



BLYTH BIA DELEGATION – MAY 7, 2018 COUNCIL PRESENTATION

The Blyth BIA has been successful with several initiatives that will receive a co-investment from the Blyth Destination Development Partnership.

1. **Blyth Artisan Market** – This initiative is designed to attract visitors to the downtown, and to encourage visitors to the theatre and to Cowbell to spend more time in town. The market will run on Thursdays from 3:30 pm to 8:00 pm and feature a curated selection of local vendors selling produce and artisanal products. Different local entertainment will be featured each week and our goal is to become a community gathering spot for tourists and residents alike.

We are currently working with the downtown businesses to ensure that the market enhances the experience for all, and that foot traffic is increased to their stores as well. We will work with them to decide how the BIA can best showcase all of the local business.

Our final location is scheduled to be in the parking lot behind 437 Queen St, but the current construction schedule will require us to find an alternate location from May 31 to the end of July, or whenever the lot becomes available to us.

We are requesting the Township of North Huron's permission and assistance to close Dinsley St from Queen St. to the alley in order to host the market in a location that is close to the downtown, visible to the theatre patrons, accessible and easy for the market audience to also see & visit the downtown core. In looking at possible location, this block (if closed) provides the safest alternative. We are working with the Blyth Festival, North Huron Publishing, the Legion and Hotel Lux to make sure that all of their businesses are accessible during the market times. The closure would last from 2:30 (vendor set up) to approximately 9 pm (tear down) each Thursday. We are also scheduled to operate four Sunday markets to enhance the experience for theatre attendees. The two Sundays in July may arrive before the 437 Queen St parking lot is ready. We will work with township staff to create a safety plan for vendors, volunteers and patrons. The block would at all times be accessible to pedestrian traffic.

As a Committee of Council **we request that the Artisan Market be endorsed by Council and operate under the Township's insurance.**

We are working to develop our policies and applications in adherence with the Township's Licensing By-Law. All vendors will be required to submit proof of insurance (or apply to purchase), and all food vendors must be registered with the Huron County Health Unit and supply proof of registration. Our co-ordinator, Amy Zoethout has experience in operating a market and has worked with both the Goderich Farmers' Market and Bayfield Farmers' Market. She is currently an owner and operator of the Goderich Makers Market and the Makers Mercantile.

OTHER DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS:

2. Hometown Holiday Weekend – A collaborative weekend with many groups and organizations taking on various events to host a traditional Christmas in Blyth weekend. Currently scheduled are a charity run, a jazz concert, a family dinner & dance event, a children's Christmas movie, a makers' market and a CBC reading of *A Christmas Carol*. The committee is also in the research phase of a Santa Clause parade.

3. Building Blyth's On-Line Brand – A project has been designed to rebuild the BIA website to enhance the digital footprint and social currency of the village. With this matching investment from the Blyth Destination Development Partnership, we will be able to redesign the website sitting at blythnow.ca, create a digital map page, and add a social media strategy. We have several groups and committees active in social media and bringing everyone into a cohesive strategy would carry our brand as a visitor-friendly destination further.

4. Destination Storytelling – Historic Plaques and Projects – Blyth has a wealth of interesting characters, stories and locations and this project is designed to bring all that information into engaging displays that are part of the street façade, delightful surprises inside various stores and buildings and part of the on-line content. We will hire a researcher and editor to professionally write the stories, using archival material from the Repository and other sources. We will contract a designer to create plaques which will be affixed to participating buildings to tell a unique story about the history of each. Each store or business will be offered the opportunity to tell a story about a past occupant through a portrait and signage.

5. Private Projects – There are a number of private projects that have received Destination Partnership funding as well. Currently the BIA is partnering with Pick a Posie owner and new Blyth resident, Jennifer Triemstra-Johnston to create a topiary statue that will act as "selfie" station in front of the theatre. Using a metal frame and different seasonal materials, she will create an engaging photo opportunity for visitors to share on social media with curated hashtags.

The influx of this partnership funding has created a new and exciting energy within the BIA and various committees and private businesses. As we did not receive funding for all of our initiatives, we have revised our budget (filed with Director of Finance, Donna White) to include the most up-to-date information.

We are excited about the opportunities in 2018 and beyond and thank the council for their continued support and guidance.

Karen Stewart, Chair

Deb Sholdice, Treasurer

Amy Zoethout, Blyth Artisan Market Co-ordinator