

BUY LOCAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 27th at 9am via Zoom

Meeting started at 9:01am

Purpose of Buy Local: Engage more people in Bellaire's downtown businesses, particularly including local and regional people throughout the entire year.

In Zoom attendance: Christy Wilson, Sue Palmisano, Brenda Fink, Shelly Dayton, Sam Hall, Trish Fox, Tony Colombo, Patrick Boyd, Shana Minish, Josh Todd, Durinda Travis

September 29th meeting minutes were approved by Shelly and 2nd by Brenda. All agreed.

Debriefing:

Witches & Warlocks event was a low turnout but a lot of fun for those who did it. It's a great event that we plan to continue next year. Christy mentioned people said they did not hear about the event, but the low turnout could have been due to an election year and people tuning out information. Patrick added people are expecting events to be cancelled and are tuning out all events right now. Shelly mentioned this was the first time we did not do the passports.

The discussion of passports; this is a burden for bars/restaurants but is helpful for retailers. So we need to come up with a better "hybrid" version so it's helpful for everyone. Group should think of ideas to be discussed at next meeting. Maybe some sort of self-service passport station. Shana said she thinks more people in general downtown is great for business and would like to continue to promote a special during these events.

Shana brought up again that it is difficult for bar/restaurant owners to be on a 9am meeting and maybe we should consider a different time such as 1pm. Christy and Shana both agreed that these Zoom meetings make it much easier.

Communication with the group was discussed. Emails, etc. Brenda and Trish mentioned going back to a year long calendar, so everyone is aware of all of the events for the entire year. Shana said that was very helpful last year.

Fresh Air Open Spaces:

Having the Fresh Air Open Spaces with the tables and chairs made such a huge impact on the businesses in downtown Bellaire this year that we feel it is imperative to continue this again next year and years to come. This helped bars & restaurants as well as retailers.

Since reading recent DDA minutes and after reading the article in the Antrim Review about the tables and chairs being donated to Shorts Brewing Co, this is a major concern. The original idea of these tables and chairs came from this Buy Local Group who asked the DDA for help and the DDA acted on it. It was a huge success and since there is no assurance from Shorts this will be done again next year this creates a huge concern. This group feels the tables and chairs should continue to belong to the DDA and continue to be put out in

years to come. Why should Shorts be responsible for maintaining these for the entire downtown?

Some concerns raised about the tables & chairs are:

- 1) Winter Storage: Patrick mentioned he thought the Village already approved storage of these items in the May Village meeting. Trish agreed she remembered hearing that also. Patrick is going to confirm.
- 2) Tear Down: this can be done by volunteers of this group just like the setup.
- 3) Placement next year: If the same spaces are not available next year or in years to come, then there are other places available. For example; if the parking lot becomes a development and is not available, then we'll ask the Village if we can place them on the green space next to the Village building as they offered this year.
- 4) Maintenance: this group can formalize a maintenance program for future seasons.

Upcoming Events:

Downtown Holiday Open House; this is still on this year! Saturday, November 21st. This is an all-day event, so whatever your business hours are. All businesses should be decorated for Christmas and run in-house specials. We will do ads and flyers again this year leading up to the event. Patrick said promote "Safe Christmas Shopping" Downtown Bellaire. Shelly will get details of the ads we placed last year and do the same thing. Christy said there is still money in the DDA Buy Local budget that we can use. Advertising for our events falls into the budget and does not require approval. It has already been approved by the DDA. **If your business wants to be included, send your specials to Shelly ASAP!**

Christy brought up the discussion of if the Holiday Open House being one week prior to Small Business Saturday hurts Small Business Saturday sales or is it better to have 2 small events vs. 1 large event. Three retailers in the group (Patrick, Brenda, Shelly) said both weekends were great for their business last year and said it does not hurt, it's great!

Holiday PJ Party. Currently scheduled for Friday, December 18th. Details tbd.

Review of Buy Local Structure as sub-committee of DDA:

Shelly reminded all of us the purpose of why this group was originally formed.

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Last year the DDA asked us to formalize our group as a sub-committee of the DDA and gave us a budget and we agreed. While this was much appreciated and worked well, we found ourselves spending too much time on the formalities of writing and posting agendas and

minutes and not enough time on our purpose. We now want to spend more time on the events and simply do what we do best to create a buzz in downtown Bellaire. We will continue to work with the DDA and the Village whenever possible on projects. Today this group made our final motion. **Patrick made the motion that this Buy Local Group is no longer a sub-committee of the DDA. Shelly supported. Unanimous vote yes.**

Brenda said she no longer has the time to do all of the chairperson duties. Shelly volunteered to handle all future email communications with the group.

Next Meeting scheduled for November 24th at 9am via Zoom (until further notice)

Meeting adjourned at 10:22am

Respectfully Submitted by:

Christy Wilson
Buy Local Secretary