



River District

Minutes

River District Board of Management

July 9, 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 (via video)
Member Tim Dwyer
Member Kathy Hannen
Member Olivia Legate
Member Jen Smith
Member Winnifred Walcott

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services
Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk
Josh Gurney, Owen Sound Police Service Sargent
Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator
Allison Penner, Deputy Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. All Board members and staff listed above were present except for Councillor Dodd.

2. MOTION TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION

RD-250709-001

Moved by Vice Chair Thomas

"THAT the River District Board of Management now move into 'Closed Session' to consider one matter regarding personal matters about identifiable individuals respecting appointments to the River District Board of Management."

Carried.

3. REPORTING OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Chair Parsons advised that the Board returned to the open session at 5:37 p.m. All Board members and staff listed above were present except for Councillor Dodd.

During the Closed Session, the Board discussed one matter regarding personal matters about identifiable individuals respecting appointments to the River District Board of Management, and direction was provided to staff.

4. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

- 4.a Member Dwyer Re: Parking Time Limits
- 4.b Member Walcott Re: Garbage By-law
- 4.c River District Coordinator Re: Upcoming Stakeholder Meeting
- 4.d Member Legate Re: Block Captain Update

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 6.a Minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on May 14, 2025

RD-250709-002

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT the minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on May 14, 2025 be approved as printed."

Carried.

7. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 7.a Deputation from Clark Finlay Re: Pedestrianization of 2nd Avenue East

Mr. Finlay provided a PowerPoint presentation respecting ideas to increase pedestrian use of 2nd Avenue East. Mr. Finlay noted alignments between pedestrianization and the Harbour and Downtown Master Plan. Mr. Finlay suggested actions that would support the River District, such as promoting walkability in new development and increasing the frequency of activations and events within the River District.

Mr. Finlay noted possible objections to pedestrianization such as challenges with deliveries, accessibility, safety, cost and parking, and further provided suggestions for how these challenges could be overcome.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Finlay provided examples of other Ontario municipalities that have successfully pedestrianized streets on a seasonal or short-term basis.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Finlay advised that he believes long-term closure of the street is preferable to occasional events, and that more people will visit the River District if it is lively and there are things to do.

8. PUBLIC FORUM

8.a Ron Cole, River District Business Owner

Mr. Cole provided comments in opposition to the ideas proposed in Item 7.a. Deputation from Clark Finlay Re: Pedestrianization of 2nd Avenue East. Mr. Cole noted that he and other business owners have concerns about accessibility and social disorder. Mr. Cole requested that if the Board were to move toward permanent pedestrianization, a meeting of River District stakeholders be held.

Councillor Dodd joined the meeting via video.

8.b James Ball, Owen Sound resident

Mr. Ball provided comments respecting public substance use and police presence in the River District. Mr. Ball noted that he believes the price of goods sold in River District businesses and the cost of events around the City exclude people with fewer financial resources.

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

10. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

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

Sergeant Gurney advised that the Owen Sound Police foot patrol hours in the River District totalled 89.5 in May and 131 in June. Sergeant Gurney noted that officer training and a high volume of calls for service can limit capacity to conduct foot patrol.

In response to a question from the Board, Sergeant Gurney noted that Owen Sound Police have received limited response to their request that River District businesses provide impact statements related to possession and use of illicit drugs. Sergeant Gurney advised that while anonymous statements would be accepted, signed letters may be more impactful as the Police Service hopes to provide these letters to the courts to demonstrate the community impact of dismissing drug possession charges.

Chair Parsons requested that the River District Coordinator include the request for letters of support from the Owen Sound Police in the next River District newsletter.

RD-250709-003

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided July 9, 2025, from Sergeant Gurney respecting a Police Update, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

Carried.

Sergeant Gurney left the meeting.

The Board discussed Item 11.a at this time.

- 11.a Matter Postponed from River District Board of Management Meeting held on May 14, 2025 Re: Feedback on Short-Term Rental Licensing Review

The City Clerk advised that in follow-up to the presentation provided at the May 14, 2025 meeting of the River District respecting feedback on short-term rental (STR) licensing review, staff are seeking direction from the Board with respect to whether they support removing the principal residence and rental cap requirements in the C1 and MC zones.

