



**2023 SPRING GENERAL MEETING**  
**May 18, 2023**  
**5:30pm-7:00pm**

Rapid Fire Theatre, 10437 83 Avenue NW

**MINUTES**

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**BOARD MEMBERS**

Kristopher Armitage, Chair (Knifewear)  
Al Gothjelpsen, Vice Chair (The Pint on Whyte)  
Anastasia Arabia, Treasurer (Trend Research)  
Emily Sommers, Director (Healing Waters Spa)  
Dominic McKenzie, Director (Float House)

**OSBA STAFF & SUPPORT**

Cherie Klassen, Executive Director  
Alanna Morton, Membership & Marketing Coordinator  
Calyca Greenwald, Marketing Intern  
Karey Gachugu, Summer Ambassador  
Keelyn Naprawa, Summer Ambassador

**GUESTS**

Nikela Anderson, Y Station  
Wilf Brooks, Strathcona Plaza  
Ann Gordon-Tighe, Y Station  
Chris Henderson, Y Station  
James Robinson, City of Edmonton  
Doug Courts, Yates Whitaker

**MEMBERS**

Alix Bean, Roots on Whyte  
Yvan Chartrand, Bonjour Bakery  
Jerrold Corse, A&W  
Joshua Cura, Hoot Company  
Grace Emmanuel, Stylus  
Kim Fjordbotten, Paint Spot  
Stephanie Gilchrist, Eyemazy  
Kaylee Laventure, Delcon Development  
James Leech, Stylus  
Rick Maisonneuve, Eyemazy  
Mike, Mars and Venus  
Joani, Mars and Venus  
Katherine McFatridge, Wintersweet Wellness  
Collective  
Gerry Schulz, Nu2You Consignment  
Joe Short, Trend Research  
James Ortlieb, Sid's Selfie World  
Parker Ortlieb, Sid's Selfie World  
Mark Wilson, Vivid Print

**1. Call to order**

Kris Armitage, Board Chair and General Manager of Knifewear called the meeting to order at 5:40pm and welcomed everyone.

A land acknowledgement was read: *We respectfully acknowledge the traditional land on which Edmonton sits, the Territory of the Treaty 6 First Nations and the homelands of the Métis people. We would like to acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose ancestors'*

*footsteps have marked this territory for centuries such as: Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Blackfoot, as well as the Métis and the Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.*

Kris Armitage expressed thanks to the Rapid Fire Theatre team for hosting the SGM. He explained the format of the meeting with presentation to begin and facilitated conversation in the lobby to follow.

## **2. Introductions**

Kris introduced the OSBA Board of Directors, staff, and the external auditor Doug Courts. Thanks were extended to the team for their work and to the board members for volunteering their time with the association.

## **3. Acceptance of Agenda**

MOTION: To accept the Old Strathcona Business Association 2023 Spring General Meeting Agenda as presented.

Moved by Kris Armitage. Seconded by Anastasia Arabia.  
Carried

## **4. Acceptance of the Minutes of May 18, 2022**

MOTION: To accept the Old Strathcona Business Association 2022 Spring General Meeting Minutes as presented.

Moved by Kris Armitage. Seconded by Emily Sommers.  
Carried

## **5. Presentation of the 2022 Audited Financial Statements (Anastasia Arabia)**

Anastasia Arabia, Treasurer provided an overview of OSBA's 2022 audited financials. OSBA hires an external accountant to oversee the audit of the financial statements which were published in the 2022 Annual Report.

Both cash and capital assets were up from 2021, and there was also some deferred income at the end of the year that was received in December to fund projects in 2023.

OSBA's levy remained the same as the 2021 budget, but we received nearly \$100,000 more in grants than was originally budgeted for. This was largely from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) that was granted to the OSBA after the budget was already set. In addition, there was sponsorship and ticket revenue from the Winter Whyte Light Up event.

Having received the CCRF grant, we started our street furniture project and spent \$114,000 towards the project total of \$250,000. This accounted for most of our increase in expenses that were not

budgeted. More was also spent on in-office expenses while the office moved into a smaller space at the end of December.

OSBA also increased the street cleaning budget and received a \$25,000 grant from the City via Capital City Clean Up which allowed us to add in pressure washing services and increase litter pick up. We ended the year with a \$14,889 deficit, however surplus from 2021 was used to cover this.

The auditor has noted that OSBA's financial statements present a fair picture of the financial position of the association as of December 31, 2022.

## **6. 2023 Projects and Initiatives (Cherie Klassen)**

Cherie provided a brief overview of the current strategic plan and projects for 2023. The board of directors will be working on developing a new strategic plan for the next 3-4 years as the current one will bring us to the end of 2023.

### **Summer 2023**

OSBA has found a lot of success promoting neighbourhood maps which will be updated like the mural map, pet-friendly business map, and patio map. A total of 6 rainbow crosswalks will be painted this year, some in new locations. We also have an Indigenous inspired crosswalk being painted in the West Ritchie area. Spurline alley will also be repainted as Rainbow Road; these projects are happening thanks to help from the City of Edmonton's Placemaking Partnership Fund. We also look forward to a vibrant festival season, updates to come through the member newsletter and online event calendar. The summer team also started this week and will be out and about this summer visiting businesses, attending events and creating content to showcase the neighbourhood.

### **30<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our organization as a Business Improvement Area. OSBA runs programs that include beautification, cleaning, advocacy and marketing. Calyca, OSBA's marketing intern will be leading these initiatives including a legacy mural, free merchandise and lots of storytelling about businesses from the past 30 years.

