BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

Beautification Sub-Committee Meeting
DRAFT Minutes
Monday June 29, 2026
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Virtual

Chaired by Naiomi Gardner

Present: N. Gardner, B. Glazier, K. Nadherny
Staff: B. Dean, J. Jones, and A. Policicchio
Observer: L. Bouchard-Bain

1) Call to Order

Chair called the meeting to order at 8.03 a.m.

2) Approval of Agenda

Motion to "approve the agenda as presented"
Motion: B. Glazier
Second: N. Gardner

CARRIED

3) Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None declared
K. Nadherny joined the meeting 8.08 a.m.

BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The Beautification committee met to discuss short-term implementation ideas for Downtown Burlington, focusing on the "Gather and Glow" proposal presented by staff. The proposal included illuminated LED features to complement existing Adirondack chairs and create a unified visual impact throughout the downtown core. However, committee members expressed concerns about the timeline constraints, city approval requirements, and budget limitations that would prevent quick implementation of innovative projects.

After extensive discussion about the challenges of working with municipal bureaucracy, the committee ultimately decided to focus on continuing the successful Adirondack chair program and exploring small LED enhancements, while postponing more ambitious projects like flags and banners until next year.

Staff were asked to return with a realistic budget analysis and timeline for Q3 and Q4 programming, particularly focusing on winter lighting improvements.

Next steps

Alison

- Continue to work with the city's transportation partner to revitalize the Singing Tree.
- Investigate the possibility of integrating Gather + Glow elements (e.g., illuminated cubes) into Movies by the Lake events, subject to city permitting.
- Share the beautification budget tracker with the committee.

Brian

- Look into Trello access issues for Naiomi and Barry after the meeting.
- Email the draft minutes of the last meeting to Naiomi.
- Arrange a follow-up meeting with the committee for the week of July 5th.
- Have an offline conversation with Barry to identify and address the major clog with the city's Paddit team.

Collaboration

- Alison and Jaclyn: Send out the Gather + Glow proposal and images to the committee after the meeting.
- Brian, Alison, and Jaclyn: Re-evaluate and come back with a clear plan for immediate (summer) and future (winter) beautification actions, including budget analysis, by the week of July 5th.

Summary

Trello Access Issues Discussion

Brian and Naiomi discussed access issues with Trello, with Naiomi experiencing difficulties logging in despite trying the security code. Barry confirmed he also struggled with Trello access. The meeting began with technical setup, including adding agenda items and recording the session.

Meeting Minutes Review Discussion

The meeting began with Brian confirming that minutes from the previous meeting were emailed out and noting technical issues with Trello. The chair, Naiomi, called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM, and the agenda was approved. No conflicts of interest were declared, and an observer, Lisa Bouchard-Bain, was recognized. The group discussed the need to approve or amend the draft minutes from the June 22nd meeting, though these could not be clearly viewed during the session due to technical difficulties.

Downtown Beautification Committee Planning

The Committee reviewed and approved terms of reference for a beautification committee focused on summer 2026 projects in the downtown area, with Naiomi as chair and Kim as secretary. The committee discussed various implemented projects including Adirondack chairs and pole decor, identified challenges with the City's public art process, and outlined next steps including liaison work with Mallord Farm and Terra Greenhouses, as well as plans for a summer music series and beautification incentive program. The conversation ended with approval of the minutes and a motion to move forward with the agenda's main items.

Downtown Burlington LED Lighting Proposal

Alison and Jaclyn presented the Gather + Glow proposal, a plan to permanently illuminate downtown Burlington using LED light infrastructure that builds on existing elements like Adirondack chairs and the Singing Tree. The proposal aims to create a "downtown that shines" through various LED installations in both public and private spaces, with initial focus on quick wins like working with Scrivener's and revitalizing the Singing Tree. The team outlined a three-phase rollout timeline, with Phase 1 expected to launch in July 2026, Phase 2 in September 2026, and Phase 3 in November 2026, including potential integration with existing events like Movies by the Lake and the Festival of Lights.

Downtown Furniture Implementation Plans

The team discussed plans for implementing additional Adirondack chairs and furniture in downtown Burlington, focusing on creating "living room-style" setups with illuminated elements to enhance the evening atmosphere. Alison reported that 38 chairs are available (18 currently placed and 20 newly arrived), with 6 located at BPAC and plans to reserve some for new members. The team outlined their approach of working with private property owners for flexibility and quick implementation, with chairs typically placed in pairs and secured together. Brian requested approval to move forward with demonstration projects in the Brant Street corridor, emphasizing the need for cost-effective and sustainable solutions that could be replicated across downtown.

Downtown Seating Arrangement Planning

The committee discussed the feasibility of using animated swings and seating arrangements for downtown events. Alison explained that while animated swings would be desirable, the high rental and purchase costs, along with space constraints and city permit requirements, make them impractical. The group explored options for placing seating at Spencer Smith Park, with Alison noting that while small LED cubes could potentially be integrated into existing movie nights at the park, any permanent installations would require city permits and could be removed by city maintenance teams. The current plan involves placing 16 Adirondack chairs across multiple downtown locations including BPAC, Different Drummer, Simply Gifted, Downtown Bistro, and Village Square, with two additional chairs reserved for future businesses.

Downtown Beautification Committee Discussion

The committee discussed downtown beautification efforts, with Barry expressing concerns about spending more money on chair placements and questioning the impact of current initiatives. Alison suggested defining what constitutes "impactful" changes, noting that her role with the beautification portfolio has only been for 14 months and questioning whether small acts could have significant effects. The discussion revealed tension about balancing community and business expectations with budget constraints, as Barry mentioned pushback from the business community and challenges with city cooperation on downtown improvements.

Downtown Burlington Visual Identity Discussion

The group discussed concerns about the visual impact of downtown Burlington, with Kim emphasizing the need for uniformity across private properties to create a clear identity. Jaclyn proposed placing Adirondack chairs in front of every business member's location, but Barry argued that the chairs are better suited for specific, strategic positions rather than being distributed widely throughout downtown. The discussion highlighted the significant challenges of creating an impactful visual identity within budget constraints and the practical limitations of implementing uniform design elements across multiple private properties.

Downtown Beautification Strategy Discussion

The group discussed downtown beautification efforts, with Barry expressing concerns about adding more chairs and suggesting alternative approaches like LED lighting and flags. Alison proposed returning to using only flowers, noting that previous flower installations had no complaints and provided the desired uniform visual impact. Naiomi requested that the discussion about flowers be postponed until the next meeting, emphasizing the need for immediate action on available resources including 20 additional chairs and lit-up structures.

Downtown Beautification Implementation Challenges

The committee discussed challenges with implementing downtown beautification projects due to municipal approval requirements. They agreed to continue with the Adirondack chair program while exploring simpler options like flags and banners that could be implemented more quickly without extensive city approval processes. The group acknowledged that while innovative projects like public art and digital wayfinding were part of their 10-year beautification plan, these would require more time and bureaucratic hurdles to implement. Naiomi suggested not abandoning the 10-year plan entirely but rather focusing on successful past approaches while potentially adding new elements that would have less city pushback.

Beautification Plan Budget Challenges

While there was support for innovative projects like metal flowers and music zoo installations, budget restrictions meant the committee would need to focus on immediate, high-impact solutions like banners, flags, and LED lighting. The group agreed to prioritize winter lighting infrastructure using approximately $55,000 from their beautification budget, while deferring more ambitious legacy projects to future years. Staff was tasked with developing a clearer budget understanding and timeline for Q3-Q4 programming before the next meeting, which will be scheduled for the week of July 5th.