

TO: CITY MANAGER

1998 December 09

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: **RENEWAL OF THE HASTINGS STREET (HEIGHTS MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION) BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA (BIA) BYLAW**

PURPOSE: To seek Council authority for staff to work towards preparation of a renewal Bylaw for the Hastings Street BIA and for a new Bylaw to form a BIA along Hastings Street in the area east of the existing BIA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council authorize staff to work with the Heights Merchants Association towards renewal of the Hastings Street BIA Bylaw and creation of a Bylaw to create a BIA in the three block area east of the existing BIA on Hastings Street.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Heights Merchants Association c/o Claudia Laroye, Executive Director, #102 - 4100 Hastings Street, Burnaby, B.C., V5C 2J1.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 1998 September 14 Council adopted a report forwarded from the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Committee regarding a grant funding the creation of a Hastings Street Business Development Office through the Heights Merchants Association. As outlined in the report, one of the mandates of the Business Development Office is to coordinate and campaign for the renewal of the existing Hastings Street BIA's bylaw and the creation of a new BIA bylaw for the three-block area to the east of the existing BIA's boundary (Willingdon Avenue to Gamma Avenue). The Heights Merchants Association has received the initial \$15,000 in funding from the City for the Business Development Office and have hired a staff person to implement the BIA renewal and expansion program.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Business Improvement Areas are intended to be self-help agencies formed by local businesses for local businesses to upgrade and promote their business and shopping district. Under the *Municipal Act* commercial properties within a BIA are charged a levy by the municipality on their tax bill which is passed on to the BIA to be used for physical improvements or promotions for the BIA area.

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On 1994 February 07 Council gave Final Adoption to Bylaw No. 10003 which created the first BIA in the City of Burnaby for the Hastings Street commercial area between Boundary Road and Willingdon Avenue. Since this time the Heights Merchants Association, which administers the Hastings Street BIA, has been highly successful in working to improve the physical appearance of the BIA and to promote the Heights as a interesting and unique shopping district.

The Hastings Street BIA has coordinated and pursued many Street Beautification initiatives which have occurred along Hastings Street over the last four and a half years. The BIA was involved in the Hastings Street Beautification project which brought installation of bus shelters, bicycle racks, benches, garbage cans and the distinctive yellow pedestrian and street lighting in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways' Hastings Street People Moving Project which implemented installation of HOV lanes on Hastings Street and the removal of street parking during rush hours. Other physical improvements to the area which the BIA has been involved in include the seasonal Street Banner program, decorative street signage, the Heights Spring Clean-Up Program, the Graffiti Reduction Program and the Heights Summer Flower Planting Program.

The Hastings Street BIA has also been instrumental in coordination of special events which have become very successful in recent years. These include the hugely popular Hats Off Day, Light Up the Heights and Annual Christmas Tree Lighting holiday programs, Halloween on the Heights and the Burnaby Artwalk on the Heights. These events have contributed to the success of the Heights as a shopping district and a community by bringing the community together and allowing the merchants and residents of the area to celebrate the Heights together.

Development of communication between merchants in the BIA and acting as a resource for local merchants has also been a role of the Heights Merchants Association. This has been accomplished through publication of the quarterly newsletter "What's Up", publication of the annual Heights Business Directory, facilitation of development of the "Hastings Street Tenant Kit" and seminars on topics such as crime prevention, window display techniques and cooperative advertising initiatives.

3.0 BIA CREATION PROCESS

In order to create a BIA, the *Municipal Act* provides a process that is similar to Local Improvements. A BIA can be established by a petition, which is cumbersome and rarely used, or by the Council Initiative process, which was the method used when the Hastings Street BIA was first created. The Council Initiative process establishes a BIA under a bylaw. The bylaw defines the boundaries of the BIA and the levy rate which will be charged to commercial properties in the BIA. After the Third Reading of the bylaw, the property owners in the area to be included in the bylaw are sent a notice of intention which describes the benefits of the BIA and the additional levy that will be imposed. The property owners then have one month to petition the Council not to proceed with the BIA.

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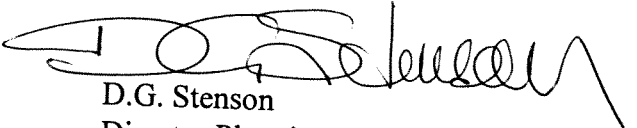
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Unless a petition against the BIA is made to Council by a majority of the property owners representing at least 50% of the total assessed property value, the BIA bylaw would proceed to final adoption.

Due to the success of the initial BIA from Boundary to Willingdon and the continuation of the distinctive Hastings Street street furniture east of Willingdon for three blocks to Gamma Avenue, the Heights Merchants Association are requesting to create a new BIA in this three block area. As well, this three block area from Willingdon to Gamma is a natural continuation of the linear commercial activity on Hastings Street west of Willingdon. For administration and legal purposes this new BIA would be a separate entity from the original BIA, but would be operated and administered by the Heights Merchants Association and, therefore, would effectively be part of the original BIA.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Unless otherwise directed, staff will continue to work with the Heights Merchants Association and the Hastings Street Business Development Office toward renewal of the existing BIA's bylaw and creation of a new BIA bylaw for the three block area on Hastings Street east of Willingdon Avenue (Willingdon to Gamma). A further report introducing the two bylaws is anticipated in 1999 January.


D.G. Stenson
Director Planning and Building

PSF:hr

cc: City Solicitor
Director Finance
Director Engineering
City Clerk

a:\Hastings\BIA Renewal request

