We will work to give as much notice as we can.

Closing Remarks

Nicole returned to the podium and thanked everyone for coming to this year's event. She turns the podium over to Frank Yunace, incoming Chair of the Board.

Frank takes the podium to adjourn the meeting. He said he would also like to talk about adjustments that need to be made to Birmingham, as the loading zone for Pete's Fine Foods is deeply affected. He asks for a motion to adjourn. It is seconded by Karen Gardiner.

A thank you to thank Ampersand Café in the library for their catering services.

Meeting adjourned: 10:00 a.m.