



River District

Minutes

River District Board of Management

September 13, 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
Councillor Travis Dodd
Member Kathy Hannen
Councillor Suneet Kukreja
Member Denis Langlois
Member Winnifred Walcott

STAFF PRESENT:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services
Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services
Viveca Gravel, Community Development Coordinator
Dave Bishop, Owen Sound Police Services Police Inspector
Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Chair Parsons invited everyone in Council Chambers to rise and observe a moment of silence for Sharif Rahman.

Following the moment of silence, Chair Parsons noted that condolences were shared with the family on behalf of the River District Board and membership.

2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

2.a Councillor Dodd Re: Scaffolding and Plywood for Windows

2.b Member Cole Re: Current Situation in the River District

2.c Chair Parsons Re: Town Hall on September 11, 2023

2.d City Manager Re: Cars & Coffee Event

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 July 12, 2023

RD-230913-001

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT the minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on July 12, 2023 be approved as printed."

Carried.

5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations or presentations.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions from the public.

7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

8. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

8.a Verbal Report from the Police Inspector Re: Police Update

Inspector Bishop advised that the Owen Sound Police Service (OSPS) have been busy throughout the summer with the unprecedented three homicides that have occurred in the City. Despite that, the OSPS conducted a combined total of 442 hours of foot and bike patrol in the River District during June, July, and August. In 2022, the OSPS conducted 395 hours of foot and bike patrol in the River District during the same period, so they have increased their presence in the River District this year.

Inspector Bishop noted that later this evening, the OSPS is hosting a Graduation Ceremony for their newest class of seven (7) auxiliary officers. The auxiliary program has been in operation since 1990 and the OSPS relies on this program for various events held throughout the City. The OSPS typically has 18 auxiliary members, and the graduation of these new officers will bring the program back to that complement.

Inspector Bishop noted that the OSPS will be running another Citizen's Police Academy from October 18, 2023 to December 6, 2023 on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The 8-week program provides an interactive

opportunity to learn about all the different areas of the OSPS, including criminal investigations, forensic identification, and tech surveillance. They will be able to accommodate approximately 23 to 25 people in the program.

Inspector Bishop advised that the auxiliary members and Community Services Officer conducted a 'Lock It or Lose It' campaign on September 8 in the River District where they checked for unlocked vehicles and left a brochure with any vehicles that were unlocked to provide awareness.

Inspector Bishop noted that the OSPS participated in International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31 at the Owen Sound Farmers' Market with community partners, including Grey Bruce Public Health and Supportive Outreach Services (SOS).

Inspector Bishop advised that he cannot provide an update on the homicides that have occurred in the City as they are very complex; however, he did note that the OSPS has made a lot of progress on all of the cases.

RD-230913-002

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided September 13, 2023, from Inspector Bishop respecting a Police Update, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

Carried.

8.b Report CR-23-076 from the Director of Corporate Services Re: 2023 Mid-Year Financial Update

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the report.

The Director of Community Services advised that an amendment is required to the staff recommendation as the first step will be to present a draft budget to the Board at its next meeting on November 8, 2023 for review and comment, followed by a public meeting at the subsequent Board meeting.

RD-230913-003

Moved by Member Langlois

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-23-076 respecting the 2023 Mid Year Financial Update, the River District Board of Management directs staff to:

- 1. Issue an invoice for any year-end reserve funding requirement to be covered by the River District Board of Management;**
- 2. Issue a \$2,000 donation to the Owen Sound Police Services' Citizens on Patrol; and**

3. Bring forward a report on the draft 2024 budget to the next meeting on November 8, 2023."

Carried.

The Director of Corporate Services left the meeting.

8.c Report CR-23-074 from the Deputy Clerk Re: River District Board of Management Vacancy

The Deputy Clerk provided an overview of the report.

In response to a question from the Board, the Deputy Clerk advised that a Board member will need to take over the Block Captain responsibilities for the block that was assigned to Allegra Deen. Member Walcott volunteered to take over the Block Captain responsibilities until a new Board member is appointed. The Deputy Clerk noted that the Community Development Coordinator will update the Block Captain Map on the River District website.

