

## Council gives Ambleside BIA its stamp of approval

### Property owners would have 30 days to oppose plan

Maria Spitale-Leisk / North Shore News

October 11, 2015 12:00 AM

West Vancouver council unanimously agrees that Ambleside, Hollyburn and Dundarave shop owners should pool their marketing budgets and merge into one business improvement area.

A steady stream of veteran West Vancouver business owners and landlords spoke before council Monday evening, pleading for the establishment of a BIA in the listless commercial hub.

The most impassioned plea came from Kate Billington, who co-owns The Bakehouse in Dundarave.

"We need this (BIA) to help us," said Billington. "We are all small businesses fighting together. We are trying to keep our doors open against large giants that all reside in Park Royal."

Members of the Ambleside Dundarave Business Improvement Association have been working on a BIA proposal for two years now and officially made the pitch to council in July.

On Monday, council voted to send the BIA bid to a reverse referendum of sorts, in which the BIA will be established unless more than 50 per cent of the property owners representing more than 50 per cent of the assessed value register opposition to the plan within 30 days. "This is the right solution for the right place at the right time and I think enough talk - let's get on with it," said Coun. Michael Lewis.

Under the BIA bylaw, all commercial property owners within a defined geographical area pay an annual levy based on the assessed value of their property. A BIA is a non-profit association run by an elected mix of business people in the designated area who advocate for area improvements ranging from beautification projects to municipal bylaw changes.

There are 21 BIAs in the City of Vancouver, and, if approved, this would be the first one on the North Shore.

Ambleside Dundarave Business Improvement Association director Gordon Holley said the money collected also goes towards hiring full-time staff, marketing the area locally, regionally and in tourist markets, and developing strategies to promote the businesses at established community events.

Organizers are hoping to have the BIA off the ground in January, and are seeking a 10-year term and a budget (BIA levy amount) of \$500,000 for the first year and a maximum funding amount of \$5.6 million over the decade.

BIA fees for property owners, per year, would range from \$755, for a 1,500-square-foot store on Bellevue Avenue, to \$7,000 for a "significant landowner" in Ambleside who operates a mix of businesses at 18th Street and Marine Drive.

So far, 90 per cent of 84 area business owners informally polled said a BIA would be appropriate for Dundarave and Ambleside.

© 2015 North Shore News

[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your](#)