

DOWNTOWN GUELPH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date:	Wednesday, August 26, 2026	Location:	DGBA Boardroom (Hybrid / Online)
Time:	5:00 PM	Status:	Draft for Board Approval

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME & ATTENDANCE

1.1 Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Board Chair Chuck Nash.

1.2 Attendance & Regrets:

- **Present:** Chuck Nash (Chair), Derrick Rutherford (Secretary & CLC Chair), Richard Overland (Treasurer), Bryan Steele (Vice-Chair - Zoom), Cathy Downer (Zoom), Pina Marfisi (Attractions Chair), Carly Klassen, Denise Mansur, Fay Yachetti, Iside Dallan, Kristel Manes.
- **City Staff & Liaisons:** Tracy Suerich (City Liaison), James Goodram (City Liaison - Zoom).
- **Regrets:** Tom Lammer.

1.3 Approval of Agenda:

Motion: To approve the meeting agenda as presented. — **CARRIED.**

1.4 Approval of Minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes of the previous Board of Directors meeting held on Monday, July 20, 2026. — **CARRIED.**

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES

2.1 Chair Updates (Chuck Nash):

- **Bright Nights Lighting Review:** Workmanship on the sample 4 buildings on Carden Street was reviewed; quality issues noted (angles, wire colors, loose loops). Two additional local quotes are being procured while leaving dialogue open with the existing vendor to see if workmanship can be brought up to standard. The installation is estimated as a three-week job.
- **DGBA Board Election Timeline:** Final elected board names must be submitted to City Council by November 13, 2026. Key dates established:
 - *Call for Nominations:* Monday, September 21, 2026
 - *Nomination Submission Deadline:* Monday, October 12, 2026
 - *General Membership Voting / Election Meeting:* Monday, October 19, 2026
- **Macdonell Street Reopening:** Macdonell Street has fully reopened following the 20-day closure, completing utility work that mitigates disruptions through 2028.

2.2 Governance & Officer Appointment — Board Secretary:

Motion: Moved by Chuck Nash, seconded by Carly Klassen, that the Board of Directors appoint **Derrick Rutherford** as **Board Secretary** of the Downtown Guelph Business Association, formally joining the Executive Committee effective immediately. — **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2.3 Treasurer Updates (Richard Overland):

- **GIC Investment Renewal:** The DGBA reserve GIC was successfully renewed for an additional 6-month term after yielding approximately \$4,000 in interest over the prior term (projected to generate \$2,500–\$3,000 this cycle).

3. CITY OF GUELPH STRATEGIC & INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

3.1 Infrastructure, Wayfinding & Programs (Tracy Suerich & James Goodram):

- **Civil Infrastructure & Construction Footprint:** Water main tie-ins on Wyndham continue. Construction staging will expand north through St. George's Square up to Woolwich beginning September 8 through December 18. Crossing at Cork Street is scheduled to open soon.
- **Sidewalk Work & Frosh Week Safety:** Sidewalk construction schedules were reviewed. The board raised serious safety concerns regarding weekend nightclub lineups (Frank & Steins, Royal Electric, Jimmy Jazz) during Frosh Week / Move-in starting early September. City staff will coordinate with contractors tomorrow morning to evaluate daytime pours or prioritize pedestrian walkway links to avoid pinch-point crowding.
- **Safe Semester Policy:** Road-closure towing under Safe Semester will not occur this year; focus shifts to active on-site security and construction site perimeter fencing protection.
- **Perimeter Wayfinding & Safety Mirrors:** New "Downtown is Open" perimeter signage is being installed along Norfolk, Norwich, and surrounding boundaries. Safety mirrors installed on fence corners received positive feedback, with additional units ordered. Board noted requests to maintain clear sightlines at tight corners.
- **Patio Program Extension:** City has confirmed seasonal patio program extension past Doggy Promenade through to **Friday, October 2 / October 5, 2026**.
- **"Three for Free" Parking Program:** Program is active through October 31, 2026 (offering 3 hours free parking in Macdonell Lot daily and Market Parkade on Thursdays & Fridays). Uptake data will be tracked and compiled.
- **Public Piano Activation:** Request received from the Happy Making Piano Program to place public upright pianos downtown for 1 month; item referred to the Attractions Committee.
- **Sidewalk Encroachments:** Concerns raised regarding 10-day right-of-way compliance notices issued to small retailers for outdoor sidewalk racks. City staff affirmed ongoing internal review of bylaws and agreements to support street vitality without penalizing independent businesses.

4. COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE (CLC) REPORT

4.1 Good Neighbour Campaign Presentation (Derrick Rutherford):

- **Campaign Draft Review & Approval Process:** Presented the draft Good Neighbour Campaign materials (window decals, 8-panel foldout educational brochure, and full-size posters) developed in consultation with Guelph Police Service (Michael), Wyndham House, Stepping Stone, County Health & Housing, and CHC. It was clarified that the campaign collateral is currently in draft form and undergoing City Staff review prior to convening all agency stakeholders for final sign-off and production.
- **Brochure Architecture:** Structured around the **G.R.A.C.E.** framework (Growth, Respect, Accessibility, Community, Education) and provides clear situational response scripts, contact triage (911 vs. Welcoming Streets/Bylaw), police reporting guidance (Who, What, When, Where), and highlighting the half-hour free Law Society legal consultation available to downtown businesses.
- **Incident Tracking & Data Alignment Debate:** Discussion ensued regarding the internal online incident logging form on the DGBA portal. Board members raised concerns that busy BIA members may not take the time to fill out additional online reporting forms. Derrick emphasized the critical necessity of establishing independent, DGBA-aligned tracking data and concrete evidence to substantiate downtown business challenges and advocate effectively for City and community support. As an alternative/complementary strategy, Derrick will explore establishing a formal data-sharing partnership with Guelph Police Service, Bylaw, and Welcoming Streets (CHC) to gain direct access to centralized incident KPIs and reporting metrics without placing an administrative burden on merchants.

5. ATTRACTIONS COMMITTEE & PROMOTIONAL UPDATES

5.1 Downtown Vouchers & Event Programming (Pina Marfisi & Richard Overland):

- **Downtown Construction Vouchers:** Highly successful launch with widespread merchant adoption (only 2 businesses declined). Initial batches distributed via Magic 106 and GuelphToday contests had 100% redemption within minutes. Early redemption tracking indicates 33%–40% of customer transactions exceeded the \$25 voucher face value. The City has piggybacked by funding 250 additional \$10 vouchers.
- **Upcoming Event Calendar:**
 - *Vintage Market & Jazz Festival:* Saturday, September 12, 2026 (Carden Street, Quebec Street Mall pop-ups, and Jazz parade).
 - *Doggy Promenade:* Saturday, September 26, 2026 (Carden Street).
 - *Halloween Trick-or-Treating:* Saturday, October 31, 2026.
- **Spirit of the Season 2026:** Event preparations underway on Carden and Macdonell Streets. Board members were challenged to secure at least one community/corporate event sponsor.

6. NEXT MEETING & ADJOURNMENT

6.1 Next Meeting: Confirmed for **Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at 5:00 PM** in the DGBA Boardroom.

6.2 Motion to Adjourn: Meeting officially adjourned at 6:35 PM.