



**To Executive Committee
City Council
City of Edmonton**

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT
Alberta Avenue Business Association (BIA)**

Board Executive

2020 Executive: Chair: Jesus Gonzalez Jr. (Paraiso Tropical), Treasurer: Suzanne LaGrange (ATB Financial) Secretary: Amanda Nielsen (Norwood Dental Associates).

2020 Board of Directors:

Jesus Gonzalez Jr. (Paraiso Tropical), Jim Nguyen (Downtown Auto & Tire), Christy Morin (The Carrot Community Coffee House), Laura Truong (T & D Vietnamese Noodle House), Trevor Stride (Plaza Bowl), Suzanne LaGrange (ATB Financial), Amanda Nielsen (Norwood Dental Associates), Senait Tamere (Simba's Den Pub & Bistro).

Office Staff:

- One Full Time: Executive Director: Joachim Holtz, C.Mgr until July 8; Interim Executive Director (contractor) Joshua Semchuk for remainder of 2020.
- No Other Staff

Our Focus

Communicate a continued awareness of Alberta Avenue Business Association and Alberta Avenue District
Promote our business improvement area (BIA) as a business and shopping zone.

Our Vision

For Alberta Avenue to be recognized as a place where safety, family, and a commitment to nurturing businesses and the arts are essential ingredients in elevating the community.

Our Mission

Engage with business members and community groups to enhance the profile of Alberta Avenue District as a shopping destination.

Board Governance

The Chair and the Board worked through 2020 to navigate the pandemic and a change in leadership within the Executive Director position.

BIA Economic Indicators

On the date of this annual report, our 2020 Alberta Avenue BIA Economic Indicators Report was being finalized by the City and we expect to receive it very soon.

Last year's report was very meaningful, clearly identifying our strengths and weaknesses. As well, the support we have been receiving from the City's 'Local Economy' team has been outstanding.

In addition, the information we receive from the 2019 Economic Indicators Report will be of maximum benefit for our board's next strategic planning session.

Programs / Projects

1. Businesses Together and The Group of 22

Joint AABA / EPS / Community Initiatives

This initiative exists to establish a self-sustaining business watch community and enhance communication between EPS, the Alberta Avenue community, and businesses. It strives to bridge communication gaps between EPS and area stakeholders, connect businesses through technology with crime prevention as an objective, reduce crime and disorder, and increase perception of public safety.

Topics of consideration include:

- Lighting
- Visibility
- Alarms and video surveillance
- Beautification
- General Maintenance
- Lock up your property
- Be aware and alert of your surroundings
- Loss Prevention
- Back Alley safety

- Aggressive panhandling around businesses
- Secure your vehicle at work
- Training & resources

2. Eats on 118

2020 was the sixth year we held 'Eats on 118' promoting our hospitality businesses.

In September 2016, the Alberta Avenue Business Association, in partnership with the City of Edmonton successfully launched the first food focused campaign for the hospitality businesses on 118th Avenue. There was an overwhelming response from the community with four sold out tours. 14 local businesses participated in the guided food tours with 34 patrons per tour and 135 tickets sold.

In 2020 we completed a 30 day marketing and food campaign featuring 20 restaurants encouraging people to #ShopLocal with curbside and pickup opportunities. Patios were a feature for those who wanted them,

thanks to the easy-to-apply CoE patio system.

3. Marketing / Advertising / Events

In 2020 Bottom Line Productions worked with Alberta Avenue Business Association in creating and implementing a marketing plan focusing on the Mosaic of Curiosity that is Alberta Avenue businesses.

Advertising: The 2020 advertising campaign included a mix of traditional media (TV, Print, Radio) and digital media. Advertising was purchased with a variety of outlets with the desired target market; people who are locally conscientious, adventurous, 'foodies', community minded, people that live within the Alberta Avenue community, as well as the greater Edmonton area.

