



# River District

## Minutes

### River District Board of Management

**March 8, 2023, 5:30 p.m.**

**City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers**

#### **MEMBERS**

##### **PRESENT:**

Chair Dave Parsons  
Vice-Chair Matthew Quade  
Member Ron Cole  
Member Allegra Deen  
Councillor Travis Dodd  
Member Kathy Hannen  
Councillor Suneet Kukreja  
Member Denis Langlois  
Member Winnifred Walcott

##### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services  
Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services  
Paul McGrath, Manager of Community & Business Development  
Jeff Fluney, Owen Sound Police Services Police Inspector  
Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk

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#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and welcomed new Board members, Councillor Travis Dodd and Councillor Suneet Kukreja.

#### **2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

There was no additional business.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 4.a Minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on January 11, 2023

RD-230308-001

Moved by Member Cole

**"THAT the minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on January 11, 2023 be approved as printed."**

Carried.

#### 5. PUBLIC MEETINGS

- 5.a 2023 Budget

Chair Parsons declared the Public Meeting open at 5:32 p.m.

The Deputy Clerk explained that notice of the public meeting was circulated to all River District members, posted on the River District website, and posted on the City's website on February 22, 2023. No comments were received from the public and no individuals registered to attend the meeting electronically. The Deputy Clerk encouraged those present for the public meeting to sign the sign-in sheet located on the table outside of Council Chambers.

The Deputy Clerk advised that personal information is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, and that the information collected will be used to complete the budget process. Questions about this collection should be addressed to the Deputy Clerk.

The Director of Corporate Services provided a presentation on the proposed 2023 River District budget. Ms. Allan highlighted the levy increase of 2%, the budget deficit of \$20,696 to be drawn from reserves, the estimated reserve balance, and other costs that are not included in the River District budget, such as staff costs for administration and support, actual costs for street maintenance and beautification funded by the City tax levy, waste collection, and snow removal.

Peter Reid, Township of Georgian Bluffs resident and River District Business Improvement Area member, expressed concerns regarding the draft 2023 budget. Mr. Reid noted that this is the third year in a row that the River District Board has had to draw from the reserves to balance the budget. The \$10,000 contribution to the reserves is concerning since \$20,000 is being drawn from the reserves, and then the Board is putting \$10,000 back into the reserves. Mr. Reid commented that this budget should have a 10% increase to levy members to make it sustainable, as the budget is falling further behind each year with the Board drawing from the reserves. If this process continues, then eventually, there

will be no reserves remaining for the Board to rely on to fund special projects that may come forward in the future.

The Director of Community Services reminded the Board that the Community Development Coordinator position is funded until December 31, 2023, and that the draw down from reserves at the end of 2022 was less than anticipated at \$5,000.

Mr. Reid noted that the budget allocation for the Community Development Coordinator position is an important value add to the River District as this individual is doing great work to promote the River District.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Allan noted that the \$10,000 annual contribution to the reserves is done for best practice purposes by anticipating future reserve contributions. The Director of Community Services advised that there is an operating agreement between the City and the Board and the services that were previously provided through the DIA Manager position are now completed by various City staff positions. The Director of Community Services noted that in 2020, the Board approved the River District Action Plan and staff are working to implement this three-year strategy.

Ms. Allan left the meeting at this time.

In response to a question from the Board, the Director of Community Services advised that the Board is governed under the *Municipal Act*, and it stipulates that City Council can create a Business Improvement Area through a by-law. There are 257 properties in the River District that are subject to the River District levy and each of those businesses contribute to the budget. This levy is collected with municipal property taxes and then allocated to the River District Board. For 2023, the River District levy is \$255,106. From the municipal tax levy, the City contributes 50% of the wages for the Community Development Coordinator, as well as in-kind administration and support from the Manager of Community and Business Development, Recording Secretary and Clerk's Division, Finance Division, and IT Division. The City also pays for street maintenance, beautification, waste collection, weekly street sweeping, and snow removal, funded through the municipal tax levy.

The Board discussed the possibility of reducing the budget for the membership celebration event and brought forward suggestions of selling raffle tickets, not providing drink tickets to every member, and other ideas that might help to reduce the overall cost for this event. The Board noted that this event is important as it helps to make all River District members feel welcome and part of a community.

