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April 19th, 2015

RE: Weeknight Parking Fees

Dear Barrie City Council,

We are writing to express our concern with the proposed addition of weeknight parking fees for downtown Barrie.

We represent three of Barrie's largest arts organizations, the Barrie Film Festival, Talk is Free Theatre and Theatre by the Bay. Each year, our three organizations collectively program hundreds of films, concerts, comedy events and theatre productions in downtown Barrie at the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts, the MacLaren Art Centre, Heritage Park and the Uptown Theatre.

We strongly believe that the implementation of this fee will negatively impact our events, discouraging patrons from attending events downtown. The policy would particularly affect events timed in the mid-to-late afternoon, whose audiences primarily consist of senior citizens. Any event going past 5 pm would effectively double the cost of parking for attendees.

While we understand the need of the City to increase parking revenues, we advise them to carefully consider the impact that this fee will have on our organizations and, most importantly, our efforts to draw citizens to our downtown.

Regards,

Claudine Benoit, Director, **Barrie Film Festival**

Alex Dault, Artistic Director, **Theatre by the Bay**

Arkady Spivak, Artistic Director, **Talk Is Free Theatre**

Regarding the proposed flat rate parking fee of two dollars after five pm Monday thru Friday.

As a resident, property owner, business owner and landlord at 119 Dunlop St. East I have a unique overall perspective of the potential and challenges associated to our Downtown.

Speaking just as a business owner, Bliss – Ann Green Yoga, the proposed flat rate of \$2.00 after five pm could not be more harmful to our business.

The numbers:

5,000 client visits to our studio per month

74% of these client visits occur from 5:00 pm – 10:00 pm Mon-Fri resulting in 3,700 visits per month

Average number of monthly visits per client – 12

12 visits per month would therefore result in an additional \$24.00 per month to attend Studio

Monthly membership cost \$80 per client

This additional parking fee will now increase their membership cost by 30%

I do not know of any business in a competitive market that can afford a 30% increase and remain in business.

The night classes range from 45 minutes to 75 minutes so a client attending a 9:00 pm 45 minute restorative class who will be in the building for less than one hour will pay an additional \$2.00. Even when attending a standard 75 minute class our clients are no more than 90 minutes. Night time parking fees will result in a higher per hour rate than day time parking rates. We have special rates for those that can't afford to attend, many will bring their children but will be in no position to pay additional parking fees.

During the day our attendance suffers directly from the parking fees but we have managed to attract a small loyal cliental. We have an incredibly positive impact on all the restaurants and coffee shops around us who tell us they know when our classes end as they need to gear up for the flood of customers that are coming directly from us.

Our evening cliental do not have the same impact on the neighbouring business as clients are scheduling their visit before or after their dinner plus we have a large number of commuters who just want to get home after a long day.

I do not know of another downtown business that draws as many people to the downtown core on a consistent basis throughout the year. We purposely chose our location three years ago as we believe strongly in supporting our downtown and community. Every time the Heritage Park lot is closed we can directly see the negative financial impact to our business. When Dunlop St. is closed there is another negative impact. We keep our clients informed but we still see a huge drop for any closure.

Speaking with a number of our clients the City of Barrie's decision to implement the evening parking fee is going to seriously impact our business. There are many challenges with the downtown parking but this evening fee will only put one of the largest downtown business attractions out of reach for most of the current clients and threaten its future.

Chris Small
Studio Bliss

Harbour Management Corp.

16 Dunlop St E Unit 3, Barrie, ON L4M 1A3 705-797-2070 phone 705-792-3899 fax

April 17 2015

City of Barrie
70 Collier St
Barrie, ON

RE: Proposed Evening Parking Rate Changes – Downtown

It has come to my attention that there has been discussion about proposed changes to the downtown parking rates in the City (Section D 15-G-083 Minutes April 13 2015).

As Owner of the Uptown Theater located in the heart of downtown, I must take this opportunity to express my extreme opposition to this rate increase recommendation.

A key attraction to heading to Downtown Barrie in the evenings and on weekends is the free parking. Without this perk, I feel that business would suffer dramatically. Wealthier businesses, with well off clients, such as the many sex parlours and tattoo shops, may well be able to absorb this increase, however, my honourable movie going patrons, may not and may choose to bypass heading to my Theater, which I am already subsidizing greatly.

The Downtown, including the Theater, currently exists in an extremely fragile state. I am growing increasingly concerned with the skyrocketing vacancy rate of the downtown. As a landlord, heavily invested in the fabric of downtown, I have been attempting to rent to only quality tenants and encourage these tenants to stay open later in an effort to improve and stabilize the downtown area.

Should the City choose to proceed, please be advised that I will seriously consider folding the already failing Theater.

This proposal is pure madness and will surely set back the downtown, leaving owners with no other alternative than to accept these less desirable businesses in order to survive, ultimately having the opposing effect on what the downtown area requires in order to replenish and thrive.

