



Alliston Business Improvement Association ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday April 26, 2018

6:00 pm

ABIA Boardroom – 51 Victoria Street East

Secretary: Roham Davoodian

Minutes

Attendance: Vice Chair Sherry Ward, Director Julia Stubbs, Director Lachlan McGurk, Member Carleigh Maloney, General Manager Linda Spurr, Office Administrator Norma Freitag

ABIA Members: Jamie Cranston, Jenny Jackson, Christine Molenaar, Lorna Duggan and Kate Vander Zaag

Regrets: Chair Mike Jerry, Director Heidi MacKenzie, Director Ryan Fox, Director Colleen Ross

Absent: Deputy Mayor Donna Jebb, Councillor Michael Beattie

Call to Order and Welcome

Secretary Ro Davoodian extended a welcome to everyone and thanked them for taking the time to join the ABIA this evening. He proceeded to inform those who attended, that 2017 was a stellar year for the ABIA with several accomplishments.

Confirmation of Agenda

No additions or changes to agenda.

Motion to approve the Agenda: Director Lachlan McGurk, Second Director Vice-Chair Sherry Ward:
Carried.

Confirmation of AGM Minutes (2017)

Motion to approve the 2017 AGM Minutes: Director Carleigh Maloney, Vice-Chair Sherry Ward:
Carried

ABIA Chair's Address

Review and Annual Report from Secretary Roham Davoodian

There are 18 new businesses within our catchment area and the Board is happy to welcome them as we dedicate efforts to attracting sustainable businesses to fill any vacancies.

Our Trademark branding of RURBAN, 'The Best of Both Worlds' has continued to gain momentum with our aggressive marketing plans. We have been strongly utilizing social media, print and television to draw more local economy and tourism to our town. The ABIA paid for the 'Blue Highway' attraction signs that were erected on Highway 400 and area highways with the mind set of promoting Alliston. We will continue to aggressively campaign Alliston in 2018.

The ABIA Board of Directors took the lead on some serious threats to our business community this past year with the Simcoe County District School Board looking at potentially moving the Banting Memorial High School outside of our downtown core. This raised several concerns for the local businesses as they strongly rely on students for employment as well as keeping the local economy alive. Data was collected by the ABIA from the local businesses and it provided enough negative impact that this issue is now put on the 'back-burner'. We will continue to keep our members posted if any issues rise again.

Another tough challenge for the ABIA this year was the saving of the parking lot from sale at the location of Elizabeth St. Parking within our downtown core is already at a premium. Thankfully sharing the importance of information and facts, common sense prevailed and the lot was taken off the real estate market.

The ABIA is continuously working on our beautification projects such as graffiti removal. As well, focusing on marketing of the Alliston Catchment area as an important commerce hub to spend hard earned money, and attract profitable businesses. In 2018, we have begun to attend tourism shows to promote our downtown by handing out maps and talking face to face with potential visitors. We have reached out to our Town's New Economic Development Office and shared that the Town must elevate their marketing to the tourism industry to help our efforts.

With each passing year Our Signature Events undergo reevaluation to see what "We can do better" to make them more epic from the year before. This continues to lead to significant improvements of these events and healthy increases in attendance. Our event director, GM Spurr and our ABIA team continue to make each event self-sustaining through sponsorship and vendor fees. In December 2017 the ABIA through suggestion of our membership added a new event, The Rurban Christmas Crawl. It was created with the intent to support and drive retail through our catchment area. This event proved to have excellent reviews from those who attended and good ROI for the minimum output by our team. We have added TWO dates for the 2018 event.

A significant achievement this year has been the installation of the FREE WIFI in our downtown core. Alliston is the first downtown in Canada to have WIFI powered by Solar. The first phase is live on Victoria Street and is powered entirely by solar power. This process has been a long one, but it was well worth it. Our Communications Director Lachlan McGurk who lead this project is here the evening to discuss our accomplishment in more detail.

Treasurer Report

Treasurer Julia Stubbs shared the following information and reminded members that financial information is available in the ABIA office for membership to review with one of our Executives at any time throughout the year.

- 2017 Financial Statement presented
- 2018 Budget presented

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report and Financials: Director Carleigh Maloney, second: Director Lachlan McGurk: Carried.

Communication's Director Lachlan McGurk on Wi-Fi Project

Director McGurk shared with the members a few details and highlights about our Wi-Fi Project. He proceeded to inform the members that there are two phases to the project. Phase 1 is live, and up and running. It covers the area of our downtown core from the train tracks all along Victoria St to Elizabeth St. The second phase will include Young St from King St to where the Freshco retail building ends.

The incentive is to collect data which will allow us to the useful information of where people are at all times of the day or evening, what days of the week are busier, gender, age group most using the free Wi-Fi, what people are looking up for example, where to dine and where to shop. All this information is useful when determining when to open and close our businesses, what age groups to cater to etc.

Hopefully in the near future this project can also help in the aid of securing our downtown core with the installation of cameras. With police presences decreasing in our streets, the cameras can act as a back up to keep our catchment areas safe and secure. Less criminal activity and less vandalism.

Another added feature to having the Wi-Fi installed in our catchment area is to allow for a future Digital Sign which would be located at the King St and Young St area. Having the Wi-Fi will allow us to send wirelessly and store advertising and any emergency alerts.

Director Lachlan McGurk closed off by showing all that attended the meeting, the OBIAA Award that was presented to the ABIA for the Wi-Fi project. The ABIA was honoured with the Marketing and Communications - Large Award for our Downtown Wi-Fi Project. Alliston is the first downtown community to have a completely solar powered Wi-Fi system and we believe that investing in progressive initiatives, will enhance our downtown ecosystem, add value to our current shoppers while attracting new visitors.

Secretary Ro Davoodian in a few words mentioned, that The Board of Directors and Staff have been putting in a significant amount of volunteer hours to ensure that Alliston's business community is sustainable and growing one. We are focused on dealing with the tough issues, taking community leadership, and strive towards the completion of the ABIA Strategic Plan with our Mission Statement.

Questions and Discussions

1. Kate Vander Zaag asked "Who Approved Rib Rest and why would Alliston allow this organization to come into our community?" GM Spurr informed the members that the Town approved the Rib Fest organization to come in, back in November of 2017. It only became public knowledge, specifically to the ABIA, through social media. GM Spurr added that the Town did not feel it necessary to contact the ABIA prior to the decision-making process. Most members who were in attendance this evening, were not pleased with this outside organization coming into our community and taking away business from our catchment area, for an entire weekend.
2. Parking continues to be a topic of discussion. Jenny Jackson from Healing Esthetics, raised the concern as this is affecting clients from getting to their appointments on times due to the lack of parking available in our town. Secretary Davoodian explained that small towns will always have this issue, however, if there is a draw to our downtown, which we are striving to achieve, people will always find parking.
3. Kate Vander Zaag asked "What can we do to make Alliston an attraction?" Some suggestions such were pointed out such as:
 - Riverfront Cleanup need to be put into place. A proactive move must start as we have been discussing this subject for quite sometime now and nothing has been significantly done to improve the look of the Riverfront area.
 - We need to create a Central Square for the downtown as a focal point and attraction area where people living in the community as well as visitors will come and enjoy. This would be a great place for our Tree Lighting event to occur.

Motion to adjourn: Treasurer Julia Stubbs, Second Director Lachlan McGurk

Adjournment 7:35 pm