RD-230308-002

Moved by Member Langlois

**"THAT in consideration of the proposed 2023 River District budget presented at the March 8, 2023 public meeting, the River District Board of Management:**

- 1. Receives the 2023 River District budget as presented; and**
- 2. Directs staff to send a memo to City Council requesting that the 2023 River District budget be approved."**

Carried.

RD-230308-003

Moved by Member Langlois

**"THAT in consideration of the proposed 2023 River District budget presented at the March 8, 2023 public meeting, the River District Board of Management directs staff to bring forward a report respecting the membership celebration event to explore options for reducing costs."**

Carried.

There being no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Parsons declared the Public Meeting closed at 6:30 p.m.

## **6. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

- 6.a Presentation from the Manager of Community and Business Development Re: Wayfinding Strategy for the River District

The Manager of Community and Business Development provided a presentation on the City's wayfinding signage project and its correlation with the River District Action Plan. The wayfinding strategy was developed using the Regional Tourism Organization 7's (RTO7's) existing guidelines that are currently being used across Grey, Bruce, and Simcoe Counties to provide consistency for visitors travelling to the region and to allow the City to be eligible for funding through RTO7. Mr. McGrath advised that the strategy recommends not having signage for individual businesses, but rather directing people to the River District as a cluster, with lots of retail. Currently, most signs are in the City centre, directing people outwards to the edges and beyond. With the largest concentration of important destinations in the City centre, this strategy focuses wayfinding efforts on the opposite approach by ensuring that signs help visitors find their way from the edges to the City centre and River District.

Mr. McGrath noted that parking signage in the River District will be updated with a more simple and identifiable design. The wayfinding strategy identified 37 signs that will either be placed directly in the River District or direct traffic to the River

District. This signage would be a priority and would be supported with potential grants from RTO7 and/or Rural Economic Development (RED) funding.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. McGrath advised that implementation would occur in 2024 or 2025, depending on funding and grants to support the wayfinding strategy. The Director of Community Services added that the implementation will be a phased-in approach and will take several years before all the signs have been installed.

**7. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD**

There were no questions from the public.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED**

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

**9. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF**

- 9.a Report CS-23-029 from the Community Development Coordinator Re: Owen Sound River District Block Captains

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the report and requested that Board members sign up for a Block Captain area following the meeting.

RD-230308-004

Moved by Member Cole

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-23-029 respecting Owen Sound River District Block Captains, the River District Board of Management:**

- 1. Approves the responsibilities of River District Block Captains as outlined in the report;**
- 2. Authorizes staff to update the River District Block Captains map with new board members; and**
- 3. Directs staff to change the River District Block Captains map on the [owensoundriverdistrict.ca](http://owensoundriverdistrict.ca) website with each Block Captain's contact information and a list of the responsibilities of the Block Captains."**

Carried.

- 9.b Verbal Report from Member Deen Re: Proposal for Hottest Street Sale

Member Deen has received requests from customers who had to work or had other priorities but would have been able to attend the Hottest Street Sale if it had ended later, and suggested that the event hours be amended to start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 6:00 p.m.

The Director of Community Services advised that at the River District Board meeting on January 11, 2023, the Board approved the timing for the Hottest Street Sale as being from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Based on this direction, the Community Development Coordinator has already distributed registration forms and changing the timing of the event now could cause confusion. Typically, the busiest times for the event are in the morning up until 2:00 p.m. Ms. Coulter noted that the Board can provide input into the planning of the event when the Community Development Coordinator brings forward her wrap up report following the event.

RD-230308-005d

Moved by Member Deen

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided March 8, 2023 from Member Deen respecting a Proposal for Hottest Street Sale, the River District Board of Management directs staff to amend the hours of the Hottest Street Sale from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., beginning in 2024."**

Defeated.

Member Deen suggested having entertainment at the intersection of 7th Street East and 2nd Avenue East as she has received feedback that it seemed like nothing was happening at that end of the event so most people stopped and turned around to partake in the festivities happening between 8th Street East and 10th Street East.

The Director of Community Services advised that the Community Development Coordinator is planning an activation in the 700 block of 2nd Avenue East with the Owen Sound Attack and the Owen Sound Police Services to draw people to that area.

It was also noted by the Board that foot traffic needs to be diverted down the side streets as well. Chair Parsons noted that businesses located on a side street do have the option to set up a table on 2nd Avenue East.

RD-230308-006

Moved by Councillor Dodd

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided March 8, 2023 from Member Deen respecting a Proposal for Hottest Street Sale, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."**

Carried.