The Board discussed feedback received from members of the River District and noted that concerns heard were generally related to the potential to remove affordable housing from the River District and supportive comments were generally related to economic development potential.

In response to a question from the Board, the City Clerk advised that staff have committed to providing Council with a follow-up report to evaluate any changes made to the STR By-law one year following their implementation.

Councillor Dodd noted that Council will take the Board's feedback into consideration, but that Council will ultimately decide whether to make any changes to the STR By-law.

RD-250709-007

Moved by Vice Chair Thomas

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-035 and the presentation provided at the May 14, 2025 River District Board of Management Meeting and further discussed at the July 9, 2025 meeting respecting a review of the Short-Term Rental (STR) program, the River District Board of Management directs staff to forward a memo to City Council supporting the removal of the principal residence and rental cap requirements in the C1 and MC zones."

Carried.

The City Clerk left the meeting.

- 10.b Report CS-25-073 from Director of Community Services Re: River District Action Plan - Options to Approach for Update

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

RD-250709-004

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-073 respecting the River District Action Plan Update, the River District Board of Management directs staff to:

- 1. Undertake the River District Action Plan Update using internal City resources; and**
- 2. Reallocate up to \$10,000 from the funds originally allocated to the River District Action Plan Update to the in-house work, and return the remaining \$20,000 to reserves."**

Carried.

- 10.c Report CR-25-096 from the Deputy Clerk Re: Appointment of Director to the River District Board of Management

The Deputy Clerk provided an overview of the report.

RD-250709-005

Moved by Vice Chair Thomas

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-096 respecting Appointment of Director to the River District Board of Management, the River District Board directs staff to send a memo to City Council requesting that the appointment of Adrienne Robinson be approved."

Carried.

- 10.d Verbal Report from the Board Treasurer Re: Board Finances

The Board Treasurer advised that the total balance of all accounts was \$169,953, and that \$553 in interest had been earned since the May meeting.

RD-250709-006

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided July 9, 2025, from the Board Treasurer respecting Board Finances, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

Carried.

11. MATTERS POSTPONED

11.a Matter Postponed from River District Board of Management Meeting held on May 14, 2025 Re: Feedback on Short-Term Rental Licensing Review

Item 11.a was discussed after Item 10.a

12. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

13. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

13.a Final approvals issued for the following Business Licence:

- Tibbs Management Inc., an ATM and business equipment sales and service business located at 945 3rd Ave E.

RD-250709-008

Moved by Member Legate

"THAT in consideration of correspondence provided for information purposes listed on the July 9, 2025 River District Board of Management (RDBM) agenda, the RDBM receives item 11.a for information purposes."

Carried.

14. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

14.a Parking Time Limits

Member Dwyer advised that he is concerned about the parking time limits and how they may prevent visitors from extending the length of their stay in the River District.

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the current complimentary parking system. Ms. Coulter advised that the parking system currently in place was developed jointly by the Board and City Council, and that direction from the Board would be required for staff to undertake a review of the parking system.

In response to a question from the Board, the Director of Community Services advised that staff would confirm the timing of the next scheduled review of the Parking By-law.

In response to a question from the Board, the River District Coordinator advised that social media promotion of parking lots with 5-hour free parking could begin immediately.

14.b Garbage By-law

Member Walcott inquired about enforcement of the Garbage By-law with respect to non-compliance with the requirement to use garbage bag tags.

In response to a question from the Board, the Director of Community Services noted that garbage issues are an ongoing issue in the River District. Ms. Coulter noted that untagged garbage is an ongoing issue and that By-law Enforcement staff recently conduct an information blitz reminding occupants that bag tags are required. Ms. Coulter further noted that the River District Action Plan speaks to cleanliness and suggests conducting a waste audit.

14.c Upcoming Stakeholder Meeting

The River District Coordinator advised that a Community Stakeholder Discussion for a Vibrant River District will be held on July 28, 2025 at the Harmony Centre and that all River District businesses would be invited.

14.d Block Captain Update

Member Legate noted recent feedback she has received in her role as a block captain, including suggestions related to increasing garbage receptacles, providing funding to businesses to support minor repairs caused by vandalism, providing safe sharps disposal receptacles and the need to create a sense of community in the River District.

In response to a question from the Board, the River District Coordinator noted that there are two directories of River District businesses and that updates are forthcoming.

15. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Chair Parsons adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.