### **Placemaking**

We are close to installing custom street furniture as part of the CCRF placemaking project. Bike racks, bistro tables, benches and parklets have all been locally designed and manufactured through the project. Installation announcements to come within the next few weeks and this project would not be possible without funding from Prairies Economic Development through the CCRF.

### **Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy (OSPRS)**

In 2022 the city launched the first phase of the Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy which will set the stage for streetscaping and construction which is slated to begin in 2027. This is a once in 30-year opportunity to enhance Whyte Avenue and the CP lands north of Whyte to make the area more of a destination, more walkable, and enhance green spaces. The OSPRS is entering the final phase of public engagement this summer and we encourage everyone to participate to stay informed on the project. Cherie has been involved with the advisory committee throughout. The board and team are excited about the opportunities that will come out of this plan.

### Other projects

Ongoing initiatives include the Bloomin Boulevards program and enhanced street cleaning. We know through previous member surveys that cleaning and beautification is high priority to members. Pressure washing has increased to 3 times a week and litter pickup is 4 times a week during the summer months.

We also introduced a new window repair grant program to address a spike last fall in window vandalism. This was something that was introduced in other BIAs and so we advocated to create our own and successfully received funding from the city to launch a program. We have received about 6-7 applications so far, and the program will run until the end of the year. We know it's been a tough year and glad we can provide some relief of this financial burden.

### BIA council and BIA Alliance

A formal society for the Alberta BIA Alliance is currently being developed so that we have a voice with the provincial government. The alliance represents approximately 34 BIAs across Alberta. We've seen from our provincial counterparts in BC that when we have bigger issues, we really need that voice provincially. An open letter was sent to all provincial candidates with our priorities needing support, and we noted that social disorder is the main concern. This is the start of our provincial advocacy as an alliance.

*Question: You mentioned that so far advocacy strategies have been ineffective, what have those been?*

- Regular conversations with city officials, spoken to various folks about police presence.
- We see a lot of money invested downtown and we have asked about our fair share.
- Conversations, letters, but a lot of times this doesn't go anywhere.
- These issues are so big and difficult to navigate, we have to think about how else can we ramp up our advocacy through new ideas that we haven't explored.
- Some advocacy has paid off, window repair program is a good example and BIAs did a lot during COVID-19 with grants, patios etc. but these bigger systemic issues require a different approach.

*Question: Isn't homelessness a municipal issue? Have you tried to reach out to municipal government?*

- Our understanding is that housing, homelessness, mental health is under provincial jurisdiction.
- Yes, I've had many conversations with the mayor and city manager and they are also trying to find ways to work with the provincial government.

*Question: Have you reached out to Councillor Michael Janz? What is his response to all this?*

- Yes, I regularly meet with him and have a good relationship. He has also stated that the provincial government is responsible for housing and homelessness issues.

*Question: Regarding street cleaning, how much is from city and the association itself? What percentage?*

- This year the cleaning budget is \$71K with \$25K coming from City, so the majority of it is funded by the OSBA.

Question: Is the pressure washing just for graffiti removal?

- No pressure washing is for sidewalks. Businesses and property owners are responsible for graffiti on buildings.
- We used to partner with City for sidewalk flushing, which is a service that is no longer available, so we use the grant to support pressure washing

*Question: Regarding graffiti, it's the landlords who operate buildings that should have responsibility, graffiti is a deep endemic problem, something needs to get done to get landlords to be more accountable. Spaces like Army and Navy haven't been touched, and it devalues the whole corner. Broken window theory – if an area looks in decline, it invites more decline. It may not be the jurisdiction of the business association, but pressure should be put on landlords to clean up because they just don't want to pay for it.*

- There is a bylaw, graffiti was really at a peak in 2019.
- City offers a program for up to \$750 of professional graffiti removal through that program.
- Report graffiti where you can on 311, important to do because that creates enforcement action to follow up on.
- Regarding property owners, it's an ongoing challenge because they are not our members, but we are trying to get them involved and subscribe to our member newsletters so that we can keep in touch.

Question: Is the penalty (for not removing graffiti) more than the cost of cleanup or less?

- Property owners receive a letter from the City giving 14 days' notice that the graffiti needs to be removed.
- Uncertain what the fine amount is, but a member shared that it's \$250.
- Cherie added that we may want to advocate for steeper fines.
- A member also shared that in 10 years they have never paid for any graffiti removal and always use the City's professional cleaning grant, it is a fantastic program.

## **7. Adjournment**

Kris Armitage thanked everyone for questions, these discussions will continue in the lobby. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm.

## **8. Community Wellbeing and Safety**

Chris Henderson from Y Station explained that three tables are set up in the lobby and that the feedback collected tonight will help inform an advocacy plan that OSBA will put together. Those questions are:

- Your experiences as a business in Old Strathcona; what has been frustrating and where have you seen improvement?
- Your ideas to create change; what kind of program have you seen work in Old Strathcona, Edmonton, or other cities?

- Setting priorities for advocacy; which issues should we prioritize with the provincial government and the city?

His colleagues, Ann, Nicola, and Anthony will be that those tables listening to your comments, writing down suggestions and feedback on stickies which will be collected at the end of the night. He is encouraged by the questions so far, and looking for a constructive discussion and feedback on the issues members are experiencing, solutions, and priorities.

DRAFT