

Name: Annie MacInnis

Organization: Kensington Business Revitalization Zone

Title: Calgary BIAs Toolkit

Category: Downtown Leadership and Management

Timeframe: 2016-2018 (bulk of work completed during 2018 with project launched September 2018)

Two Sentence Summary: As Chair of C-Biz the umbrella organization of Calgary BRZs/BIA's and the primary mentor of new EDs I wanted to create a Calgary BIAs process manual to give a broad overview of the job for new EDs and to educate business districts hoping to form a BIA before I retire.

## **WORK PLAN**

### **Opportunity/Need**

Although there have been Business Revitalization zones (BRZs) in Calgary since 1984 we have never had a City BRZBIA handbook. I've been the ED in Kensington for 15 years and for the past 10 I have mentored most new EDs. For the past 5 I have been the Chair of our umbrella organization. As I come ever closer to retirement and saw those who mentored me leave their jobs I was concerned about the brain trust that would be lost as so many new young EDs are hired. I wanted to leave a legacy of all that I know about being an ED of a Calgary BRZ/BIA for those that come after me.

But this was daunting given I am a small BRZ with no staff. As Chair of our umbrella organization I pushed hard for help from our BRZ/BIA liaison, some City funding and support from the other EDs.

### **Goal/Objectives**

To create a toolkit of best practices, City of Calgary procedures, processes like 'how to form a BIA and 'how to expand your borders', and templates for conflict of interest and code of conduct type documents, sample agendas, AGM planning procedures. As one of two goals for my tenure as Chair of our organization, I wanted to put all you need to know to do your job as ED of a BIA into a toolkit for when we are no longer in the job to mentor newbies.

### **Audience**

Four main audiences:

1. Newly hired EDs and their board members
2. Business districts hoping to form a BIA (process for forming a BIA, sample first budget, job descriptions, etc. included)
3. City Councillors and administration
4. Future BIAs and City Councillors and administration

### **Implementation**

As Chair of our organization I pushed hard for all the BRZs/BIAs in Calgary to participate in creating and presenting to Council a 'business plan' asking for one full time staff member and funding to develop a City policy for BRZs and the creation of a handbook/toolkit. It was challenging to herd all the BRZs/BIAs toward this goal. We had tried to accomplish this twice previously and failed. This time we succeeded in getting our plan and request for funding approved. Total budget was about \$20,000 for the toolkit project. While I got initial grudging agreement from the other BRZs/BIAs to include this project in our work plan the other EDs ultimately refused to help with the project and objected to the waste of time and money each time an update was provided. In the end the administration staff person and I wrote most of the toolkit and most of the documents and processes were provided/written by me. The final few months two other fairly newly hired EDs started helping with the project. I am so grateful to Jacqui Esler, Bowness BIA and Rebecca O'Brien, Inglewood BIA for their generous help and support in those final months when the City staff people, Lorelei Higgins and Iris Li and I were so burned out trying to get the project completed by the deadline for using the funding..

## **Results**

We created the toolkit and it is even better than I imagined! We had an official launch of the toolkit and invited all the BRZ EDs, City staff and Councillors.

In an unexpected feel good turn around most EDs attended the launch. Reaction was completely positive with dissenting EDs all agreeing this was a worthwhile project and apologizing for not helping.

We printed several hundred hard copies of the toolkit but also made the toolkit available as a PDF so that it can be updated over time.

Now newly hired Calgary EDs have a process manual, a primer for their first days on the job and a reference manual for when they have a question.

Business districts hoping to form a BIA in Calgary have a resource for learning about what BIAs are and what they do and the process for forming a BIA, hiring an ED, setting a budget, electing a board...

Newly elected City Councillors will be given copies of the toolkit so they better understand BRZs/BIAs and the work we do.