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Mill & Main Plaza beside Giant Tiger

BIA celebrates another good year...

Continued from page 1 turned up."

"I'm not trying to suggest for a minute that crime is out of control in Acton, because it is not..." Felske said, adding the investigation continues into the rash of graffiti vandalism that occurred over Christmas.

Outside of the meeting, Felske would not comment further on the crack cocaine arrests, saying some are before the courts.

In his briefing, Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette told the BIA it will be an exciting year for Acton when it comes to sports and recreation with completion of the 3 Musketeers Skateboard Park, tendering of a lit soccer field in the Acton East Sports Park, and completion of the Acton Agricultural Society/indoor soccer facility in Prospect Park.

Bonnette congratulated the BIA board of directors for helping create a vibrant downtown with festivals, promotions and special events, and introduced Ron Goddard, the Town's capital works manager.

Resurfacing Main St.

Goddard updated the merchants on the \$850,000 plans to resurface Main Street from Knox Avenue



BIA BONUS: Guest speaker John Kiru, executive director of the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, accepted a gift from Olde Hide House manager Cathy Coles at the Acton BIA's annual general meeting last Wednesday at the Legion. — Frances Niblock photo

to the Town's southerly limits and Vimy Street.

"Close to the downtown core, we're going to complete the coloured crosswalks," Goddard said, adding Halton Region will replace water and sewer pipes under Main Street from Knox to Brock Street. The work will begin in June and be complete in October.

The guest speaker, John Kiru, executive director of the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, said notwithstanding

the police update, Acton is "fortunate to be where you are," compared to Toronto where street cameras are being used to catch criminals.

Kiru called BIA – the ultimate self-help group that charges itself levies to improve the economic and social well being of the community.

Kiru said the first BIAs were formed to fight malls and now the same philosophy of using their own dollars to promote themselves can help downtown BIAs fight big box stores and Wal-Marts.

Kiru said each BIA should have a strategic plan – developed after asking residents what store they can, and can't, live without. The Acton BIA does not have a strategic plan.

He said it is not the job of the BIA to put people in local stores, but to put people on the street with festivals and special events.

"Worth the drive"
"If you are expecting the BIA to make your cash registers sing – it ain't going to happen. It's up to each and every one of you – you guys are the entrepreneurs, and must be active and creative and work together to have an attractive downtown," Kiru said, adding it should be worth the drive

to Acton for more than the leather.

"It should be worth the drive for the atmosphere, for the Town environment."

BIA co-ordinator Josey Bonnette highlighted nine special events and promotions staged by the BIA last year including the Leathertown Festival, Acton Idol Contest, a Hallowe'en haunted house and Christmas celebrations.

She said nine new members joined the Acton BIA last year.

Bonnette said summer beautification efforts – with planting help from the Acton Horticultural Society – included caring for 40 hanging baskets and permanent stone planters along the street. Winter beautification involved refurbishing and hanging Christmas lights and decorations.

Re-elected Board

The BIA accepted an audited financial summary showing a \$65,000 budget (the same as this year), and re-elected its board of management with John McNabb as chair.

BIA members also instructed the board of management to look into allowing associate members – businesses outside the existing BIA boundary – who would pay a reduced membership levy to take part in BIA promotions and special events, but not maintenance or snow clearing.

In the past, Acton businesses located east of the railway tracks have expressed interest in becoming part of the BIA, but it is difficult to get the required 70 per cent support for an expansion, so associate memberships may be the answer.

Police/Fire Report

Drug theft

A 37-year-old Birchway Place woman was charged on Saturday with theft under \$5,000 in connection with drugs stolen from the Georgetown Hospital earlier this month.

Police said while at the hospital emergency department on March 5, the woman broke a seal on a crash cart and stole a small quantity of drugs, including cardiac medicine and anti-depressants.

She appears in Court April 25.

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