



## **Minutes**

### **River District Board of Management**

**May 14, 2025, 5:30 p.m.**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Dave Parsons  
Vice Chair Richard Thomas  
Councillor Travis Dodd  
Member Tim Dwyer  
Member Denis Langlois  
Member Olivia Legate  
Member Jen Smith

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Member Kathy Hannen  
Member Winnifred Walcott

**STAFF PRESENT:** Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services  
Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk  
Dave Bishop, Owen Sound Police Service Police Inspector  
Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator  
Allison Penner, Deputy Clerk

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

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

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

2.a Member Smith Re: Block Captain Update

2.b River District Coordinator Re: Invitations for River District Precinct (RDP) Phase II Opening Celebration

#### **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 March 12, 2025

RD-250514-001

Moved by Councillor Dodd

**"THAT the minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on March 12, 2025 be approved as printed."**

Carried.

#### 5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Board discussed Item 8.a at this time.

- 8.a Verbal Report from the Owen Sound Police Service Re: Police Update

Inspector Bishop reported that foot patrol in the River District totalled 92 hours in March and 114 hours in April. Inspector Bishop advised that police participated in the Wheel & Ride safety event in the River District on May 4.

RD-250514-002

Moved by Member Langlois

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided May 14, 2025, from Inspector Bishop respecting a Police Update, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."**

Carried.

- 5.a Deputation from Inspector Bishop, Owen Sound Police Service Re: Updated Approach to Drug Possession Charges

Inspector Bishop provided an overview of the Owen Sound Police Service (OSPS) approach to simple drug possession charges since 2020 and the impact he believes it has had on community social disorder. Inspector Bishop noted that the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC) has the authority to determine whether federal charges laid by police proceed to prosecution or are thrown out. Inspector Bishop advised that Police Chief Ambrose is advocating for PPSC to resume prosecutions of drug possession charges.

Inspector Bishop requested that River District members support Chief Ambrose's advocacy to the PPSC by submitting testimony respecting the impact of drug possession and related social disorder on their businesses. Inspector Bishop advised that letters with specific reference to public safety and the well-being of children would be most impactful.

In response to a question from the Board, Inspector Bishop advised that individual businesses providing impact statements would be most beneficial, but that a letter from the Board would also be welcome.

In response to a question from the Board, Inspector Bishop advised that federal charges are the most difficult to prosecute, but that there continues to be a backlog in getting provincial charges processed through the courts.

In response to a question from the Board, Inspector Bishop advised that while not aware of other police services engaging in advocacy work, he is aware of other services resuming enforcement of drug possession offences.

In response to a question from the Board, Inspector Bishop advised that he will provide a letter outlining his request to the Board for Block Captains to distribute to businesses.

In response to a question from the Board, Inspector Bishop advised that the PPSC interpretation of what constitutes a place that children frequent is narrow.

RD-250514-003

Moved by Vice Chair Thomas

**"THAT in consideration of the deputation from Inspector Bishop, Owen Sound Police Service provided on May 14, 2025, the River District Board of Management:**

- 1. Authorizes the Board Chair to write a letter on behalf of the Board outlining the impact of public drug use on the River District and expressing support for the Owen Sound Police Service laying charges for drug possession offenses; and**
- 2. Directs staff to prepare a communication for Block Captains to deliver to River District members that includes a request for members to submit statements about the impact of public drug use in the River District to the Owen Sound Police Services and a submission deadline thereof."**

Carried.

5.b Deputation from the City Clerk Re: Short-Term Rental Licensing

The City Clerk provided a PowerPoint presentation respecting a one-year review of the City's short-term rental (STR) licensing program. Ms. Bloomfield noted that City Council is seeking feedback from the River District Board about the recommendations staff originally put forward to the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee on April 9, 2025. City Council requested that the River District be offered the opportunity to provide feedback.

The Board discussed the merits of expanding STR eligibility in the River District including attracting visitors, encouraging people to visit the River District and economic benefits. The Board discussed concerns about the proposed expansion of STR eligibility respecting reducing long-term rental units, displacing vulnerable residents, corporate and non-resident ownership of STRs, noise and nuisance.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Bloomfield advised that it is too soon to report on the occupancy rates for currently licensed STRs, but that data will be collected during the license renewal process and reported on in later years.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Bloomfield advised that the City has received zero nuisance complaints related to STRs in the past year.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Bloomfield noted that the STR By-law is quite comprehensive and that the existing by-law could be amended to restrict the number of STRs operated by one individual or corporation, if that were the will of Council.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Bloomfield noted that an STR license can be revoked if the operator is repeatedly fined for contravening the by-law.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Bloomfield advised that staff do not anticipate that removing the principal residence requirement in the River District would result in a large number of STRs being created due to the stringent application and renewal process and the municipal accommodation tax reporting requirements.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Bloomfield noted that complaints are received through the by-law enforcement website and that staff proactively monitor short-term rental advertising websites for unlicensed STR units.

RD-250514-004

Moved by Member Langlois

**"THAT in consideration of the deputation from the City Clerk provided on May 14, 2025, the River District Board of Management postpones consideration of providing feedback to City Council respecting Short-Term Rental Licensing until the River District Board of Management meeting scheduled for July 9, 2025."**

Carried.

