

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 21, 2008

## **Wellington West, Ottawa's freshest, most eclectic BIA, hits the ground running**

**Highlights: First Annual General Meeting of Wellington West BIA  
February 19, 2008, 7:30 p.m., Tom Brown Arena**

WELLINGTON WEST: Despite the snowy evening, an enthusiastic crowd of almost 50 businesses and supporters filled the seats to inaugurate Ottawa's newest Business Improvement Area. They unanimously approved the constitution and year one budget, and elected their first Board of Management, composed of eleven business leaders, plus the ward Councillor.

Mike Steinberg, who was elected Chair of the new BIA, says: "Wellington west is poised to become a very important sector of the city. Our unique blend of arts, food services, historical neighbourhoods and specialty shops will provide a wonderful experience for those who visit and will enhance the lives of those who already live nearby."

With this milestone, Wellington West crosses one of the final official steps to becoming one of Ottawa's largest and most diverse BIAs:

- **A large area:** the new BIA will include the entire 2 km stretch of Wellington Street West from Island Park to the O-Train tracks, plus the bustling mixed-use commercial area between Holland and Parkdale.
- **Large membership:** with a large area and a high proportion of small, owner-operated businesses the BIA will have close to 400 businesses and 500 members when property owners are included.
- **Diversity:** this is the first time in Ottawa that an economically challenged, but emerging community like Hintonburg will join forces with an area like Wellington Village that is seen as more trendy and "upscale" to work together as part of the same BIA.
- **Heart:** this eclectic, buzzing new BIA will be centered on the Parkdale Market area with its farmers market, park, galleries, restaurants, and the new Irving Greenberg Theatre, home of the Great Canadian Theatre Company.

The group has already been increasingly active since it first received Council approval to begin formation in October, and with only 2% of area business and property owners objecting to the BIA as of the end of 2007, the group has been operating with the approval of both the city and the area membership. But with the formation of the Board, the BIA now has the formal leadership to shift into high gear as they move into the summer, and the beginning of a multi-year road reconstruction and beautification effort.

The meeting also gave businesses a chance to celebrate one of their first big victories as a voice for area business. Less than two weeks earlier, they had successfully fought the decision to install parking meters only in the Hintonburg portion of the BIA – which would have happened immediately before road construction began. After lobbying by the BIA, area Councillor Christine Leadman, and strong support from City Manager Kent Kirkpatrick, who admitted to a mistake on the part of senior city staff, Council passed a motion to exclude Hintonburg from the metered parking decision until road reconstruction is completed 3 years from now, and a strategic plan is in place.

The constitution was also approved, and it contained several elements that will help the organization live up to its goal of being a different kind of BIA.

#### Distinctive elements of the Wellington West constitution:

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- **Associate membership:** Wellington West is home to many home-based and non-traditional businesses, as well as many arts and civic institutions like the Great Canadian Theatre Company and Parkdale Market among others. These don't qualify for formal BIA membership but have much to offer, so the constitution creates a new "associate member" category to allow them to participate as non-voting members.
- **Non-members on the Board:** as a way to include the talents of community leaders who don't own businesses, in the future up to 3 spots on the Board can be filled by non-members.
- **Green thinking:** as one of Ottawa's most pedestrian-oriented, green-minded neighbourhoods, a unanimous motion was approved to enshrine environmental thinking in the constitution and mission statement, and a commitment to work toward developing green programs in the BIA.

#### New Board of Management

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##### Chair of the Board

- **Mike Steinberg** Herb & Spice Shop

##### Vice-Chair

- **Chris Green** Harvest Loaf bakery

##### Secretary

- **Brian Muzyka** Royal Bank

##### Treasurer

- **Jamie Jamieson** Bank of Montreal

##### Board members

- **Nelson Hickey** Character Salon
- **Bruce Hillary** Hillary's Dry Cleaners
- **Peter Kniewasser** Baytek Systems
- **Randy Kemp** property owner
- **Mike Morris** Morris Home Hardware
- **Rachel Russo** Levonian, Shirt-Maker
- **Christopher Smith** Collected Works Book Store
- **Sheila White** Thyme & Again

##### City Councilor

- **Christine Leadman** Kitchissippi Councilor

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