



## Corporate Report

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**Report from** Recreation and Community Services, Economic Development and Tourism

**Date of Report:** July 22, 2014

**Date of Meeting:** August 11, 2014

**Report Number:** RCS-231-2014

**File:** 35.60.18

**Subject:** Port Dalhousie Business Improvement Association – Priorities / Action Items 2014-2015

### Recommendation

That Council receive the report for information purposes; and

That 50% match funding in the amount of \$5,000 per calendar year (thru 2015/2016) to support Port Dalhousie Business Improvement Association Tourism Oriented Directional Signage be considered as part of the 2015 budget deliberations.

FORTHWITH

### Background

At its regular meeting on July 7, 2014, Council directed staff to prepare a report on the issues presented by John Scott, Director of the Port Dalhousie Business Association (Port BIA) Area Board of Management, including a request for 100% funding in the amount of \$10,000 per year for QEW directional signage in 2015 and 2016.

### Report

The Port BIA which was established in 1986 pursuant to the Ontario Municipal Act operates to revitalize and promote the Port Dalhousie Business Improvement Area. With a mandate to revitalize and maintain a dynamic local neighbourhood, the BIA markets and promotes the area as a business or shopping destination. During its presentation to Council the BIA identified the following priorities and goals for the upcoming year.

### Review the Port Dalhousie BIA Commercial Area

The BIA membership advised Council that after 20 years of operating within the current commercial area it is necessary to re-evaluate the Port Dalhousie BIA boundaries in order to expand to allow for greater BIA participation to other businesses.

In accordance with the *Municipal Act*, the steps required to change the boundary of a business improvement area are as follows:

1. The area proposed to be a part of the Port Dalhousie BIA be identified

2. Before Council can pass a by-law to alter the boundaries of an improvement area, notice of the proposed by-law shall be sent by prepaid mail to the BIA Board of Management and to every person who, on the last returned assessment roll, is assessed for rateable property (commercial or industrial assessment) in the improvement area and in the geographic area the proposed by-law would add to the improvement area.
3. The *Municipal Act* states that a person who receives a notice as referenced in #2 above shall, within 30 days after the notice is mailed:
  - a) give a copy of the notice to each tenant of the property to which the notice relates who is required to pay all or part of the taxes on the property; and
  - b) give the clerk of the municipality a list of every tenant described in clause (a) above and the share of the taxes that each tenant is required to pay and the share that the person is required to pay.
4. A by-law to alter the BIA boundaries shall not be passed if, within 60 days from the date the notices have been mailed, the clerk of the municipality receives:
  - a) written objections from at least one-third of the total number of persons entitled to notice; and
  - b) the objections are responsible for:
    - i. at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the proposed improvement area; or
    - ii. at least one third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the geographic area the proposed bylaw would add to the existing improvement area.

Objections can be withdrawn, and following the 60 day period, the clerk will review the objections received (if any) and determine whether the by-law is to be passed. The City Clerk will report back to Council following the 60 day period. It should be noted that if sufficient objections are received not to continue with the expansion of the BIA boundaries, that the expansion will not proceed, but that the BIA shall continue with the original boundaries in place. If the City Clerk makes a determination that the conditions have been met to alter the boundaries of the Port BIA, a certificate shall be issued affirming that fact.

## **Parking in the Commercial Core**

The BIA raised concerns with respect to parking issues in the commercial core in Port Dalhousie while investigating the parking options at Lakeside Park. The BIA believes that paid parking options at Lakeside Park should be reviewed and feel there is an opportunity of using excess funds on the beautification of Lakeside Park and to also subsidize new attractions to the Lakeside Park beach front area. City staff are open to reviewing the possibility of paid transient parking at Lakeside Park. Given the current state of the municipal parking system, and in order to ensure the long term sustainability, it is however vital that any revenue that would be generated remain within the parking system for the operation and maintenance of municipal parking facilities

## **QEW Tourism Oriented 'TODS' Signage**

The Tourism Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) program provides a cost-effective system of standard signs on major roads to direct traffic to qualified tourism-oriented operations. These signs make it easier for tourists to find local attractions, operations and services. They help travelers feel welcome, safe and comfortable. Canadian TODS Limited — a private, third-party company, operates, manages, maintains and finances this program on behalf of the Ministry of Transportation to:

- Increase awareness of Ontario's tourism attractions, operations and services located off provincial highways
- Enhance traffic control through "advanced warning of turns" signs
- Promote and strengthen tourism province-wide.

The Port BIA currently has two (2) TODS signs located at East and West 7<sup>th</sup> with annual estimated cost of \$10,000 (including trailblazer signs). Through the approved budget process in 2010, 2011 and 2012 the City of St. Catharines Economic Development and Tourism Department (EDTS) partnered financially with the BIA contributing \$2,500 annually towards the cost of 'TODS' signage renewal. Following 2012 City staff received no formal requests from the BIA to continue funding the TODS signage and therefore was no longer included as part of the departmental budget. The Port BIA Acting Chair, Dan Raseta contacted staff in early 2014 advising of TODS renewal fees requesting financial support from EDT. It was indicated at that time that while no formal requests for this budget expenditure had been received and therefore could not be accommodated, EDT staff did agree to include the request in its 2015 budget submission seeking funding to contribute 50% of the costs for the next two TODS contract periods – ending July 2015 and July 2016.

Close to 7,000 athletes from across Latin America, South America, the Caribbean and North America are set to compete during the 2015 Pan Am Games. The Games will involve municipalities stretching from Oshawa to the Niagara Region with the City of St. Catharines hosting the rowing competition on Martindale Pond. Maintaining the appropriate directional signage (TODS) is an important tool for profiling and directing both athletes and tourists alike to our City.

## **Notification**

It is in order to advise; John Scott, Chair, Port Dalhousie BIA, 17 Locke, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2N 5B5.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no additional budget dollars available in 2014 to assist the Port BIA with the cost for the way-finding signs on the QEW. This funding request will need to be considered as part of the 2015 budget deliberations.

## **Conclusion**

The City of St. Catharines remains committed to the revitalization of Port Dalhousie and will continue to work in partnership with the Port Dalhousie BIA to address the identified priority areas.

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