## 6. PUBLIC FORUM

### 6.a Kristy Andre, United Way of Bruce Grey

Kristy Andre, United Way of Bruce Grey Fundraising Champion provided comments in support of reinstating the poster kiosk in the River District, noting that benefits of poster displays include reaching people who do not access the internet and providing a low-cost marketing opportunity for local organizations.

## 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 Owen Sound Police Service Re: Police Update

The Board discussed this item before Item 5.a.

### 8.b Report CR-25-065 from the Director of Community Services and the Deputy Clerk Re: Municipal Act Process to Expand River District Boundaries and an Approach to Preliminary Consultation

The Deputy Clerk provided a PowerPoint presentation and an overview of the report. The Director of Community Services advised that exploring boundary expansion is an action item contained within the River District Action Plan, and that staff have a commitment to bring forward such items for the Board's consideration.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Coulter provided an overview of potential public consultation approaches, including in-person and online engagement opportunities.

RD-250514-005

Moved by Member Langlois

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-065 respecting the Municipal Act Process to Expand River District Boundaries and an Approach to Preliminary Consultation, the River District Board of Management directs staff to proceed with preliminary consultation and provide a report back to the Board, as outlined in the report."**

Carried.

The City Clerk left the meeting.

### 8.c Report CS-25-048 from the River District Coordinator Re: Poster Kiosk Evaluation and Replacement

The River District Coordinator provided an overview of the report.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Gravel provided an overview of the type of posters that are allowed to be displayed in the poster kiosk.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Gravel advised that staff had not considered a digital display board to replace the poster kiosk.

In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Gravel advised that staff have requested a higher upset limit to cover any ancillary costs above the base price that will be required to put the poster kiosk into use.

RD-250514-006

Moved by Vice Chair Thomas

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-048 respecting Poster Kiosk Evaluation and Replacement, the River District Board of Management:**

- 1. Directs staff to replace the poster kiosk as outlined in the report; and**
- 2. Approves an upset limit of \$15,000, funded from reserves, for the purchase and installation of the poster kiosk."**

Carried.

8.d Verbal Report from the Director of Community Services Re: River District Action Plan

The Director of Community Services provided a verbal report regarding the River District Action Plan. Ms. Coulter noted that the Board's 2025 budget approved an allocation of up to \$30,000 to support an update of the River District Action Plan. Ms. Coulter noted that staff had approached BC Hughes, the consultant that originally prepared the Plan, to ask that they undertake the update, but that BC Hughes is not available. Staff are preparing a report outlining alternative approaches for the Board's consideration.

RD-250514-007

Moved by Vice Chair Thomas

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided May 14, 2025, from the Director of Community Services respecting the River District Action Plan, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."**

Carried.

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

In the absence of the Board Treasurer, the Deputy Clerk provided a verbal report respecting board finances, noting that the total balance of all accounts was \$169,421.53.

RD-250514-008

Moved by Member Smith

**"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided May 14, 2025, from the Deputy Clerk on behalf of 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 Correspondence from the Board Chair Re: Owen Sound Police Service (OSPS) CSP Grant Application Letter of Support for City Guardian Pilot Project

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

- Muse Medical Aesthetics by Leah, a medial aesthetics business located at 345 8th St E
- Naagan by Zach Keeshig, a restaurant located at 277 10th Street East
- Tripsy Ad-Hoc Technologies Inc., a ridesharing service located at 1051 2nd Avenue East
- The Rocking Horse, a retail sales business has re-located to 849 2nd Avenue East

RD-250514-009

Moved by Member Dwyer

**"THAT in consideration of correspondence provided for information purposes listed on the May 14, 2025 River District Board of Management (RDBM) agenda, the RDBM receives items 11.a and 11.b for information purposes."**

Carried.

**12. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

12.a Block Captain Update

Member Smith advised that in her role as Block Captain, she visited the businesses on her block and received preliminary feedback. Member Smith highlighted ideas and suggestions from businesses including:

- Creating an online forum for sharing resources and supplies;
- Increasing the amount of art in public spaces;
- Applying Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenue to beautification;
- Engaging service-based businesses during events;
- Providing funding to businesses to offset the cost of events; and
- Increasing City's level of service related to snow removal in the River District.

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of ongoing City initiatives respecting increasing public art and evaluating snow removal levels of service.

The River District Coordinator advised that River District businesses can share information and resources through the monthly newsletter and noted that there is a small annual budget allocated to supporting business-led initiatives. Ms. Gravel noted that suggestions for enhancing inclusion of service-based businesses in events would be welcome, and that staff are seeking a candy sponsor to support the Halloween event.

#### 12.b Invitations for River District Precinct (RDP) Phase II Opening Celebration

The River District Coordinator advised that a public celebration of the redevelopment of the 900 block of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East is being held on June 6, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The celebration will include an opportunity to enjoy the new boardwalk and flexible space, as well as an opening ceremony and live music.

The River District Coordinator provided each Block Captain with invitations and asked that they be circulated to the businesses on their respective blocks as soon as possible.

### 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 7:22 p.m.