



**MOUNT FOREST BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES September 15, 2026 @ 8:00 AM
Auditorium Mount Forest Arena**

CALLING TO ORDER – Andrew Coburn, Chair, Mount Forest BIA @8:06 am

PRESENT ATTENDEES

Members: Andrew Coburn, Jessica McFarlane, Bill Nelson, Rachel Whetham, Dwight Benson, Kyle Dallaire, Councillor Sherry Burke

Staff: Tanya Matthews, Robyn Mulder

Guest: Councillor Penny Renken

ABSENT ATTENDEES None

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Andrew

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Andrew

Bill motioned to adopt the agenda; Kyle seconded; carried.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Reimagined Laneway - Cedars

Andrew

Andrew presented an update regarding screening options at the back of the Reimagined Laneway. Instead of placing a large boulder as originally planned, Malcolm will supply two cedar trees to screen the dumpster and rear parking lot. Installation is anticipated over the coming month.

2. Flowerbeds/Pots

Dwight

The downtown flowers continue to look good and have received positive community feedback. The committee recognized the work of municipal staff in maintaining and watering the planters, including additional watering of the laneway plantings during the first few weeks. A thank-you letter to the Works Department was suggested. Tanya reported that a recent social media post featuring the flowers received more than 200 interactions and strong positive feedback.

3. Pole Brackets

Dwight

The downtown sign brackets have been rebuilt and reinforced after several of the older brackets became damaged or fatigued. The next step is to have approximately 15-16 brackets powder coated in a dark brown/black colour at an estimated cost of approximately \$28 each. Robyn advised that remaining downtown revitalization funds could be used by the Township to cover the powder coating. The committee also discussed having downtown benches and bike racks inspected for deterioration or other maintenance needs.

Bill motioned that the Township cover the cost of powder coating the brackets through available downtown revitalization funds; Jessica seconded; carried.

4. Four-Year Plan for Street Banners

Robyn

The Township requested a four-year banner plan for the incoming Council. The committee reviewed the current Mount Forest banner rotation and agreed that, because the BIA recently purchased new banners and has completed several significant projects, no changes are anticipated until replacement is required in approximately three to four years.

Bill motioned that the BIA advise the Township that the four-year street banner plan will remain status quo. The motion was seconded by Kyle; carried.

5. Reimagined Laneway - Signage

Robyn

No update was available on the laneway signage. It was also noted that the string lights had not been operating recently; Scott was contacted to check the switch. Blue recycling bins stored in a nearby laneway were noted and were carried forward as part of the recycling discussion.

6. Corner of Main - Renderings Update

Robyn

Revised concepts were presented following feedback from Roads and Infrastructure. Municipal staff raised concerns about snow storage and winter maintenance and suggested that benches and trees may need to be removable during the winter. The committee questioned whether seasonal removal would undermine the intent of the space and expressed a preference, where possible, for seating and landscaping that could remain available year-round. Sightlines, sidewalk clearance and the positioning of benches were also discussed. Robyn will arrange a site visit with Kurt Ferguson and Tammy Stevenson, with committee members invited, preferably following a future BIA meeting.

7. Recycle Bin Survey

Robyn

The committee revisited concerns regarding the new recycling-bin program and how it affects the downtown core. Andrew reported that the BIA's letter had been sent to Circular Materials with municipal representatives copied. Councillor Burke advised that the issue has also been raised at Council and that staff are reviewing approaches used by other municipalities. A recycling survey has been developed by Robyn and has requested the survey be distributed to the membership. The committee agreed that additional member feedback would provide useful data and demonstrate outreach to affected businesses. Tanya will recreate the survey in Mailchimp to make it easy to complete electronically, include an opportunity for comments, and forward the results to Robyn.

8. Financials

Andrew

Financial statements circulated with the agenda were reviewed. The committee discussed year-to-date expenses associated with major projects, including the laneway, downtown lighting and the crosswalk contribution, as well as the way the Township lighting reimbursement is shown as income. A \$5,000 reimbursement related to the laneway remains receivable, pending the required paid receipts. The Treasurer will also be asked to add a budget column to future financial reporting for easier comparison of actual spending against budget.

9. Downtown Safety

Andrew

Discussion arose around safety concerns with bicycles, e-bikes, and larger mobility devices on downtown sidewalks, especially when speed or size creates conflicts with pedestrians. It was noted that enforcement falls outside the BIA's mandate, and that mobility devices need careful consideration since they're often someone's main way of getting around. The committee suggested asking the Township to share a reminder with the public about safe use and sidewalk rules.

10. Downtown Businesses Ongoing Items

All

a. Update New/Closed Businesses

i. Homemaker's Pantry, Fieldstone Counselling & Wellness

No additional openings or closures were reported.

b. Marketing Update

i. Downtown Mount Forest Gift Cards, Newsletter prep, Haunting on Main Update

Tanya gave an update on ongoing discussions with Stacey at the Chamber regarding the downtown gift card idea. The Chamber looked into it before but found the costs too high; current pricing and potential funding options are being explored. Our next BIA newsletter is set for late September and will spotlight new businesses, including Fieldstone Counselling & Wellness and Homemaker's Pantry. Other potential features include the Community Improvement Plan security incentive, a job fair, and promotion for Haunting on Main.

The committee reviewed feedback from the recent business-owner and public polls regarding the 2026 Haunting on Main. Responses were mixed between Thursday and Friday, with additional public comments suggesting Halloween Saturday. After discussion of business participation, family schedules and the benefits of holding the event on a weekday, the committee agreed to hold Haunting on Main on Thursday, October 29 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. The committee discussed featuring the Reimagined Laneway during the event. Rachel is reaching out to a local Halloween decorator for a display, and Tanya will follow up on the pumpkin donation and participation. Event graphics will be shared with Robyn for the Wellington Advertiser and passed along to the committee.

1. Next Meeting

8am in the Lower Leisure Room @ Mount Forest Arena, October 13th, 2026

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned by Andrew at 9:13 AM.