9.c Verbal Report from Member Deen Re: Proposal for New Events in the River District

Member Deen proposed that staff investigate the possibility of utilizing the Owen Sound Farmers' Market on Saturday afternoons throughout the summer for live entertainment, in the hopes of drawing patrons to the River District and inviting businesses to stay open later. This could be a great opportunity for businesses to generate more sales and provide the community with a chance to view the River District as a fun, relaxed, and safe place for family and friends to enjoy the summer evenings.

The Director of Community Services noted that at the River District Board meeting on January 11, 2023, the Board approved the events and activations for 2023 in the River District, which do tie into the budget that was received by the Board earlier this evening. In terms of using the Farmers' Market building, the vendors typically are not gone until 2:00 p.m. and there is a reoccurring rental in the building on Saturday evenings. The City's Events and Activation Coordinator has a report going forward to the Community Services Committee in April, which will propose hosting Music at the Market on a Thursday or Friday evening in the Farmers' Market Square instead of in the afternoon throughout the summer. The public is always welcome in the public space in the 800 block of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East.

RD-230308-007

Moved by Member Hannen

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided March 8, 2023, from Member Deen respecting a Proposal for New Events in the River District, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."**

Carried.

9.d Verbal Report from the Board Treasurer Re: Board Finances

The Board Treasurer advised that she needs to update the bank card as she currently does not have access to view the accounts.

RD-230308-008

Moved by Councillor Dodd

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided March 8, 2023, from the Board Treasurer respecting Board Finances, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."**

Carried.

9.e Verbal Report from the Police Inspector Re: Police Update

Inspector Fluney advised that the Owen Sound Police Services (OSPS) Citizen's Police Academy has its final class this evening. This was a six-week course and it was extremely successful. There were numerous applicants for the course, and they had a full class of 24 people from the community. There were presentations on forensics, technical surveillance, the court system, community services, front line patrol, and criminal investigations. The OSPS is considering hosting another Citizen's Police Academy this fall and would be interested in having someone from the River District Board participate in the course.

Inspector Fluney noted that there were two robberies in the River District this past month - a store robbery and a bank robbery. In the case of the store robbery, the Community Oriented Response (CORE) Unit were on foot patrol at the time and were able to intercept the person responsible who was fleeing the scene, which resulted in that person's arrest, recovery of the stolen property, and recovery of the evidence. In the case of the bank robbery, the person responsible was located within three hours, arrested, and all the stolen money was recovered as well as the evidence involved in the case.

During the month of January, the OSPS conducted 241 hours of foot patrol in the River District. During the month of February, the OSPS conducted 199 hours of foot patrol in the River District, which also included targeted foot patrol in some of the problem areas.

Inspector Fluney advised that the OSPS Community Services Officer and a member of their IT Department has been in contact with the Community Development Coordinator to schedule a presentation in the spring for River District members on video security systems. The purpose of this presentation is to provide information so they can either look at getting a video security system, improving their current video security system, or providing tips to the business owners on how they can improve the video security system they currently have. The OSPS completed a project two years ago where they collected a video security inventory of the River District and expanded it into some of the other business areas in Owen Sound. They looked at all of the video security systems that were in the City, and the OSPS want to update this inventory. Inspector Fluney noted that video security systems in private businesses are an excellent resource to assist the OSPS in solving crimes.

The OSPS Community Services Officer is working with the Community Development Coordinator to schedule a bike and street safety presentation in the River District this spring in cooperation with the Grey Bruce Settlement and Language Services.



RD-230308-009

Moved by Member Walcott

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided March 8, 2023, from Inspector Fluney respecting a Police Update, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."**

Carried.

**10. MATTERS POSTPONED**

There were no matters postponed.

**11. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN**

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION**

12.a Earth Day Grey Bruce Planning Committee Re: Earth Day Grey Bruce 2023

12.b Final approvals issued for the following Business Licences:

- True North Cannabis Company, a retail cannabis store located at 978 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East
- Pwrfade Golf, a golf simulator lounge located at 783 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East

RD-230308-010

Moved by Member Cole

**"THAT in consideration of correspondence provided for information purposes listed on the March 8, 2023 River District Board of Management (RDBM) agenda, the RDBM receives Items 12.a and 12.b for information purposes."**

Carried.

**13. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

There was no additional business.

**14. NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were no notices of motion.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Chair Parsons adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.