



Crystal Beach Business Improvement Area Board of Management Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 12th, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Fort Erie Public Library
Crystal Ridge Branch Meeting Room

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Kirk Fretz, Tom Lewis, Regan Greatrix, Robin Bannerman, Melissa Dubois

Absent: Chris Hawkswell

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion to amend the Agenda to include the following:

- Item 7. I) Supper Market
- Item 7. J) Pavers
- Item 5 – Presentations and Delegations: A presentation by Karen Dobson (Advancing Crystal Beach) on behalf of Jane Seaborne Davies regarding Veterans banners.

Moved by: Melissa Dubois

Seconded by: Tom Lewis

Carried

5. Presentations and Delegations

Karen Dobson on behalf of Jane Seaborne Davies for ACB – seeking support for veterans' banners incorporating a veteran's name, to hang on the Crystal Beach hydro poles. A program could be launched for sponsors / donors at the end of the summer 2025 season. The veterans' banners could be mounted in the Fall. The removal of the turquoise corporate banners would be TBD. Grant monies may be available for this sort of program and are being pursued.

Motion: To support the veterans' banner program as presented.

Moved by: Kirk Fretz
Seconded by: Tom Lewis
Carried

6. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the CB BIA Minutes from regular meeting held January 8th, 2025.

Moved by: Melissa Dubois
Seconded by: Regan Greatrix
Carried

7. Agenda Items

A. Vacant Board Position – Presentations
(5 minutes / candidate – in surname alphabetical order)

- Lori Brant
- Sandra Fishman
- Sarah Lamont
- Keith McTague

First and foremost, thanks to all four candidates who graciously stepped up in the interest of filling the vacant CB BIA Board position.

- Lori Brant has decided to gracefully decline pursuing the role to instead work on the Strategic Planning Committee, headed by Melissa Dubois.
- Sandra Fishman still wishes to be considered for the role however cannot attend the meeting due to car trouble.
- Sarah Lamont expressed interest in the vacant role however once she realized there were 3 other candidates who put their name forward, Sarah redirected her energies toward CB BIA committee work. Sarah Lamont added she and her family are new residents to Crystal Beach from St. Catharines – Sarah and her husband are entertainers and have performed in Crystal Beach more than being home so decided why not move to Crystal Beach?! Sarah works during the school year with Niagara Nutrition at the school level and has previous BIA experience with her former hotel background. Sarah has experience booking bands and has family who are happy to pitch sweat equity into events (Derby Days, for example).
- Keith McTague who formerly held a position on the CB BIA Board approximately 8 years ago. Keith was born and raised in the Beach and he and his wife Ashlynn are celebrating Planks 9th year anniversary and have opened their 2nd retail store location.
- Former Board Member, Irene Bradvica of the Beautification Committee, requested the new appointee to the Board be savvy with Beautification initiatives as well as be conscience regarding cost saving programs as this represents one of the BIA mandates. In addition, the appointee needs be conscience of 2026 being an election year for the BIA Board.
- Tom Lewis added that we need to remember the history and the roots of the BIA and of the Beautification Committee who truly were the founders and creators of the BIA. Tonight, we are faced with a very tough decision. We have two stellar candidates to

- appoint to one position. As Kirk said, we always need helping hands and hope those candidates who are not appointed to the Board will please join a committee
- Keith suggested a retail committee ought to be created to foster the growth of that particular vertical.

The Board did a show of hands in support of the candidates whereby Sandra Fishman received 3 votes and Keith McTague received 2 votes.

This outcome will now be presented to the TOFE for approval. We hope Keith McTague will continue to be involved. Keith made a request to the Board to consider Zoom meetings to better accommodate membership - Melissa Gagnon concurred. The current evening meetings may pose a challenge to those businesses who operate in the evening. We will survey our membership to understand if there is more convenient time to meet for greater attendance. Tom respectively requested *no* Monday evenings based on council meetings. The question was also raised if there can be a Board member added based on the ratio of new businesses in the area? Tom confirmed this is not an option; we don't need more board members rather more active members to be involved.

- B. Motion to support the March of Umbrellas May 10th, 2025 from 10am to 2pm, as organized by Advancing Crystal Beach, and whereby Robin Bannerman and Tom Lewis of the BIA will be present and available for the event.

Moved by Tom Lewis
Seconded by Robin Bannerman
Carried

- C. Motion to support "HER Weekend" April 11th to 13th, 2025, as organized by Lori Brant, with involvement and sponsorship by several Crystal Beach businesses and whereby Robin Bannerman and Tom Lewis of the BIA will be present and available for the weekend long event. <https://www.herweekendniagara.com/>

Moved by Tom Lewis
Seconded by Robin Bannerman
Carried

- D. Volleyball in the Grove – management by JAM Sports Niagara currently in negotiations. Letter of understanding to be circulated with the Minutes from this meeting. Kirk and Tom met with JAM Sports to conduct a site inspection which outcome was very positive and aligned. TOFE will allow the installation of two sand regulation volleyball courts on either side of The Grove stage which will be managed by JAM. JAM will promote their events and we will have a chance to book events for the community in the off times (to be determined). A profit sharing model will be explored. We need to determine who will manage the maintenance of the courts as well as the scheduling. CB BIA to build the courts. Possibility for other league games and clearly a great marketing tool for our business community. Suggestion to post game schedule to avoid conflicts / misunderstandings with scheduled groups. The bleachers from the former Ridgeway H.S. have been donated to CB BIA.

