

Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the
General Purposes Committee
meeting of Richmond City
Council held on Monday, October
19, 2015.



October 14th, 2015

His Worship Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Council
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond BC V6Y 2C1

Re: Oct 19th, 2015 Update to Mayor & Council on Steveston Business Improvement Association

Dear Mayor and Council,

The Steveston Merchants Association looks forward to providing Mayor and Council with an update on the activities towards the establishment of a Business Improvement Association (BIA) on October 19th, 2015 at Richmond City Hall.

Attached is a copy of our presentation. We have created a video with information about BIA's, some details on the process to initiate one and comments from the former Mayor of Langley, Honourable Peter Fassbender who has many years of experience working with a BIA.

Here is the link to the video: <https://youtu.be/dMrOyG5PQ-Q>

We hope to move forward with engaging Steveston commercial property owners and business operators in discussions about the benefits of a BIA in Steveston over the next several months. Our goal is rally support for a BIA and return sometime in the New Year with a presentation to council requesting the BIA initiative move to the formal petitioning process.

We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have at any time.

Sincerely yours,

Stephanie Clarke
Steveston Merchants Association

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Steveston Business Improvement Association Initiative

Steveston Merchants Association Update to Council October 19th, 2015

Background:

The Steveston Merchants Association (SMA) became a registered non profit society formed in 2010 and has operated as a volunteer organisation relying on annual membership dues from various merchants and property owners. Over this period of time the SMA has invested over \$118,000 in cash, \$ \$13,000 in in-kind contributions and over 8200 volunteer hours totaling approximately \$180,000 in volunteer hours towards improving the experience and business opportunities for Steveston. A total value of approximately \$311,000.

The SMA has developed many beneficial activities and programs over the past 5 - 6 years with the goal of helping to create more interest in Steveston that the local and tourist community can enjoy that helps to increase business opportunities for a wide range of Steveston businesses. The SMA has annually put on a Christmas festival that is extremely well attended, a Halloween event that is a scary success, a Scarecrow Crawl which is entertaining and imaginative, a Girls Night Out shopping promotion that is very popular to name a few. These types of activities help to encourage visitors to continue to enjoy Steveston and to support local businesses. A thriving retail commercial district is a barometer of the overall health of the community at large. Both do not flourish without each other.

The SMA wants to continue to provide the benefits that can be gained by working as a whole to leverage what Steveston has to offer and to build on its potential and encourage investment not only in its busy season but all year long.

The model the SMA operates under is not sustainable. A handful of volunteers do most of the work and eventually they tire out. The model is not equitable either. Many benefit from the activities without contributing and this is realized on the backs of others trying to lead the way wanting to make a positive difference. Retail experts say the face of retail has never changed as drastically as it has in the last 5 years and it will again over the next 5. Steveston needs to keep pace with that wave rather than be washed over by it.

Establishing a Business Improvement Association (BIA)

Many commercial retail areas have looked at the success of the BIA model. There are roughly over 350 in Ontario and over 70 BIA's in the province of BC and more form every year. There is a provincially legislated process to form a BIA that all BIA's follow. It is not uncommon for the exploration of a BIA to take a period of years before it is ready to move toward to the formal

voting process. The discussion of a BIA in Steveston dates as far back as 1996. We believe that a BIA model is the best advantage Steveston can utilize to move forward, to begin to compete with our organised neighbours who have established BIA's such as White Rock, Langley, Tsawwassen, or the City of Vancouver that has 23 or with other competitors like indoor malls that have sizable marketing and promotional budgets at their disposal.

We have explored the BIA model. We began to test the waters. We learned we wanted to follow best industry practice approaches to moving forward the best way possible for Steveston. To do that we have brought someone on board to help that has extensive BIA experience at all levels. Stephanie Clarke has worked as the executive director for the provincial BIA organisation and has worked extensively with the provincial department that holds the legislation for the creation of BIA's. We are confident and committed to following the necessary steps to continue what we originally started and to expand our outreach so that more stakeholders can learn what particular benefit a Steveston BIA can have short and long term, to gather input from stakeholders to shape the BIA's direction so they are fully prepared to participate in the voting process when the outreach process is complete.

We are here today to provide an update to council about our activities and to continue this process in the right direction.

We are here to answer any questions you may have and to offer to share more information about BIA's and what other BIA's are doing locally in BC and beyond. We have included more detail in the information package and hope you have had a chance to review that.

No BIA has ever formed with unanimous support. This is precisely why the legislation was created in the first place. All that benefit contribute. Provincial governments recognize the value a BIA can provide on so many levels. Statistics prove that almost all opposition to a BIA is eliminated after the BIA has operated for its first term. Statistics show that no BIA in BC has been voted out once it has started. This is a very compelling reality and one we hope to prove to the Steveston business community.

When the time comes we ask council to permit us to utilize the legislation and to allow us to move forward following the same method all of the other 70 BIA's in BC were created through and allow the business community to be responsible for the final outcome through the legislated voting process.

Thank you.