RD-230913-004

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-23-074 respecting River District Board of Management Vacancy, the River District Board of Management receives the report for information purposes."

Carried.

8.d Report CS-23-088 from the Community Development Coordinator Re: River District 2023 Mid-Year Review, Events, Promotions, and Activations

The Community Development Coordinator provided an overview of the report.

RD-230913-005

Moved by Member Walcott

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-23-088 respecting River District 2023 Mid-Year Review, Events, Promotions, and Activations, the River District Board of Management receives the report for information purposes."

Carried.

8.e Report CS-23-093 from the Community Development Coordinator Re: River District Additional Street Lighting Enhancements

The Community Development Coordinator provided an overview of the report.

In response to comments from the Board, the City Manager advised that staff will present a report to City Council at its meeting on October 23, 2023 respecting surveillance cameras in collaboration with the Owen Sound Police Service.

In response to a question from the Board, the Director of Community Services noted that staff are not aware of any current grants for lighting but will continue to monitor any grant opportunities. Ms. Coulter added that staff are going to investigate the possibility of using the City's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for enhanced lighting and determine if this can be added to the CIP. If any changes are proposed for the CIP, then this would be presented through the City's Community Services Committee.

RD-230913-006

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-23-093 respecting River District Additional Street Lighting Enhancements, the River District Board of Management:

- 1. Supports staff moving forward with recommended actions 1, 2, and 3 as outlined in the report;**
- 2. Directs staff to work on a plan to improve lighting in Carney's Lane, Artist Alley, and Scotia pedestrian lane; and**
- 3. Considers, as part of the 2024 budget deliberations, making an allocation from the reserve that would go together with a request to Council to match the allocation and that the funds be used for lighting enhancements to be determined through the issuance of an RFP."**

Carried.

8.f Verbal Report from the Board Treasurer Re: Board Finances

The Board Treasurer advised that the total assets in the bank, including the gift certificate account, operating account, and savings account are \$153,701.57. The savings account has made \$3,800 in interest to date this year. The Board Treasurer advised that if the Board is in a surplus again this year, they could consider putting funds towards additional street lighting.

RD-230913-007

Moved by Member Cole

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided September 13, 2023, from the Board Treasurer respecting Board Finances, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

Carried.

9. MATTERS POSTPONED

There were no matters postponed.

10. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

11. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

11.a Ontario Business Improvement Area Association Re: 2024 BIA Conference

The Deputy Clerk advised that should a member of the Board wish to attend the 2024 BIA Conference, a motion from the Board will be required to approve the conference registration for that member so that all conference expenses will be reimbursed.

Vice-Chair Quade expressed interest in attending the 2024 BIA Conference.

RD-230913-008

Moved by Member Cole

“THAT in consideration of correspondence from the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association listed on the September 13, 2023 River District Board of Management (RDBM) meeting agenda respecting the 2024 BIA Conference, the RDBM approves a 2024 BIA Conference registration for Vice-Chair Quade.”

Carried.

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

- All My Relations, a retail store located at 893-895 3rd Avenue East
- My Woodshop, a home occupation located at 745 3rd Avenue East
- Fuego Wood Fired Pizza, a restaurant located at 136 10th Street East

RD-230913-009

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of the business license final approvals listed on the September 13, 2023 River District Board of Management (RDBM) agenda, the RDBM receives the business license final approvals for information purposes."

Carried.

12. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

12.a Scaffolding and Plywood for Windows

Councillor Dodd advised that he has received comments from River District members regarding scaffolding and hoarding for buildings in the River District that are undergoing renovations and requested clarification on the period of time that this is permitted. The Director of Community Services noted that an individual can apply for a Street Occupation Permit for \$68 and are allowed to have the scaffolding and/or hoarding in place for a period of three (3) months. Engineering Division staff review the pedestrian traffic plan provided by the applicant, which must include a minimum clearance space outside of the hoarding for safe pedestrian movement in the area. Ms. Coulter advised that the applicant can apply for two renewals of the Street Occupation Permit for an additional three (3) months each time and those renewals cost \$34 each. The applicant must also provide insurance.