Motion to engage JAM Sports based on their letter of understanding and circulate said letter to the TOFE and Executive.

Moved by Melissa Dubois

Seconded by Kirk Fretz

Carried

- E. Parking in Crystal Beach – Letter received from the TOFE on behalf of Jennifer Pennell-Ajie Secretariat of Traffic Coordinating Committee jpennellajie@forterie.ca on January 24, 2025. The letter requests the feedback from the BIA membership regarding the municipal / public parking lot located on Erie and Derby Road. (Letter will be included with the February Minutes). Feedback is required by the CBBIA by the end of the month. Tom shared the history dating back to 2003 when the discussion regarding paving the parking lot started in an effort to come up with an organized parking lot that is resurfaced and lit. The TOFE has added infrastructure for future paid EV chargers. Tom will investigate which spots are associated with the hotel and the condos, if any. The BIA has historically supported the 2-3 hours of free parking to better support the retail and restaurants with an understanding of paid overnight parking. The CBBIA has historically not supported private parking in what is deemed a public parking lot. Public parking lots are to be respected and not abused. There was also discussion about the need to monitor this lot so that it does not become beach patron parking. Better signage for parking along Erie Road illustrating parking locations would be helpful and compliment the way finding signs installed last year.
- F. Complimentary WiFi in CB Business District – update from Caralee Grummett, TOFE – update from the TOFE attached. Still in process. We ought to gauge the interest of our membership to see who would appreciate the benefit from push down notifications should tourists and visitors be offered complimentary WiFi service.
- G. Strategic Plan update – Lead: Melissa Dubois. Melissa presented the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) after a successful first meeting held Monday February 10th, 2025 for over two hours. Those present included: Orma Bleeks, Keith McTague, Lori Brant, Heather Coupey, Kim Alvarez, Shannon Stevens, Melissa Gagnon. Melissa Dubois distributed handouts and encouraged all members for their feedback in preparation of the next meeting scheduled February 24th. Of note, and in comparison to other municipalities, Crystal Beach has a significantly higher beach entrance fees and parking fees.
- H. Discussion around toilet trailer in the Grove – In so much as the volleyball courts are to be installed, local businesses ought not be unduly taxed. Tom will ask the TOFE about the feasibility of a toilet trailer installation (considering we have the support of the Hill Association) as well as the access to potable water. Kirk mentioned previously that there is sewer hookup on The Grove property. The washroom at the Ridgeway Village Square was used as an example of what would be beneficial in The Grove. Also, the washrooms at Bay Beach and Waterfront Park should stay open longer potentially for both time of day and season, if possible.
- I. SupperMarket – Kirk commented that our present volunteer base is getting burnt out. The KIN Club analyzed their sales data and have suggested we maintain a 5pm to 9pm event for the 2025 season. We wish to continue with the 80/20 split – KIN / CB BIA. At this time, we chose to not carry a motion. We will invite Dan Strugar to our next meeting to present their 2024 SupperMarket findings.

- J. Pavers – KIN & CB BIA have engaged an admin to assist with the back end organization and call out campaign to extend assurance around the program. We are tasking EACH CB BIA Board member to sell 12 pavers per member and to try to drive further sales. Tom suggested that those who have committed to purchasing a paver should be invoiced or, if they were suggested by someone then that person should be following up for payment.

8. Sub-Committee Report

Treasurer's report

All expenses have been submitted. All banking records as well.

Councillor's Report

Official Plan Review Public Open House. The Town of Fort Erie is hosting a Public Open House to provide our community with the opportunity to review and learn more about the draft updated Official Plan. The Town's updated Official Plan considers the feedback received from the community. Where? Fort Erie Town Hall, 1 Municipal Centre Drive. When? February 20, 2025, from 5:00pm – 7:00pm What is this about? An introductory presentation will be delivered providing an update on the Project, followed by a drop-in style event with opportunities to discuss the draft policies in the updated Official Plan with members of the Project Team. As this is an in-person drop-in event, no registration is required to participate.

He shared that he discussed with the TOFE EDTS to discuss potential marketing opportunities please see handout provided from that discussion as suggestions for the CBBIA and its members.

Tom asked if anyone is planning a festival, fundraiser, concert, or special event in Fort Erie for 2025 that now is your chance to showcase it! Submit your event to Fort Erie's online community calendar and get featured on the Town's website. Plus, eligible events will be included in the 2025/2026 Fort Erie Visitor Guide! Deadline: Friday, February 28, 2025. Submit your event or learn more:

<https://bit.ly/3HxNEKN>

Questions? Contact edts@forterie.ca. Don't miss this opportunity to promote your event to residents and visitors alike!

WiFi was addressed by Robin earlier in the meeting.

Tom mentioned that the website needs to be updated as the business directory is outdated and not accurate.

Tom mentioned the hiring of a bookkeeper for the CBBIA and to reach out to the one doing Ridgeways.

9. New Business

N/A

10. Next Meeting Date

Crystal Beach AGM Wednesday, March 12th, 2025 at 6:00 pm @ the Fort Erie Public Library, Crystal Ridge Branch Meeting Room.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:58pm.

Moved by Kirk Fretz

Seconded by Robin Bannerman

Carried