



**MOUNT FOREST BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES August 11, 2026 @ 8:00 AM
Auditorium Mount Forest Arena**

CALLING TO ORDER – Andrew Coburn, Chair, Mount Forest BIA @8:05 am

PRESENT ATTENDEES

Members: Andrew Coburn, Jessica McFarlane, Bill Nelson, Rachel Whetham

Staff: Tanya Matthews, Robyn Mulder

Guest: Councillor Penny Renken

ABSENT ATTENDEES Kyle Dallaire, Councillor Sherry Burke, Dwight Benson

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS **Andrew**

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA **Andrew**

Agenda amended by Rachel, requesting to address Halloween Haunt. Rachel motioned and Bill seconded; carried.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Flower Beds/Pots **Dwight**

The item was tabled as Dwight was not present and no one else had an update to provide.

2. Reimagined Laneway - signage **Robyn**

Robyn provided an update on signage for the Reimagine Laneway. Three signs are currently being manufactured, including signage at the rear of the laneway directing pedestrian traffic toward Main Street and double-sided signage in the parking area to help direct visitors toward the laneway. The group discussed placement and visibility, particularly for visitors entering the parking area from Fergus Street. An updated social media post will be prepared featuring the laneway, new signage and an update on the flowers.

3. Corner of Main **Robyn**

Updated renderings and preliminary pricing were presented for the proposed corner improvement at B&A. The group reviewed several concepts and discussed seating configuration, pedestrian safety, separation from the roadway, accessibility/comfort,

landscaping and snow-removal requirements. There was general preference for a concept providing more seating, with seating oriented away from the roadway and sufficient setback from the curb for winter maintenance. Concerns were also raised regarding planter drainage and appropriate tree species based on issues experienced with previous downtown plantings. Further input from Roads and landscaping/plant specialists was recommended, along with a request for revised renderings from Plural reflecting the committee's feedback.

4. Downtown Safety

Andrew

No recent break-ins were reported. Robyn provided an update on a new Community Improvement Plan incentive for downtown building security. A \$1,000 top-up grant is now available for eligible security improvements, including lighting, alarm systems, access-control systems, surveillance cameras, sensors, transparent security shutters and related installation costs. The group agreed this would be useful information to promote to downtown businesses and include in the Q3 newsletter.

5. Downtown Businesses Ongoing Items

a. Update New/Closed Businesses

All

i. Knotty Pine reorganizing/Homemaker's Pantry

Knotty Pine has relocated from its downtown location to the owner's farm outside of town. Homemaker's Pantry is expected to open at the former I'm Soooo Bad location at the corner of Main and Wellington Streets within the next few weeks.

b. Newsletter/Marketing - Gift Card Intro

Tanya

An update was provided on outreach to the Chamber of Commerce regarding the gift card initiative. No response had yet been received, and the item was tabled pending further follow-up.

6. Halloween Haunt

The committee discussed scheduling for the Halloween Haunt, as Halloween falls on a Saturday this year. Rather than holding the event on Halloween afternoon, there was discussion about moving it to Thursday or Friday evening to avoid conflicts with trick-or-treating, hockey, work schedules and other family activities, while still allowing children to participate in both events. It was agreed that email polls and online polls will be conducted to gauge the interest of both business owners and residents on what day they prefer.

NEW BUSINESS

Garbage & Recycling – Blue Bin Program

The committee discussed concerns regarding implementation of the new blue bin program within the downtown core, particularly its suitability for mixed-use Main Street properties with multiple residential and commercial tenants. Concerns included limited space to store and place multiple large bins, the required spacing between bins for collection, sidewalk accessibility and pedestrian safety, downtown aesthetics, and additional challenges anticipated during winter snow removal. The committee also noted

concerns that difficulties storing and accessing the bins could result in recyclable materials being placed in regular garbage, contrary to the intent of the program.

Information received from Waste Management indicated that other communities are experiencing similar downtown challenges and are considering solutions such as designated collection/staging areas and measures addressing responsibility for bin placement. The committee discussed whether an alternative approach could be considered specifically for the downtown/BIA district rather than changing the program more broadly.

It was suggested that the BIA prepare a formal letter outlining these concerns and requesting consideration of an alternative solution for Main Street properties. The proposed letter would be circulated to committee members for comment before being directed to the Municipality and, primarily, to the County and County Council representatives. Additional information regarding the program and any provincial requirements would also be investigated to support the BIA's concerns.

1. Next Meeting

8am in the Lower Leisure Room @ Mount Forest Arena, September 15th, 2026

ADJOURNMENT - meeting adjourned by Andrew @9:33am