



KENTVILLE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Annual Report

2022/2023

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Pandemic recovery has meant a lot of things to a lot of different people, organizations, and businesses. For Kentville Business Community, it meant encouraging people to return to our downtown, and offering safe and engaging opportunities to do so.

It has been challenging to shift minds away from 'stay at home'. But with the help of grants from Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Develop NS, we were able to expand on our downtown infrastructure and implement placemaking activities to increase foot traffic. Post-covid recovery grants were invested in street furniture such as umbrellas for our picnic tables and planters to create a barrier between pedestrians and vehicular traffic, in lighting installations to brighten our pedestrian areas and murals to enliven our public spaces, and in programming that brought audiences of all ages into our commercial core.

Beautification efforts such as the Harvest Festival window painting displays left people saying "have you *seen* Kentville lately?" Creating an atmosphere where people want to walk around, observe their surroundings, and stay a little longer is an important part to creating a community. And that personal investment of time translates into spending money locally.



Genevieve Allen Hearn, Executive Director



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As with many businesses and organizations, 2022 felt like a year of renewal, where we could finally get back to doing the things that we love and the term “new normal” echoed around the world. Throughout the pandemic most business focus was on survival, but now we have shifted back to being entrepreneurs and look to the future once again.

This will be my last Presidents message, and I have taken some time to reflect on all the things that KBC means to me. Rather than a Board, it has felt like a group of friends gathering to share ideas on community development. As with any organization, success is achieved by the work of a collective group, and I have been tremendously fortunate to work with a very engaged and energetic Board along with staff members Genevieve Allen Hearn and Doug Ralph. Working with this team has been an absolute privilege.

KBC's Board is diverse, engaged and energetic. The timing is right for a change in President and allow proper succession while bringing in fresh new ideas. I am proud to say that I will continue to serve as the first “Past President” since the organization's reboot in 2013.

Despite the new challenges of inflation and labour shortages, the Kentville Business Community continues to be strong in the face of adversity. Kentville truly continues to be the vibrant, diverse and professional centre of the Valley that we envision in our Vision Statement. I have no doubt that Kentville will continue to prosper far into the future.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank the entire community for your support and the work you put into making Kentville a vibrant place to live and do business.

Thank you.



Paul Dixon, Board Chair



ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

VISION

Kentville is the vibrant, diverse business and professional centre of the Valley.

MISSION

KBC works to create a community which is supportive and welcoming to current and future businesses, professionals, and organizations, and to attract people to shop, use services, and spend time in Kentville.

STRATEGIC PILLARS



Engagement & Communication: Act as a conduit of information for the business community and engage businesses and organizations in downtown events, activities, and projects.



Support & Recognition: Support the growth and synergy of businesses and organizations in Kentville, and celebrate successes.



Marketing & Promotion: Promote shopping, using services, and doing business in Kentville.



Infrastructure & Investment: Advocate for and assist with development and beautification efforts in the downtown.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

Paul Dixon - President
Andrew White - Vice-President
Gary Morse - Treasurer
Christina Coughlan - Secretary
Carrie May - Board Member
Liz Huntley - Board Member

Darryl Pike - Board Member
Julie Ogilvie - Board Member
Lindsay Young - Ex-Officio
Cate Savage - Ex-Officio
Genevieve Allen Hearn - Executive Director
Doug Ralph - Communications Coordinator

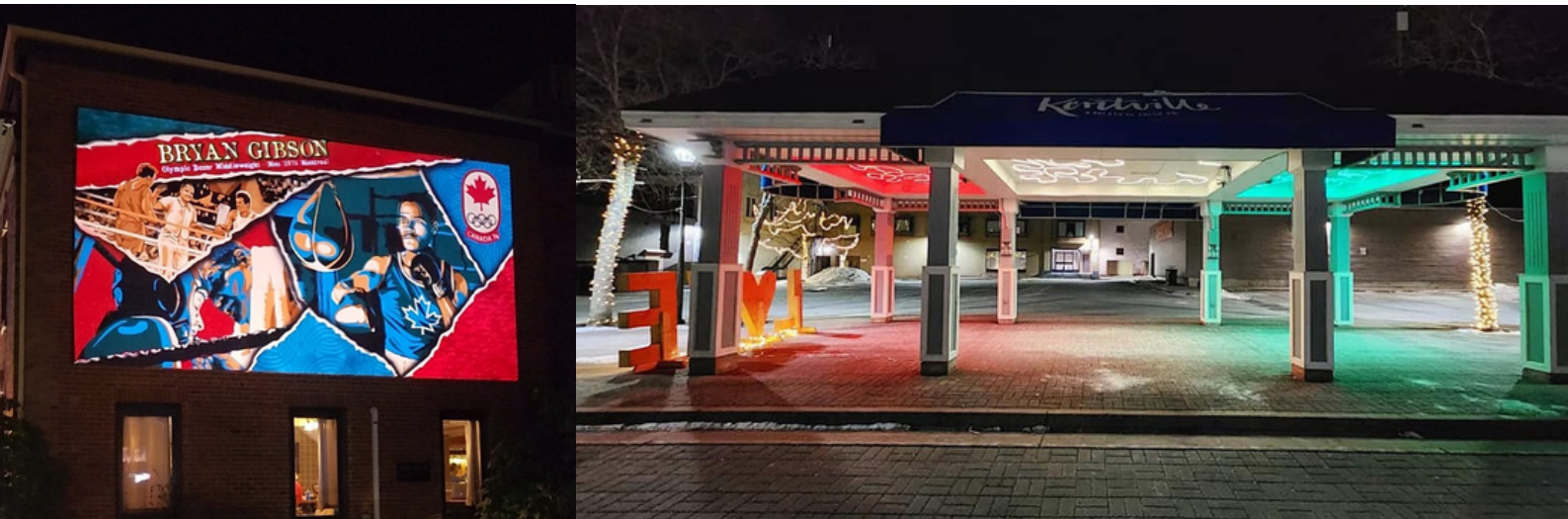


ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Kentville Business Community has been working to attract new audiences to town through events and programming. In an Events Strategy conducted in 2019, KBC learned that businesses are interested in piggybacking on pre-existing events in Kentville, to make them more business-friendly.

