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THE EDMONTON'S
FRENCH QUARTER

Annual Report

2019/2020





Message from Martin Van Keimpema, President, French Quarter BIA Board of directors.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our Board members Joris Desmares- Decaux, Adam Ziel, Gerald Noppers, Marlene Crilley, and Felix Yuen. These dedicated volunteers have been very busy the past 2 years and I wish to thank them for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that our BIA is fully engaged in making our business district stand out.

2019 was a year with a fair amount of instability as our Executive Director, Jean Johnson left our BIA as of January 31, 2019. We hired Marc Neal as the new Executive Director and he submitted his resignation in December of 2019. As a result, we had been in a bit of a quandary as to how to move forward. After an open competition to recruit and hire a new Executive Director, we are pleased to confirm that we

were successful in hiring our former Executive Director, Jean Johnson. Jean started his position in early February 2020.

As you can imagine, with a rapid change in personnel this was a year in evolution. With a new Executive Director, Marc Neal, at the beginning of 2019 we encouraged him to explore new approaches and to bring about his vision in order to see what new ideas and innovations could be brought to the fore. Marc did work at adding value to the Bonnie Doon Center with an art show called Creative Collection.

I wish to thank Marc for his time with us and I especially would like to thank Jean Johnson for reengaging with our BIA.

Martin Van Keimpema,
President





**Every
projects has
challenges, and
every projects has
it's reward's**



During 2019, Marc spent a good part of his energy looking for strategic allies to promote our business district. It is important to note that the original motivation for creating the 'French' Quarter Business Improvement Area (BIA) is that in the Bonnie Doon Community 34% of the residents are French first language. Therefore, given the specific nature of our branding as the French Quarter BIA, Marc worked closely with La Cité Francophone as it houses many Francophone not-for-profit groups focused on promoting their community locally and provincially. Two organisations were selected for sponsorship initiatives, Radio Cité, a local French community radio station 97.9, and the Flying Canoe. Marc wanted to connect the francophone community in a very obvious way with our members. This is work that will require special effort to bring about measurable results for our BIA and as such a review of how this connection can best be achieved is being looked at by our current ED and our Board of Directors.



The Flying Canoe is a short-term event but one of significant importance in our BIA. We have worked at developing various strategies to assist this event but need to work on how it can add value for the BIA. We must find a way to extend the event outside of La Cité's immediate geographical location. We will continue our discussions with the organisers to explore how we can extend beyond its current limited outreach to other parts of our BIA.

Marc reached out to many of the businesses in the area, some of whom have taken advantage of the help from the French Quarter. Some of the assistance provided involved social media support such as Facebook and Twitter to promote shopping locally with specific businesses being targeted. There is definitely more work to be done to get greater engagement from our members.



Other initiatives included Bonnie Doon and King Edward Park Community Leagues and focused on engagement with the City and TransEd regarding disruptions of traffic in our area and the maintenance of driving surfaces.

Marc did interviews with Radio Canada about the developments foreseen at Bonnie Doon Centre and was part of a press conference announcing the launch of a new musical event called FrancoFusion a Music Festival in September of 2019. FrancoFusion was one of the projects we sponsored with direct investments as well as providing office space for the summer months to facilitate the organising of what turned out to be a resounding success.

The Bridge Without Borders project had new flags installed. This summer the bridge has new nylon flags and we are hoping for greater longevity from these as they are normally expected to last the better part of a year. Replacing the flags will happen on a yearly basis.

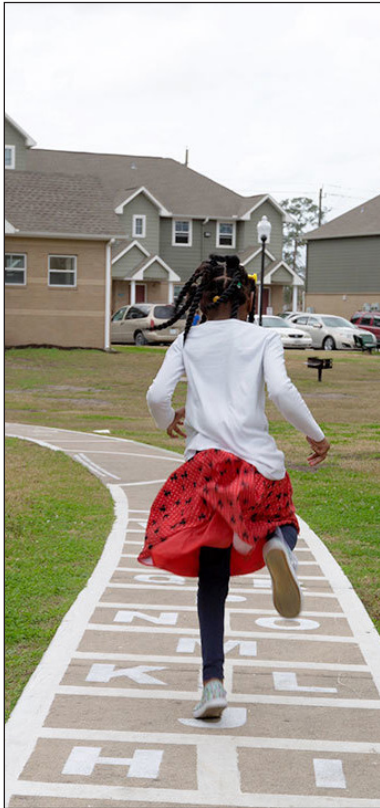


The Façade Improvement Program is being revamped and we are hoping that it will be available again very soon but that has not stopped businesses from beautifying their properties. The commercial property on the south side of Whyte, from Brewville Coffee at one end to Fat Albert's at the other end, was bought by a new developer. The developer undertook a full upgrade of the building including a major change to the façade and this was done without the benefit of the city's Façade Improvement Program which is under review. The refreshing of this property has had a major positive impact to our BIA.

