

MEETING MINUTES
ST THOMAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Wednesday November 12, 2025 8:30am 45 Caso Xing

Attendance:

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

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

Advisors:

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

Staff:

Sarah Lynch	Y
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Guest:

Chief Marc Roskamp	Y
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- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:38 am 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 November 12, 2025 Agenda as distributed." Carried.

- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**

Motion by Ian Gillespie. Seconded by Dave Thomson. "To confirm the October 8, 2025 Minutes as distributed." Carried.

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

- 5. Deputations**

Chief Marc Roskamp

A brief review of the 2026 budget and how it impacts the downtown along with downtown activity statistics was provided. To date, there were 842 calls related to homelessness and encampments in the downtown area, resulting in 38 arrests and 129 individuals processed. Downtown has seen a 14% reduction in calls, attributed to the support provided by the Special Constables and the connections

established between unhoused individuals and Indwell services. Once individuals were successfully connected to supports and housed, a 30% reduction in related calls was observed. Crime severity has decreased by 17%; however, there has been a 22% increase in violent crime, attributed in part to bail reform.

The delegation noted that other communities continue to visit St. Thomas to learn about the innovative approaches being used to address homelessness. For the 2026 budget, the Police Service will include two additional Special Constables and seven additional officers. The current team consists of eight Special Constables providing service six days per week, with a request to expand to ten positions and seven-day coverage. St. Thomas presently has 88 officers, which is below the staffing levels of comparable municipalities, and increased staffing will be required to respond to anticipated growth.

An update on the CCTV program was provided: an 11th camera has been installed at Talbot Street and First Avenue, and a 12th camera will be installed on White Street next week. Safety continues to be a priority at downtown events, with hard barricades now being incorporated.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to report all crime (emergency and non-emergency) to ensure data can be accurately collected. Special Constables can be reached at **226-374-8815** or **cru@stps.on.ca**, and the non-emergency police line remains available.

A board member and downtown business owner expressed appreciation for the Special Constable program, noting the positive impact on the downtown and commending the team for their support and compassion. It was also noted that clean-up efforts continue every two weeks behind The Inn.

6. Chair Report - Grayden

Business Updates – New/relocated/lost

- New: Space Snacks 571 Talbot St., Knotty Dogs Grooming – located in the back of Oh My fur and Whiskers 257 Talbot St.

-Lost: Homebrew Junction will be closing their storefront at the end of December.

Social Media Updates

-Numbers and reach have increased due to Pumpkin Prowl and Light Up Talbot promotions, people continue to share posts.

7. Finance Report

The financial report was presented and reviewed by the board.

Downtown Dollars Tracking

Sarah reported that \$390 in DDB\$ were redeemed in October.

To date in 2025, \$6,800 DDB\$ have been issued — \$1,750 donated and \$5050 sold. Of this, \$1,545 has been redeemed, with \$5,255 outstanding.

Since 2018, \$295,065 DDB\$ have been issued, with \$255,785 redeemed and \$39,280 still outstanding.

8. Reports

8.1 Parks Dept Update – Todd

Remembrance Day Ceremony was a success. Mums have been pulled from all downtown gardens/planters, and the winter green display are currently being planted.

8.2 Promotions Report

Radio – Dave: Tree lighting/Light Up Talbot 2 spots rotating for past 2 weeks and will end this Friday. New Downtown Santa spot will begin rotating with “Magical Time” ad and will be replaced with New

Years ad. Everything has been scheduled for the remainder of the year. MyFM is an in-kind sponsor of Light UP Talbot.

Downtown Vibe - Reza

Next issue will feature several businesses, some of which are older businesses that have not been featured yet. Lumberjack, Innovative Interior Consultants, Take 5, Studio 36 and Rituals will all be featured and ready for Light Up Talbot, Wendy's distributes most copies to community and 4800 will be delivered by Canada Post.

8.3 Beautification Report & Event Update

Banners

Removed and returned to storage on Sunday November 2nd

Pumpkin Prowl Recap

Another successful community event with strong participation and positive feedback.

New this year: street closure and shortened event hours, both well-received.

