

MEETING MINUTES
ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WEDNESDAY JUNE 11, 2025 8:30AM ROOM 304 CITY HALL / ZOOM

Attendance:

Chair - Grayden Laing	Y
Vice Chair-Renee Carpenter	N
Past Chair-Earl Taylor	Y
Treasurer-Tina Swaenepoel	Y
Promotions Chair-Dave Thomson	N

Reza Alavie	N
Jennifer Childs	Y
Suzanne Faris	N
Ian Gillespie	Y
Duane Orth	Y
Mayor Preston	Y
Russell Schnurr	N
Sarah Van Pelt	Y

Advisors:

Emily Mason	N
Sean Dyke	Y
Paul Jenkins	N
Jessica Pietens	N
Sarah Noble	N

Megan Pickersgill	Y
Aaron Devries	Y
Cody Montgomery	Y
Tara McCaulley	Y

Staff:

Sarah Lynch	Y
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*Guests: Christene Scrimgeour, Anna-Kay Bernard and Mathew Waite

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:32am meeting Quorum.

Mission: To cultivate a community of all Downtown property and business owners and residents, while advocating, beautifying and actively promoting our businesses and authentic heritage in Downtown St Thomas.

Vision: To engage, inspire and welcome our community and visitors to experience Downtown St Thomas as a unique destination.

2. Declaration of Conflict:

No Declarations were presented.

3. Confirmation of Agenda

Motion by Tara McCaulley. Seconded by Tina Swaenepoel. "To confirm the June 11, 2025 Agenda as distributed." Carried.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

Motion by Duane Orth. Seconded by Ian Gillispie. "To confirm the May 14, 2025 Minutes as distributed." Carried.

Note: Meeting Minutes can be found at www.downtownstthomas.ca/monthly-minutes

5. Deputations

Scrimgeour & Company audit report

Christene Scrimgeour presented the board with an overview of the draft annual financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2024. The review noted the purchase of the railcar as a new addition to capital assets. It was also observed that the deferred revenue related to the DDB dollar program remained consistent with previous years.

Motion by Sarah Van Pelt. Seconded by Duane Orth “To approve the draft annual financial statements as presented as of June 11, 2025.” Carried.

6. Chair Report - Grayden

Business Updates – New/relocated/lost

- Chef Bondi’s will be reopening
- inFuzed tZ is closed
- Lewis Baking Goods has opened at 572 Talbot St.

Social Media Updates

Numbers have stayed consistent. Nicole Van Pelt will not be able to provide social media marketing this summer due to other commitments. The DDB summer students will provide social media posts during the summer.

7. Finance Report

Treasury and Board discussed treasury managing DDB finances while maintaining a separate bank account. If moved under Treasury, they would handle accounts payable, with invoices submitted and approved electronically via Filehold. Cheque runs occur weekly and some setup would be required.

Motion by Sarah Van Pelt. Seconded by Tina Swaenepoel “To approve moving the Downtown Development Board funds over to a new City account, having the Chair sign off on invoices and having Treasury pay the vendors. Any amount above \$5000 will be taken to the board for approval, unless there is a financial emergency, in which case the executive will be consulted to approve it.” Carried.

Downtown Dollars Tracking

Sarah reported that \$770 in DDB\$ were redeemed in May, and she completed 8 DDB\$ pickups. To date in 2025, \$4,575 DDB\$ have been issued — \$650 donated and \$3,925 sold. Of this, \$435 has been redeemed, with \$4,140 outstanding.

Since 2018, \$292,840 DDB\$ have been issued, with \$248,640 redeemed and \$44,200 still outstanding.

8. Reports

8.1 Parks Dept Update – Cody

Greenhouse is currently full of hanging baskets and will be going up tomorrow. Garden beds in downtown have been planted with approximately 11,000 plants. Any issues with hanging baskets, please let Cody know. Two trial self-watering pots are downtown to test out for the year. Councillor Taylor asked if it would be possible to move some from the pots from Moore St. to Talbot. Cody made note to look into this for the future.

8.2 Promotions Report

Radio – Dave

The 2 new Nostalgia Nights Car Show spots are airing now.

Downtown Vibe – Reza

Finalizing to send to print.

Website update – Sarah Van Pelt

Redding was given approval to go live. Should be live today or tomorrow. Once live, board members are encouraged to review to make sure everything works properly before editing timeline (30 days).

8.3 Beautification Report

New signs – Sarah

Myrtle now has a new sign. Two signs were pulled down last week, Rituals and Buzz Bites.

8.4 Council Update - Mayor Preston

First Ave. project has finished ahead of schedule. Fairview Ave. project to begin. Centre street project continuing. New city Communications/PR position has started.

8.5 Municipal Heritage Committee Update - Russell

No Report.

8.6 CIP Program – Russell

No Report.

8.7 Railway City Tourism Report – Megan

Summer hours are Wednesday-Saturday with summer student, Charlotte returning from last year. There are many events happening - starting this weekend with the Food Truck Festival. A new art initiative called “Platform 13” at the Tourism station will provide a free space for artists to showcase their work with opportunity to sell on Tourisms online store. Anne Marie Chung will be the first artist to set up. This artist will also be painting the tourism piano and the piano will be pulled out onto the platform to be played by visitors. Tourism would like to consider creating a welcome package in collaboration with the DDB.

8.8 Economic Development Report – Sean

Elgin County Ukrainian community will be painting a piano at ECRM and it will move throughout the downtown to different venues, starting at the Bistro. Grayden noted: If there are any downtown businesses that are interested in showcasing the piano, to connect for further details. This will be a fundraiser to bring awareness.

Sean noted that the 2024 Oktoberfest was not over budget as sponsorship covered costs.

8.9 SBEC – Emily

No Report

8.10 Chamber of Commerce Report – Paul

-The next Business After 5 will take place Wednesday June 18, 2025 @ ECRM, hosted by CVD Photography, Catering by James Meadows and ECRM.

-Chamber Family Picnic July 27, 2025.

-MP & MPP Luncheon July 28, 2025.

Visit www.stthomaschamber.on.ca for full details.

9. Old Business

10. New Business

10.1 Discussion regarding metal signs:

A question was raised about continuing the program at a cost of \$250 per sign. Going forward, installations will be done at 9 feet using new screws with higher weight rating. The need for signage will

be revisited after the summer. In the meantime, summer students can speak with business owners for feedback and note any signs that are loose or uneven.

10.2 Nostalgia Nights Volunteers:

Brief update provided about Nostalgia Nights and request for parking support was made to the board for the 2 parking shifts (12pm-3pm and 3pm-6pm). Members interested in supporting encouraged to reach out to Sarah.

10.3 Seasonal Patio inquiry:

Zesty Dessert Café has expressed interest in setting up a seasonal patio for the summer. The board confirmed there are no restrictions, provided a minimum 1.5-meter clearance is maintained for pedestrian access.

Shawn Devree also inquired about hosting a sidewalk sale from June 19–21. The board welcomed the initiative and encouraged other businesses to participate, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the 1.5-meter accessibility requirement.

11. Coming Event

- Chamber of Commerce Business After 5 – Wednesday, June 18th from 5-7pm @ ECRM
- Nostalgia Nights – July 12, 2025 4pm-9pm

12. Adjournment

Motion by Tina Swaenepoel. Seconded by Sarah Van Pelt. “To adjourn meeting at 10:01am”. Carried.

Next Meeting: Wednesday July 9, 2025 at 8:30am in room 304.