Online Website: The Alberta Avenue Business Association website was monitored and updated at least once per month. Original content featuring business spotlights, initiatives and events relevant to AABA were created for the blog on average twice per month.

The business directory was updated as necessary in coordination with the Executive Director. Alberta Avenue events and business information including notices from the City of Edmonton and business resources were posted as required in the appropriate sections on the website (News, Resources etc.).

Social Media: In 2020, AABA's social media networks saw steady growth. The platforms were well maintained with engaging, original content. Interactions (commenting, liking, sharing) with businesses and organization's content aided in raising AABA's presence online.

Newsletter: A business and public newsletter was used to highlight government support and events.

Publicity and Promotions: Throughout the year, Bottom Line Productions acted as a liaison between media and Alberta Avenue Business Association spokespersons, provided key messaging for specific projects (Dine the Ave, Businesses Together) and media training when necessary.

Operation Clean Sweep: BLP developed and implemented a volunteer engagement event drawing many in a COVID-19 friendly-manner to clean garbage off the full Avenue.

4. Beautification

For 2020 we hanged 38 flower baskets and placed 6 sidewalk flower barrels. In 2020

we hired [Boyle Street Property Maintenance](#) to help clean Alberta Avenue streets and alleys

5. Infrastructure

The Alberta Avenue BIA and the City of Edmonton are working together in maintaining infrastructure that is important to BIA members. The following is work that is scheduled for Spring 2020

TREE LIGHTING

-Alberta Ave, from 77 St to 87 St: A review is underway on how best to light these trees, given that there is not currently underground infrastructure on this stretch of the street. Further updates will be provided once a plan is in place, understanding that this is of interest to business members on this part of Alberta Avenue.

-Alberta Avenue, from 87 Street to 97 Street: An annual inspection of the existing tree lighting and repairs is scheduled.

-Alberta Avenue, from 103 Street to 106 Street, North Side: The electrical cabinet on the NE corner of 105 St at 118 Ave was energized in February 2020. Repairs to the electrical receptacles and attachments on the trees is scheduled, which will illuminate these trees for the first time.

STREET LIGHTING

-A walk-about inspection is scheduled to identify damaged street lights. This includes identifying broken and missing shrouds on the lower part of the street light poles. Replacement of damaged parts will follow.

POSTER POLES

-Thank you to the City and James for getting the poles rebuilt.

6. Digital AABA Initiative and Online Business Directory

We worked with, and continue to work with UAlberta to help businesses build microsites on the AABA website director pages. This support helps businesses who do not have the funds or time to create and manage a website. Bottom Line Productions continues to work and maintain these pages.

Revitalization 2.0

In December of 2020 the City continued to fund the BIA with revitalization money for two more years.

Operations / Management:

Executive Director:

Joachim Holtz, the sole full time employee looked after the daily operations of the Alberta Avenue Business Association (BIA) since January of 2008 and was answerable to the Board. He resigned on July 8 2020.

The following assorted tasks were carried out by the interim executive director during 2020. These are over and above additional tasks that may have been assigned to him by the board, on top of various other incoming inquiries from businesses and the public into the AABA office throughout the year.

In addition, all incoming / outgoing emails, phone calls, text messages and reply to same are handled solely by the IED during the year.

❖ Completed all tasks, reports and documentation as required by the City of Edmonton, under the 2020 Timetable for the Administration of BIA's

❖ Presented our 2019 Annual Report to City Council Executive Committee

❖ Assisted in co-ordinating the 2020 Eats on 118 project with Wild Heart Collective

❖ Worked with our Auditor on the 2020 Audit, from start to finish. We received a fully satisfactory audit and no discrepancies

❖ Arranged all monthly Board meetings and AGM in a timely manner

❖ Continued to work within budget

❖ Monitored Revenues and Expenses on an ongoing basis and submitted quarterly Budget vs. Actual reports to City's Local Economy Department