Councillor Dodd noted that this is a long time for scaffolding and/or hoarding to be in place in the River District, and for such a minimal fee, that can potentially create a negative view of the River District. Councillor Dodd suggested that perhaps a fulsome review of the Street Occupation Permit By-law is required, including statistics on actual usage and how often these permits have been extended, to ensure that the by-law continues to meet the needs of the current times.

Councillor Dodd inquired about the Property Standards By-law, and specifically, plywood in windows in the River District. Currently, there is at least one building in each block that is using plywood in some way or form as a window replacement and there should be discussion regarding this item to provide a more fulsome review of this by-law.

RD-230913-010

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT the River District Board of Management waives the notice provision in the Procedural By-law in order to deal with a time-sensitive matter relating to hoarding and boarded windows in the River District."

Carried by a 2/3 vote.

RD-230913-011

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT in consideration of Additional Business presented September 13, 2023 respecting hoarding and boarded windows in the River District, the River District Board of Management supports a review of:

- 1. The Street Occupation Permit By-law No. 2010-169 respecting hoarding through the Operations Committee; and**
- 2. The Property Standards By-law No. 1999-030 respecting boarded windows through the Corporate Services Committee."**

Carried.

12.b Current Situation in the River District

Member Cole brought forward safety concerns from business owners within his block following the homicide in the River District and noted that he has received comments from Owen Sound residents who have indicated that they are afraid to come to the River District.

Member Walcott advised that those in attendance at the Town Hall meeting earlier this week hosted by the Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce discussed their concerns and brought forward ideas on how the River District Board, the City, and business owners can work together to address some of the current issues in the River District. One suggestion brought forward was to have more events to bring more people into the River District to help people feel safe.

12.c Town Hall on September 11, 2023

Chair Parsons advised that over 40 people attended the Town Hall meeting on September 11 and Diane Austin, Chief Executive Officer of the Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce, will be providing the meeting notes to River District members. The Chamber of Commerce is proposing to host another meeting in the River District to include the Chief of Police, Mayor and Council, City Manager, and the River District Board.

In response to a suggestion from the Board, the Director of Community Services advised that staff can investigate the possibility of inviting someone to a future Board meeting to discuss potential solutions, ideas, and partnerships to address the current issues in the River District, as well as training for Board members.

In response to a question from the Board, the Director of Community Services noted that the Community Development Coordinator will bring forward a report in early 2024 to share the planned events for 2024 aligned with the approved Board budget as per the agreement between the City and the River District Board. This report will also include City planned events in the River District.

Inspector Bishop advised that he sits on a committee for the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police that deals with substance use disorders. There are several cities throughout the province, such as Peterborough, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Cambridge, and London where most of the social services are located because they are central to several surrounding areas. Owen Sound is one of these areas for Grey and Bruce Counties. People that require those services, or people that are experiencing homelessness or poverty, tend to migrate to the places where the services are available. Inspector Bishop noted that the province or the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) need to start looking into how this can be balanced across communities. If Owen Sound was only dealing with the local Owen Sound issues, then there would not be as many issues; however, when you bring more people into the centres, that is when more issues are created. There are also other expenses involved for those communities such as a higher cost of policing. Inspector Bishop also noted that statistics show that people experiencing homelessness are four times more likely to be victimized by crime. Inspector Bishop noted that the province needs to determine a way for other communities to also have these social services in place to assist their own populations instead of them having to move to the larger centres for the services.

In response to a question from the Board, Inspector Bishop advised that most of the foot and bike patrol conducted by the Owen Sound Police Service is throughout the daytime to maximize their visibility in the River District.

12.d Cars & Coffee Event

The City Manager advised that the Cars & Coffee event is being held this Saturday in the River District beginning at 9:00 a.m. along 2nd Avenue East from 7th Street to 11th Street. This will be an incredible time for people to walk around the River District and visit the many businesses. The City Manager noted that all the planting pods on 2nd Avenue East were planted today by Parks staff and this brings vibrancy and colour to the street level.

The Community Development Coordinator added that 2nd Avenue East will be closed to vehicular traffic and that the business owners have been notified that they can put a table on the sidewalk in front of their business.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Chair Parsons adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.