Business feedback (22 responses):

- 54.5% reported 1,000+ children visiting their store in just two hours.
- 36.4% spent \$200–\$300 on candy; 68.2% paid staff for 2–3 extra hours.
- 77.3% were in favour of the street closure; 18.2% suggested further improvements or expansion.
- 86.4% supported the shortened event time.
- 72.7% want to continue handing out candy, though many suggested a bulk purchase or subsidy option to offset costs.
- Most businesses did not see a sales increase after the event but support continuing the current timing.
- Nearly all responders want to see the date kept the week before Halloween, with 1 responder suggesting earlier in the month.

Light Up Talbot Update

Friday, November 14 — Santa, tree lighting, carriage rides, fire show, and more.

8.4 Council Update - Mayor Preston

No update.

8.5 Municipal Heritage Committee Update - Russell

No Report.

8.6 CIP Program – Russell

No Report.

8.7 Railway City Tourism Report – Megan

No Report.

8.8 Economic Development Report – Sean

Horton Farmers' Market – Commercial kitchen nearly completed which will support businesses in commercializing their products and can act as an event space. Horton Christmas Market this Saturday, November 15th and acts as a good driver to bring many people downtown to support our downtown businesses. Industrial: Vianode announcement regarding 2 billion+ investment in St. Thomas. Expected to employ 1000+. Water infrastructure coverage in media.

8.9 SBEC – Jessica

No Report.

8.10 Chamber of Commerce Report – Paul

The next Business After 5 will take place Wednesday November 12, 2025 @ Chuck's Roadhouse partnering with Angry Bear Barber Shop. Light Up Talbot – warming station host. Next Wednesday is the YEI at Elgin Harvest Pizza. AGM November 27th send Christy an email if you would like to attend. Final Business After 5 for 2025 is December 3rd at CASO hosted by the Chamber board – wear an ugly sweater for The Caring Cupboard. Public skate will be on December 31st at Joe Thorton Community Centre. Uncorked event is themed "Tacos and Tequila" and will be hosted in late January or early February. Visit www.stthomaschamber.on.ca for full details.

8.11 EBRC Report - Tara

Now located in downtown core at CASO Station, second floor. Have received 26 applications for The Pitch which they will be reviewing this month to pick top 5. The Pitch will be on February 4th at St. Annes Centre. Free admission, Tara will provide an Eventbrite link to register to attend.

9. Old Business

9.1 Snowflake Repair Update – Team met for a second time to fix remaining broken snowflakes. Majority have been fixed and installation will begin today.

9.2 Sign By-Law discussion - A building owner recently reached out in regards to signage permit application for installation.

Key points:

- A City sign permit application is required under the Building By-Law.
- All sign locations and sizes must be approved by the Director.
- A \$100 application fee applies, and the form must be completed by the business owner and signed by the building owner. Earl recalls a discussion with planning in previous years regarding permit fees for the DDB (10 permits at \$100). Sarah will reach out to planning inquiring about permit cost and will report back to board.

9.3 Home Show - April 10-12, 2026. Fees are \$795-\$995 for a 10x10 booth. If the board does not see value in renting a booth, Tourism has offered to display and distribute downtown materials at their booth, allowing Tourism to act as the primary representative since the downtown is included within their mandate. Sarah will send businesses an early email to gauge interest. Future considerations to collaborate with other City departments to have one combined booth that showcases all areas.

9.4 AGM - Annual General Meeting date has been set for Wednesday January 28, 2026 at STEPAC. Cathy's catering has been scheduled for breakfast.

10. New Business

11. Coming Event

- Chamber of Commerce Business After 5 – Wed. November 12 @ Chuck's Roadhouse 5pm-7pm
- Light Up Talbot – Friday November 14, 2025 5:00pm-9:00pm
- Horton Christmas Market – Saturday November 15, 2025 10:00am-4:00pm
- Optimist Santa Claus Parade – Saturday November 22, 2025 6:00pm

12. Adjournment

- Motion by Tina Swaenpoel. Seconded by Duane Orth. "To adjourn meeting".
- Carried. Note: Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 am (exact time not recorded)

Next Meeting: Wednesday December 10, 2025, at 8:30am at City Hall Room 304