



**PRESTON STREET BIA  
AGM 2020  
Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 7:00pm to 8:00pm**

**Board Attendance:** Lauryn Santini, Steve Moffatt, Antonella Ceglia, Marcus Filoso, Claudio Lepore, Lori Mellor, Lindsay Childerhose

**Membership:** Angelo Filoso

**Presentation: Summary of Annual Report by Lindsay Childerhose**

**Answers to Q&A Submissions**

Treasurer of the board, Lauryn Santini, answers the first questions regarding the Reserve Fund;

Q. The Reserve Fund is to be attributed to building an arch at the north end so should not be used for shortfalls in the budget.

A. We have carried forward marketing funds from previous years, that would be applied to any overage in 2021.

Q. What happened to the CIAO sign?

A. The BIA got in touch with Claridge to work with them for placement of the sign. Then Covid hit and we cut the budget in half, so there was no funding left for it. It has been tabled until we have sufficient funding.

- Board members advised that the presentation provided the answers to the remaining questions submitted by Mr. Filoso. He disagrees and feels that there are questions left unanswered.
- He states that he feels the budget does not add up. He shares that it does not make sense to cut the levy by fifty percent and not do so also to the BIA expenses. He asks; what has the BIA done to cut their office and administration expense in 2020? What will the BIA

do to cut expenses in 2021?

- Lori provides the following answer; The Board decided to vacate our lease in May. The BIA is actively seeking a new office space that is smaller and less expensive. The BIA is unwilling to break the lease with the current landlord, Luciano Gervasi, as this is a member-business and the BIA would not want to leave them in a bad spot. The current lease expires at the end of August of 2021, however, if new tenants become available, the BIA has agreed to cooperate with the landlord to accommodate the new lessee.
- As for salaries and wages, the BIA applied for and received the CEWS which is providing \$57,000 toward salaries to year end. Additionally, we have received other grants that bring the total salary raised to \$72,050 The CEWS is expected to continue until summer 2021.
- Mr. Filoso mentions that he was unaware of the grants acquired by the BIA until this evening. He asks why they are not included in the Budget for 2021?
- The grants are included in the budget at the top in the revenue line. At the time that the budget was sent to the membership, it was not known that CEWS would continue past the end of the year.
- Antonella explains that the BIA has been successful thus far in securing some grants for 2021. They expect to acquire more but cannot be sure, so it is best not to include them in the budget.
- Mr. Filoso feels that the anticipated grants should be shown in the budget for 2021 as this would show optimism about securing the funds.
- All grants the BIA is aware of to date have been included in the budget. The BIA will continue to research other grants and take advantage of any other opportunities that will arise from the three levels of government for 2021.
- Mr. Filoso reinstates that he would like to see the BIA cut expenses. He reminds the Board that in business, when the budget is cut, expenses must also be lowered.
- Lori responds that we have negotiated costs with two of our most expensive suppliers: Goodbye Graffiti has dropped their fees from \$18,300/ year to 11,300. Christmas Décor which does our tree lights have cut our annual fees in half, reducing our costs by \$15,000 plus taxes.

- Mr. Filoso reiterates that he thinks admin expenses should be reduced.
- Steve Moffatt responds to this by asking; is Mr. Filoso suggesting that the BIA lay off its two employees?
- Mr. Filoso says this is not his direct implication but reaffirms that cuts must be made to lower expenses or it does not make sense to cut the levy. He adds we should increase the levy back to the full amount. Maybe staff hours should be cut?
- Steve responds by asking; where do you cut? He notes that the BIA has in fact lowered their expenses by acquiring grant money to subsidize salary and expenses. He explains that keeping two staff members on payroll at a 25% cost to the BIA is a better alternative than laying staff off. He says if staff are in fact laid off, there is a chance that the BIA would not be able to hire them back. He affirms that it makes sense for the BIA to continue to employ BIA staff, and that they have in fact provided value to the membership despite the inability to run our festivals owing to the circumstances that Covid19 has created.
- Mr. Filoso asks about the removal of advertising expense for his business. There is some confusion with Board members about what is meant by this. Marcus explains that a \$250 advertising expense with L'Ora di Ottawa was removed from the budget, and that Mr. Filoso would like to know why.
- Lori explains that while L'Ora di Ottawa does not hit our target market, the BIA supported them when they were in the BIA. Since the business has moved outside of the BIA boundary, it is no longer a member.
- Mr. Filoso rejects this statement and explains that this is the only Italian Newspaper in Ottawa and should be supported by the Preston Street BIA.
- Steve seeks clarification, on where the business is located. He asks; where is the newspaper produced?
- Mr. Filoso responds that the newspaper is not produced in Ottawa. However, he still owns property within the BIA boundary.

- Steve states that this kind of rationale becomes a shell game. He mentions that if it is in fact imperative that the BIA cut expenses, it is understandable that this expense be removed.
- Mr. Filoso asks about the Archway. He reminds the Board that reserve funds should be allocated to the south-end Archway and should not be used for office expenses.
- Antonella responds that we are not sure we will be able to build the archway at the north end because the new team for Lebreton Flats' redevelopment plan was not aware of our interest in doing this. The team developing the original plan were aware of the Arch. Since that plan has been thrown out, the BIA is now working to raise awareness for the Arch with the new team and committee. Lori is a member of the advisory committee and is working to build support for the arch.
- Mr. Filoso asks why the CIAO sign was not installed at the North end of Preston Street.
- Lori explains that Claridge was approached on this to discuss location. Then Covid19 hit and the BIA cut the levy. There were not sufficient funds available for this project, so it has been tabled until there is funding available.
- Mr. Filoso responds by saying he would also like to see a revised budget.
- At this point, Antonella states that it is clear we do not have quorum to approve the budget. From here, the BIA is asked to revise the budget to include the updated grant information. This is to be sent out to the membership.
- Mr. Filoso asks why the membership does not already have the budget information?
- Lori reminds Mr. Filoso that the Annual Report, including the budget, is sent, by protocol to the members in advance of the Annual General Meeting. This year in particular, it was sent multiple times by e-newsletter. The budget did not include the grant information for 2021 because, at the time of writing the budget for 2021, this information was not available.
- Mr. Filoso states that the members are entitled to a hard copy of the budget before approving it.

- Steve responds by saying that delivering the budget in person is not a good option due to Covid19. He states that quorum cannot be met regardless, as 35 people are needed to reach this. He mentions that this might be different given the circumstances, and suggests that the BIA investigate this.
- Mr. Filoso contends that the number of attendees does not matter, as the budget, as it is, would not be approved anyway, given the ratio of office expenses to funds raised by a levy of 50%.
- Steve responds that it is important, right now, for the BIA to maintain a presence on the street. Cutting the levy to 50% makes sense for the membership. With a wage subsidy of 75% continuing into the new year, it makes sense for the BIA to retain staff. He states that he is pleased with how the BIA has progressed. Going forward, the BIA should continue to aggressively pursue grant opportunities to help fund raise funds for BIA activities.
- Lori points out that the Board is not confident we will be able to move forward with Italian Festival or any of our other events owing to Covid. This would result in savings of up to \$140,000. Portions of this money can be redirected to other types of advertising and promotion, but the Board will have to play this by ear, as we do not know what will be allowed owing to Covid.
- Antonella asks that the Board now discuss what is needed going forward. Lori is to revise the budget showing the grant information and distribute this to the membership. The BIA is also to investigate what is needed to reach quorum given the current circumstances surrounding Covid19.
- Motion to close the AGM for 2020.  
Moved by Steve Moffatt.  
All in favour. Unanimously accepted.