

MEETING MINUTES
ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 8:30AM ROOM 304 CITY HALL / ZOOM

Attendance:

Chair - Grayden Laing	Y
Vice Chair-Renee Carpenter	Y
Past Chair-Earl Taylor	Y
Treasurer-Tina Swaenepoel	Y
Promotions Chair-Dave Thomson	N
Reza Alavie	Y
Jennifer Childs	N
Ian Gillespie	Y
Duane Orth	Y
Mayor Preston	Y
Russell Schnurr	N
Sarah Van Pelt	N

Advisors:

Emily Mason	N
Sean Dyke	Y
Paul Jenkins	Y
Jessica Pietens	N
Sarah Noble	N
Megan Pickersgill	N
Aaron Devries	Y
Tara McCaulley	Y
Todd Sawyer	Y
Cody Montgomery	Y

Staff:

Sarah Lynch	Y
-------------	---

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:35am 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 Tina Swaenepoel. Seconded by Duane Orth. "To confirm the September 10, 2025 Agenda as distributed." Carried.

- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**

Motion by Tina Swaenepoel. Seconded by Ian Gillespie. "To confirm the July 9, 2025 Minutes as distributed." Carried.

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

- 5. Deputations**

No Deputations were presented.

- 6. Chair Report - Grayden**

Business Updates – New/relocated/lost

- New: Ellebasi Beauty Bar – 548 Talbot St., Fanshawe Driving school - 370 Talbot, Artisan store – 570 Talbot St. (Earl will confirm name)
- Lost: Mugford's, RubyBlues, Unusual Finds, Opa's in November.

Social Media Updates

At standard level 80000 views, reach is doing well, Oktoberfest push currently going on.

7. Finance Report

The financial report was presented and reviewed by the board.

Downtown Dollars Tracking

Sarah reported that \$4,265 in DDB\$ were redeemed in July/August. She completed 9 DDB\$ pickups. To date in 2025, \$5,200 DDB\$ have been issued — \$650 donated and \$4550 sold. Of this, \$1,270 has been redeemed, with \$3,930 outstanding.

Since 2018, \$293,465 DDB\$ have been issued, with \$253,635 redeemed and \$39,830 still outstanding.

8. Reports

8.1 Parks Dept Update – Todd

Hanging baskets have been taken down, flower beds removed as they have lost their summer support. Mums have been ordered and will be planted by the end of the month (will try to get them on Moore before Oktoberfest). Still working on crack and crevice spray until the end of October.

8.2 Promotions Report

Radio – Dave

Oktoberfest spots have been airing on myFM, New Country 107.3, and 101.3 GIANT FM, until September 20th.

Oktoberfest Digital has been on myFM-Website at St. Thomas Today since August 29th and will continue until September 20th. Bonus spots for Oktoberfest also airing.

Following Oktoberfest, Downtown Dollar and Full sing jingle spots until September 30th, Pumpkin Prowl October 1st, followed by Light Up Talbot and Christmas Tree Lighting.

Downtown Vibe - Reza

Nostalgia Night issue of Vibe was distributed. Almost 5000 copies delivered to homes in the downtown. Will start on the Christmas issue at the end of the month, will be ready for Light Up Talbot.

8.3 Beautification Report & Event Update

New signs – Sarah

Jancat had their sign knocked down again.

Flowerpots

Moonlight Painters will begin watering flowers, once we have a date from Parks.

Banners

Moonlight Painters has been tentatively scheduled for the removal of the banners Sunday October 26th with a rain date the following Sunday, November 2. Volunteers are needed in the am from 8am-11am.

Oktoberfest Update

We are moving into the final planning stages for Oktoberfest. We are still looking for a few more volunteers to help with the info booth, which will also include stein sales.

New highlights this year include:

- A **community stage** featuring local performers from 2–8 p.m.
- A **street hockey rink**, with 3-on-3 games overseen by Parks & Recreation throughout the day.
- A **Mascot Madness Challenge** at 5:30 p.m.
- A **Police vs. Fire match** at 6:00 p.m.

Everything is coming together well, and these additions should help spread activity across the footprint and create great energy downtown.

Pumpkin Prowl Update

Pumpkin Prowl continues to grow in popularity, with strong community feedback and attendance. We've also heard from a number of businesses that, while they love the event, the large increase in attendees has made it more financially challenging for them to participate at the same level. To keep this event fun and family-friendly while ensuring it remains sustainable for businesses, we may need to explore new ways to activate it next year, offering businesses more opportunity and less financial strain.

With guidance and recommendations from the Chief, a **special event application** was submitted and approved to close Talbot Street from Ross to Elgin. The event will run from **5–7 p.m.** this year, with the street closure in effect from **4:30–7:30 p.m.** Discussions about how we can better support the businesses to off set cost. Possibly having businesses team together.

Summer Student update: Completed summer obligations with a focus on cleaning and beautification as well as promotional efforts and support.

8.4 Council Update - Mayor Preston

Construction continues throughout the city. Library updates, Centre St. construction is wrapping up, sod is being laid. Fairview project will continue through to November. There is currently a heritage report regarding a downtown property. Councillor Earl Taylor – presented a motion to council re: moving the inn from the downtown. Motion was denied. Mayor suggested inviting the Chief back to discuss current issues as well as the special constables and request a deputation by the chief.

8.5 Municipal Heritage Committee Update - Russell

No Report.

8.6 CIP Program – Russell

No Report.

8.7 Railway City Tourism Report – Megan

New mural on back of Mondamin building (parking lot side).

8.8 Economic Development Report – Sean

PowerCo is continuing to move forward, many positive things continue to happen with industrial area. CBC Still Standing will be hosting season Finale on Wednesday September 24th at Joe Thornton Community Centre, free to attend, no tickets.

8.9 SBEC – Jessica

No Report.

8.10 Chamber of Commerce Report – Paul

-Hired new communication staff

-Recent survey to members showed that bail reform was top issue.

-The next Business After 5 will take place Wednesday September 17, 2025 @ Abode home Comfort

- CIBC Economist coming in September 25th at noon. \$20 tickets
- working on activation for Light Up Talbot
- Currently working on Favourite Things. Downtown businesses were offered a special price of \$100 for business card size ad.

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

9. Old Business

10. New Business

10.1 Snowflake repair date: Set-up at Horton Farmers' Market. Looking for multiple (10) volunteers. October 4th 2pm (Renee/Andre/Mayor/Grayden/Tina +3/Aaron possibly). Sean has connected with power.

10.2 Banner removal date October 26th or November 2nd Grayden/Sarah

11. Coming Event

- Chamber of Commerce Business After 5 – Wednesday September 17, 2025 @ Abode home Comfort
- Oktoberfest September 20, 2025
- Bridges To Better Business Thursday September 25, 2025

12. Adjournment

Motion by Tina Swaenepoel. Seconded by Earl Taylor. "To adjourn meeting at 10:01am". Carried.

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