“Events need to be in harmony with the business community and promote downtown as a destination.” - KBC Member, Event Strategy Survey

KBC has expanded the offerings during the Torch Light Parade (now called the Holly Days Festival) as well as during the Harvest Festival and Pumpkin People Festival to facilitate better linkages between events and the business community. Late night shopping parties, activities in Centre Square, and installations around town encourage the movement of people around the commercial core has been met with a lot of success.



A mural lit up during Holly Days Festival with animated 'mural-mapping' technology (left). The new gazebo light installation in African Heritage month colors during February (right).

“It’s important to have a central area that’s rich in colour and art in which to host events.” - KBC Member, Event Strategy Survey



ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

The second annual #weARTkentville Mural Festival commissioned five new murals in the downtown area, as well a virtual mural map that visitors can access online. The mural map provides walking directions to each mural located in town, moving people through the downtown area while learning about our stories, histories, and dreams.



Under the Gazebo events continued to bring people into Centre Square at times that the town usually empties out, giving people the opportunity to experience Kentville beyond the 9am-5pm during the week was a priority for KBC.





INFRASTRUCTURE & INVESTMENT

Kentville Business Community teamed up with BIDs across the province to apply for a beautification grant from ACOA. Through this collaborative grant, each BID involved was given \$8,000 to use on downtown beautification projects. KBC used the money to commission artists to paint windows during the Harvest Festival, resulting in a town full of art through the month of October, when visitors are enjoying the Pumpkin People displays. This project was such a success, that the KBC Board has requested more window painting projects in the future.



Kentville Business Community continues to give grants to businesses looking to improve the look of their facade. KBC distributed six Facade Improvement Program grants in 2022/23, including the building on 326 Main Street pictured below.





INFRASTRUCTURE & INVESTMENT

Centre Square was the focus for downtown infrastructure and beautification grants from ACOA and Develop NS. This area was identified as the heart of the downtown, where events such as the weekly Farmers' Market and Lion's Club jams take place. As a purpose-built parking lot, using it as a pedestrian space can be challenging.



A Harvest Community Supper in support of the KCA's cafeteria program (left) and visitors of the Holly Days Festival activities in Centre Square (right).

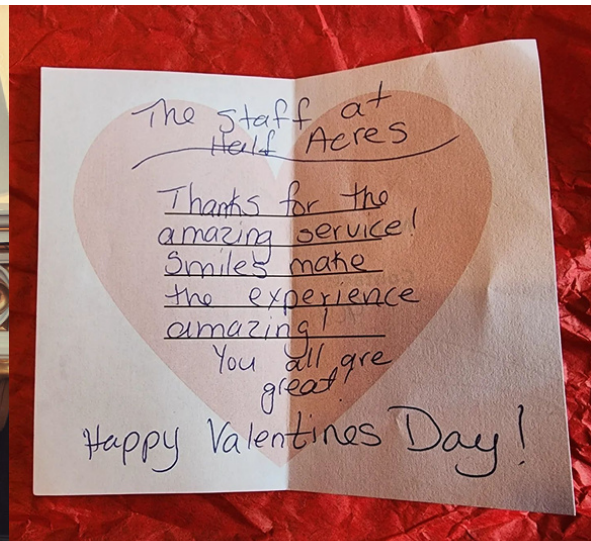
KBC conducted a survey with various stakeholders on how to improve Centre Square as a public space. The results showed that Centre Square scored high on 'Accesses & Linkages' but needed improvement in 'Comfort & Image'. KBC has been working with the Town of Kentville to provide comfortable places to sit, as well as brighter lighting, improved aesthetics, and shade.





SUPPORT & RECOGNITION

Kentville Business Community incentivizes shopping in Kentville's downtown through give-aways, contests, and the KBC Dollar program. During the extended hours campaign, KBC surprised late night shoppers with KBC Dollars every Thursday. During the Fire & Ice festival in Kentville, KBC asked shoppers to write a love note to their favorite shop. The notes were then posted on Facebook, and one love note author won \$1,400 in KBC Dollars.



When new businesses come to town, KBC drops in with a welcome package, and highlights their business in the monthly newsletter, as well as on Facebook and Instagram. These social media posts have become one of KBC's most popular, often generating hundreds of 'likes' and welcoming comments.





MARKETING & PROMOTION

KBC partnered with BID's across the province to produce a 'Buy Local Again' campaign to encourage shoppers to get back into shops post-pandemic. The campaign included photoshoots at six retailers, video footage of the town that was included in a province-wide commercial ad, and a heart installation, where people taking photos could learn about the pledge to buy local.



For decades, Kentville has been perceived as a 9-5 town. However, there are new businesses that would like to see shopping crowds in the evenings and weekends. KBC's Promotions Committee ran an Extended Hours campaign before Christmas to encourage people to shop in town outside of traditional work hours. The campaign included targeted flyers, newspaper ads, radios ads, and targeted social media boosts.





2022/23 FINANCIALS