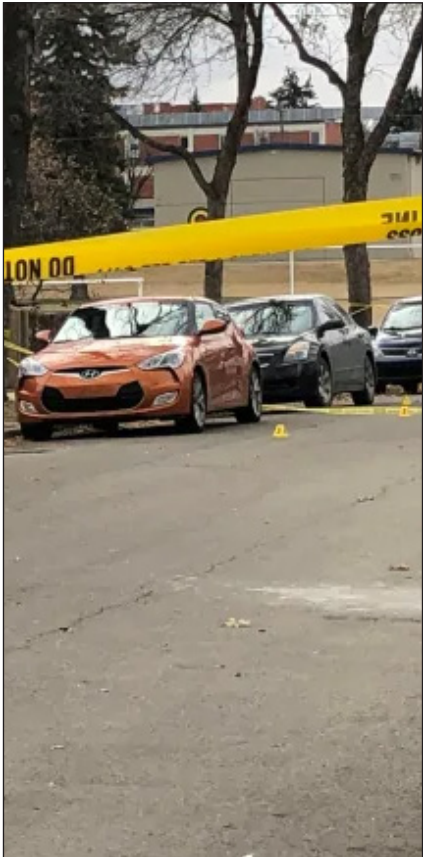
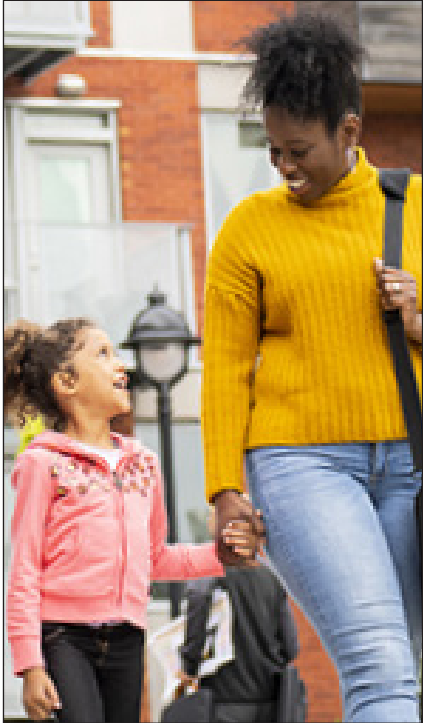
In March 2020, Covid-19 struck and our members have been negatively impacted by this pandemic. Our Board is determined to work hard for our members as this pandemic shall not determine the long-term success of our BIA. Our ED is working hard at putting together different strategies to attract people to our BIA and to assist our members with an online presence, so that in the event of further disruption we can help our members maintain a minimum offering in order to stay afloat until more stable times return.

The corner of 91 Street and Whyte Avenue is a concern. We lost Snap Fitness and the appearance was not very pleasant. Mark collaborated with La Cite on a project that enhanced the esthetics of this major intersection. The idea to put planters and vertical banners highlighting some of the not-for-profit organizations has been realized and is a welcome addition to that corner. The owner of the lot has agreed to let us use this space free of charge.

Ongoing Work



There is still great deal of cooperation between the us and other BIA's with initiatives such as the BIA council and their regular meetings which allows us to discuss a wide variety of topics or challenges that affect us all such as: graffiti, community safety, low income housing proposed for construction in a variety of BIA's. This is actually an important aspect of our work as it provides an opportunity for inter-BIA cooperation that benefits all of us.



Looking Ahead



As a BIA, we are very concerned with the negative impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had and so we are working on innovations to assist our members. We have seen some businesses do well in spite of the pandemic because they had an online presence which they enhanced for online ordering and curbside pickup. We want to assist all of our members to have the benefit of a larger online presence. To do this, the French Quarter BIA will be developing a large online

market for our members, and in order to ensure sustainability we will add other local merchants outside of our BIA. These merchants will subscribe at a monthly rate which includes an associate membership fee and on-going support fees. Our members and other 'associate members' will be contacted over the course of this Fall to present the project and commence taking inventory and to assist them to come online in this large virtual marketplace.



