



Harriston Rising Committee Minutes

Monday, December 9, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Launchlt Minto

Attendance: Kathie Butcher, Peggy Raftis, Raissa Rogers, Councillor Ed Podniewicz, John Kay, Jan Campbell, Krystal Williamson

Staff: Erin Raftis, Marketing and Community Development Coordinator

Regrets: Lisa Leslie, John Mock, Rachel Hopf, Caitlin Loughran, Mabel Amapali

1. **Call to Order at 7:01 p.m.**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
 - a. Minutes of the September 16th, 2024 Harriston Rising Meeting
3. **Roundtable Discussion**
 - a. 2024 Budget Update

Raftis reviewed the 2024 budget to date, providing new members with an overview of the Town of Minto's yearly contributions. Butcher presented details of the sponsorship packages, which included a winter planter, summer planter, Halloween bag sponsorship, two tickets to the street dance, a water bottle, and a social media shout-out. These items were covered by the sponsorship revenue, leaving an additional profit of \$50.

The committee discussed curating a *Signature Event Sponsorship Package* to combine with the existing packages and promote to larger businesses outside the downtown core.

- b. 2025 Budget Planning

The committee reviewed the budget versus actual costs for 2024 events and discussed allocations for 2025. Adjustments may be made depending on the events planned for 2025, with final decisions scheduled for the January meeting.

c. Beautification Update

The committee discussed the need to update downtown benches. Prior to the meeting, John Mock estimated the cost to refinish each bench at approximately \$700. Raissa Rogers suggested exploring a bench sponsorship program to offset costs, potentially incorporating it into the sponsorship package.

Kathie Butcher reported on the Winter Planter Social, noting that nine planters were purchased through sponsorship packages, with an additional five purchased for the event. Joan Ivel received a \$100 honorarium for her time, and attendees enjoyed wine and cheese at the event.

Raftis recommended reaching out to CELP for an April 2025 downtown street cleaning, following a successful collaboration in 2024. The committee agreed to proceed.

Raftis also agreed to investigate whether the final Harriston entrance sign has had its lights replaced.

d. Events Update

Butcher reported a record attendance of 325 participants at this year's Halloween Haunt, with 49 waitlisted attendees accommodated and five turned away a week before the event. Approximately 25–50 unregistered children also participated but did not receive bags or passports. Businesses were left to decide whether to provide candy to unregistered participants.

Fifty sponsor bags remained after the event, and Butcher suggested distributing five bags each to the sponsoring businesses since the bags cannot be reused in 2025. The committee discussed challenges businesses face, such as the cost of candy, and how that impacts the capacity of the event and considered introducing a sponsorship opportunity to help cover these expenses. They also debated whether to revise the registration process for 2025.

Butcher recommended purchasing more décor for the downtown (not Tannery Park).

The committee reviewed Candy Canes and Cocktails.

- 2 vendors provided feedback (one noting issues with the firepits near their product).
- Reviewed business feedback
 - Most businesses were pleased with the advertising campaign.
 - Sales were reported as down or the same compared to the previous year.
 - Requests were made for more lighting near the drink area.
 - Over half of participants enjoyed the passport, though clarity on submission instructions was requested.
 - Minimal interest was expressed in participating if a fee were attached to the passport.

Initial thoughts for 2025

- Increase visibility of the drink area.
- Consider reintroducing entertainment, such as the fire performer from previous years.
- Arrange vendors along sidewalks in front of vacant storefronts to connect both ends of the event.
- Promote a "bring a friend and get a prize" incentive.
- Provide clearer signage for businesses offering hot drinks and treats.
- Collaborate with a local business to supply vendors with pre-ordered meals (e.g., chili, bun, dessert, and hot drinks).
- Purchase additional décor and consider industrial lighting options, such as Broadline Rentals

The committee was interested in holding an early planning meeting to engage business owners.

Butcher summarized the event, noting that attendees preferred a shorter format (2 p.m.–4 p.m.) with a break before the movie at Crown Harriston to allow for a dinner break. Highlights included:

- A choir of 60 students from the public school.
- Ornament crafts, candy apples, and popcorn provided by the Norgan.

The event was well received overall. Butcher will follow up with the Fire Department regarding the location of letters to Santa. Krystal Williamson expressed interest in volunteering to help write replies from Santa Claus.

The committee also discussed the Egg Scramble and Chili Cook-Off, considering whether to continue these events in 2025. Raissa Rogers offered to rally business involvement for an Easter event, and Butcher suggested offering a simpler snack, such as pre-packaged treats, while cross-promoting with the Optimists Hunt. The arena is booked for April 19, 2025 for the Egg Scramble.

A Christmas teardown day will be organized for late December or early January. Raftis will send out a poll for availability and propose a January meeting date.

e. Capital Project Planning Activity

The committee voting on their top priorities for capital projects, based on the list created in the Share Your Ideas community meeting the previous week. Raftis will curate the list and send out results in a follow up email.

4. Adjournment at 8:52 p.m.