

north shore news

New process for LoLo BIA

Public meeting now required

[Jules Knox](#) / North Shore News

January 31, 2014 12:00 AM



Next time businesses in Lower Lonsdale want to form a Business Improvement Area, the City of North Vancouver will have to assist by holding a public meeting to ensure every business owner is informed. Photograph by: file, North Shore News

Next time businesses in Lower Lonsdale want to form a Business Improvement Area, the City of North Vancouver will have to assist by holding a public meeting to ensure every business owner is informed. Photograph by: file, North Shore News

Property owners and business operators will now have the opportunity to voice their opinions if the Lower Lonsdale Business Improvement Area is revived.

At its Jan. 20 meeting, council decreed future consideration of a LoLo BIA bylaw will include a public meeting.

Plans for the BIA were [put on hold earlier this month in anticipation \(http://www.nsnews.com/lower-lonsdale-bia-plans-put-on-hold-1.792696\)](http://www.nsnews.com/lower-lonsdale-bia-plans-put-on-hold-1.792696) of the city's report on the central waterfront, which is expected in late February.

Council watcher Kerry Morris collected 142 signatures of Lower Lonsdale business representatives opposed to the BIA, including IGA.

He estimated that approximately \$1,000 and 300 hours were spent collecting signatures and said more businesses would

have signed if the Lower Lonsdale Business Association hadn't withdrawn its petition.

Coun. Pam Bookham voiced concerns about the LLBA's failure to receive support from the businesses it is supposed to represent. "I think we need to reset the clock on the BIA," she said. "I want to challenge the LLBA to do the kind of work that Mr. Morris was able to do with a very limited budget, a lot of energy and very little time," she said.

The LLBA should be able to provide signatures from struggling businesses if it wants to move forward with the BIA, she said.

"We approved a grant of \$120,000 to the LLBA to do just that, and one year later they came before us asking that we set in motion this bylaw process without being able to demonstrate that level of support," she said.

The BIA was previously headed for approval unless a majority of area business owners opposed the association. The process leaves the decision up to landlords, not the businesses that will shoulder the tax through triple-net leases, Morris said.

Coun. Rod Clark called the negative petition process distasteful. "We need to pull the plug on this, and quick," he said. "I find it amazing that we spent \$120,000 and roughly 400 phone calls couldn't be made," he said.

Coun. Craig Keating said the BIA was an opportunity to put resources into the hands of the business owners and operators to improve their neighbourhood.

BIAs are able to put time and money into parking, signage and landscaping issues, said Mayor Darrell Mussatto.

Instead of asking businesses if they are in favour of increased taxes, it would have been better to approach them about making Lower Lonsdale a better business district.

"The Lower Lonsdale Business Association are volunteers, and they're not out there getting paid," he said, noting that there is one salaried employee.

"They're trying to make it better and offer a solution to the change that's happening in Lower Lonsdale," he said.

© North Shore News