Meeting Notes
BIABC Member Meeting – COVID-19 Impacts

General Impacts

- Wide spread retail and proximity business closures province-wide
- If not closed, loss of revenues
- Office businesses doing better
- Restaurants trying to stay open through delivery and curb-side pick-up
- Programs and events being cut or eliminated
- Social media increasing as a means to connect
- Cleanliness and security efforts on the increase, the latter often in association with local police forces
- Great concern about business ability to pay rents; BIAs being asked to intervene between businesses and landlords (not appropriate position)
- Biggest concern for members – paying rent for businesses; not having tenants for property owners – many are working together to make arrangements
- Mixed messages being received – stay at home, but shop local
- Impacts will be years, not months

Municipality Efforts

- Many have implemented free parking – both helpful and problematic (meter hoods make it look like businesses are closed, increased parking not related to businesses impacting ability to do curb-side pick-up)
- 2 – 3 month tax deferrals for businesses (could impact timing of some BIA levies) Also, not all municipalities have the same ability to provide this. Hierarchy - municipalities can do what provinces allow, provinces can do what the feds allow.
- Questions to BIAs regarding use of budgets, actual needs
- Business helplines – often in conjunction with BIAs, Chambers, etc. Helping business sort through the vast amount of, and shifting, information
- Economic recovery task forces, working groups, etc. – city employees and businesses
- Economic impact on municipalities, without any back-stop from provinces or the feds (City of Vancouver advocating for this)
- What can they trim to support recovery efforts – less parks maintenance; recreation centres operations, etc.

Marketing Initiatives

- Buy Local, in many forms
- Promoting retailers selling on-line or by phone through social media, advertising, apps, partnerships with municipalities, Chambers, etc.
- Gift Card programs
- Businesses joining together on packaged items for curb-side pick-up (Kensington Box)
- Out of the box – feeding medical workers (in a COVID-19 safe manner), new opportunities for businesses (ie. industrial compostable packaging for food programs)
- LOCO BC researching a gift card buy local program

Future of BIAs and their Districts

- What will the new normal be? More people working from home, impact on leases in commercial properties?
- Proving value of BIAs to property owners (renewals, etc.) and municipalities (levy protection, recovery)

Events

- Mostly cancelled through the summer
- Looking at programs other than events
- Will there be a backlash if events resume – will members think priorities should be elsewhere?
- Could be specific to each district, and the focus of the event

Advocacy

- IDA Canada working on Federal issues – bank issues, interest rates, mortgages, etc.
- Provincial efforts – commercial property tax deferral
- No commercial landlord relief that they can pass on to tenants
- What role can UBCM (or AUMA) play?

Topics for Future Videoconferences

- Marketing Initiatives
- Recovery Efforts
- Future of BIAs – their roles and responsibilities
- Perhaps an opportunity to have speakers on specific topics

ACTIONS: Send information from meeting to Lori for distribution to others (info@bia.bc.ca)
Advocacy information to Patricia (patricia@eastvillagevancouver.ca)
Social media ideas to Teri (teri@robsonstreet.ca)