

What is a BIA?

By Jody Didier

In 1969, the city of Toronto was approached by a group of business people from Bloor West Village because the area was becoming rundown. After consultation, the provincial government enacted legislation under the Municipal Act, providing municipalities with the authority to designate "Business Improvement Areas." Since then, hundreds of BIAs have been instituted across North America. Over the years, there have been changes to the laws around BIAs. Traditionally, a BIA is a corporation established by a municipality using the provisions of the Municipal Act, 2001. It is governed by a board of management. Each BIA has terms of reference (bylaws) that outline operations, such as the name of the board, eligibility of persons to hold office as board members, the manner of selecting board members, terms of office, etc. The board must follow rules, procedures and policies established by the municipality and remain open and fair in their governance. The stakeholders oversee and fund the maintenance, improvement, and promotion of their commercial district - this includes everything from renovating old commercial properties to payment of the [commercial cleaning companies Roanoke](#) to the promotional materials for the district.

Town council appoints a council representative to the board of management. Generally, this will be a local councillor for the area but, in a cases, the goal is to select an individual who is willing to commit time and energy to improving and maintaining the area. In Bancroft, the BIA board of management consists of members of the business community, the council appointment representative and a part-time staff member.

The role of the Bancroft Business Improvement Area board of management is much like a steering committee and includes proposing ideas for the beautification of the designated area, establishing preliminary goals, providing an outlet for communication and feedback and working to ensure that all interest groups are involved in order to optimize input. The board of management is bound to any and all policies, bylaws and legislation requirements. The municipally appointed auditor acts as the auditor of the board of management.

A portion of the property taxes collected on commercial properties located in the designated area fund the BIA. Commercial property owners located in the designated area and their commercial/for-profit business tenants are automatically members of the BIA.

What do we do?

The BBIA beautifies municipally owned property in its designated area (Ward One). The board of management is responsible for purchasing things like flowers, benches, street banners and seasonal decorations. The Town of Bancroft provides support service for installation, removal and storage of these items.

What's new?

In 2017, the BBIA is implementing a seasonal program of community sponsored Banners to honour local people who have served in the military, either historically or more recently. "Veteran" banners will be installed annually, around September, when the summer flowers are removed and will remain on display until Christmas decorations are installed. Banners will be retained and reused for as long as they remain in suitable condition.

Interested sponsors are asked to contact the BBIA by email bancroftbia@gmail.com. There will be a fee of \$125 to cover the costs associated with each banner and sponsors may provide a photograph of the veteran and relevant information, such as name, rank, birth year, death year and when/where the veteran served. Sponsoring name(s) will appear on each banner as "honoured by." so those who don't have a special veteran in mind may also participate.