- ❖ Maintained a satisfactory working relationship with Jeff Chase and his Local Economy Team, who continue to be actively supportive in working with our BIA
- ❖ Sent out 'Quick News' newsletters to the membership, as well as other special notifications when necessary
- ❖ Dealt with Graffiti, Litter and back alley garbage problems
- ❖ For the 12th year, represented our association on the Edmonton Council of BIA's
- ❖ Represented our association on the Alberta Avenue District Council throughout the year
- ❖ Personally assisted businesses with questions, concerns and suggestions throughout the year. Also helped a number of businesses, since starting with our association in 2008, with helpful suggestions for them on small business management and banking
- ❖ Co-ordinated Hanging Flower Baskets project with Zocolo's and Alberta Avenue Community League❖ Attended numerous meetings, on behalf of our business association
- ❖ Met with EPS Beats
- ❖ Worked with Bottom Line Productions on our 2020 Marketing Plan, Website, Social Media Platforms and Marketing and Advertising.
- ❖ Prepared monthly board agendas in concert with the Board Chair
- ❖ Connected with Arts on the Ave as to providing financial donations to their Kaleido Fest and Deep Freeze Fest. We fully support the local arts scene and the many positive things that are done by AOTA.
- ❖ Reviewed all of our monthly bookkeeping postings throughout the year in concert with our bookkeeper. Back up provided to our Auditor at year end
- ❖ Kept our List of Businesses and online Directory up to date in concert with Bottom Line Productions.
- ❖ In concert with Bottom Line Productions prepared "Quick News" Information and 'Flash Bulletins' for our business members throughout the year
- ❖ Connected with a designated Commercial Realtor throughout the year to stay informed on the latest in the commercial real estate market
- ❖ Attended and / or requested to speak at numerous Revite 2.0 meetings
- ❖ Attended several meetings of the Community Exhibition Lands Committee
- ❖ Prepared 2021 Annual Budget
- ❖ Did several media interviews on behalf of AABA
- ❖ Prepared Annual Report

- ❖ Developed revitalization funding communications approach
- ❖ Reviewed Insurance Policy
- ❖ In addition to dealing with any other matters as they arose.

Engagement

The success of any business association depends to a large degree of engagement by its business members. As in any BIA, this is a work in progress.

We continue to encourage our business members to get more involved in the happenings of their association, such as:

Contacting our Executive Director with any questions, suggestion or concerns they may have.

Connect with the AABA Board Chair. Let him or her know what their biggest issue of concern is in the running of their business at the moment on Alberta Avenue and what they think the solution to it should be.

Attend the Annual General Meeting in September or October. It is their opportunity to ask questions from the floor.

Make connections! Do they know who their businesses are next to them is? Or located across from their business? Why not drop in to see those businesses owners. Networking is a powerful thing.

Share a story about their businesses with us! Let us know how we can get their business on our business association's social media platforms, blog and participate in monthly promotions.

Our 2020 Board of Directors

- 1. Jim Nguyen** (Downtown Auto & Tire)
- 2. Amanda Nielsen** (Norwood Dental Associates)
- 3. Christy Morin** (Carrot Community Arts Coffee House)
- 4. Jesus Gonzalez Jr.** (Paraiso Tropical Food Market)
- 5. Senait Tamere** (Simba's Den Pub & Bistro)
- 6. Jonathan Rivero** (Qi Creative Inc.) (Resigned in January)
- 7. Suzanne La Grange** (ATB Financial)
- 8. Neilson Nguyen** (Canadian Dollar Store)
- 9. Trevor Stride** (Plaza Bowling Co.)
- 10. Laura Truong** (T & D Vietnamese Noodle House)
- 11. Mona Mohammud** (CLI College Bus/Health/Tech)

Jointly submitted,

Joshua Semchuk (*Interim ED: July 2020 - April 2021*)
Jay Ball (*Permanent P/T ED: April 2021*)
Alberta Avenue Business Association (BIA)