Sincerely,

Mark Porter



DOWNTOWN BARRIE PARKING POSITION

DOWNTOWN BARRIE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (BIA)
50 Dunlop St. East, Suite 204, Box #8, Barrie, ON L4M 1A1
Phone: 705-734-1414 Fax: 705-734-1227

Downtown Barrie (BIA) Parking Position and Detail

April 2015

Parking Scenario: Parking is a user-funded program with a large debt load specifically because of the parkade and therefore not 'going away'. Additionally, as a large urban centre 'paid parking' is our 'reality'. **However,**

- We feel that the parkade was the catalyst that supported the development of the 'financial district' of Downtown Barrie on Collier St that includes TD Bank, Scotia Bank and now BMO; and that the parkade was evaluated independently and exclusively only with regards to the 'financial district' development and did not include a financial impact analysis on the overall parking revenues and costs.
- We also understand that if it weren't for the debt costs of the parkade the current parking program as operating, achieves an annual surplus.

What the BIA supported: Many options were presented by the City of Barrie Operations Staff. We supported the 'best case scenario' based on the financial circumstance that was presented to us and that would address these filters (SIMPLE, CONVENIENT, FAIR MARKET, VALUE) as only applicable to the evening timeframe being considered:

1. **Maintain the current rate per hour (\$1/hr off-street, \$1.25/hr on-street) from 9am – 5pm; Monday to Friday**
2. **Implement a \$2 flat rate from 5pm – 3am: Monday to Friday**
3. **Saturday and Sunday would remain 'free parking'**
4. **This would increase parking revenue by approximately \$800,000 and meet the financial obligations**

However, for many years up to and including our present timeframe, the BIA has presented and asked for the following position to be considered:

Our Downtown Parking Goal: To establish a '**complete**' parking program that includes:

- Approaching it as a **value added service** – an aspect that enhances the visitor experience
- A parking **brand** – create a recognized 'parking' symbol and supporting signage
- A complete **Marketing & Communication** Plan (including onsite signage, maps, website, etc)
- Investments in **Technology** (mobile apps, parking meter payment technology, etc)
- Investments in **Operations** (maintenance, beautification, development)
- Financially sustainable

Additionally,



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- We expressed the importance of taking into consideration all the dynamics of the downtown and how it can affect parking including the potential of reducing the overall demand for parking; these include:
 - New development utilizing current parking supply
 - Improved transit system (bus, taxi, water taxi, etc)
 - Improved active transportation (bike lanes, walking paths, etc)
 - More people working and living Downtown
 - New event venue
 - Waterfront Master Plan

The BIA Parking Evaluation Filter:

Is the parking program...

- **SIMPLE** – is it easy to do
- **CONSISTENT** – is there regularity/could you guess and have a good chance of being right?
- **FAIR MARKET** – are rates comparable of other municipalities and address financial objectives of the program
- **VALUE** – is ‘something’ of value is provided

The Current Parking Situation:

- **It is an ‘a la carte’; ‘patched together’ program** – it is NOT simple, NOT consistent, does NOT provide value however, IS fair market in terms of rates that are comparable to other same size municipalities.

The Parking Opportunity:

- Because of two comprehensive studies that have been conducted on our parking program, and consultation from third parties (Roger Brooks - Destination Development, Ontario BIA Association) we have all the ‘pieces of information’ to work with...the previous working committee has done good work
- **However**, it needs to be put together cohesively and effectively in order to work properly

The BIA Parking Proposal: Treat it like any other ‘business’ downtown – ‘service the customer’

- Go ‘all in’ with a 24hrs/7days a week, 12 months a year BUT with **2hrs free parking anytime - anywhere.**
- This approach addresses:
 - SIMPLE (one rate, one timeframe, everyone included)
 - CONSISTENT (you can guess and be right – no variance in time periods or rates)



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- FAIR MARKET (rates would be within comparable municipalities and meet financial goals)
- VALUE (2hrs free provide 'something' to promote as value to the 'customer/visitor' and proper branding and signage make it 'easy')
- Implement the appropriate investments in operations and technology (VALUE)
- Add beautification that addresses both parking lots and on-street: first and last impressions (VALUE)
- Implement a fully supported Marketing and Communication campaign that creates a brand (SIMPLE, CONSISTENT)

Method of Analysis:

- BIA Parking Performance Driver Model
- Takes information gathered from the 2 previous consultant parking study's
- Analyzes: utilization, turnover, hrs, days, weeks, month, parking stalls -- on street/off street/permits, grace periods (free parking), subtotals by region/zone, grand total

Details:

- The current information presented leads us in a direction that is worth exploring further. Specific details will fall out of that process (\$1 to start 2hr free or 2hrs free then \$, flat rate vs hourly rate, etc)...but the end result must be focused on a value added service for the Downtown.
- Program has to be continually looked at from all perspectives (hourly rates, sale of property, development, efficiency, expenses, communication, etc – causes/effect – nothing in isolation)

Conclusion:

- Our businesses don't make it hard to purchase their products/services...we have to do the same with parking.
- Pressing example: Meridian Place – if we make it difficult for visitors to park then the return on the capital investment and operating investment of the new event venue becomes harder to achieve...

On behalf of the Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA) Board of Management.

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