

BIABC Conference  
April 2015

I found this conference to be an enlightening experience to say the least. It was impressive that our Yellowknife contingent consisted of three city councilors, the director of Communications and Economic Development and four representatives of the business community. Many people I had met at the conference were surprised at our level of representation. Thanks to the city of Yellowknife for this initiative.

I look forward to our discussion as a group when we will likely flesh out a consensus of ideas for our presentation. These are a few main ideas I took away from the conference.

1. From the West End Walkabout (hosted by the president of the West End BIA)
  - a. A long term plan is essential. It allows an idea to ride out changes in city council, city administration and vendors in the area.
  - b. Empty buildings create dead zones, makes it difficult for existing businesses to attract customers (our mall as an example)
  - c. A united voice of vendors is important
2. From the Food Truck Tour (guest speakers were the deputy mayor of Vancouver and the president of the downtown BIA)
  - a. Food attracts people. This is why the deputy mayor took the initiative to promote the food truck industry to help revitalize the downtown core. There was an incredible interest right off the bat and there were problems along the way but by working with the bricks and mortar restaurants they have created a vibrant downtown environment that has benefited everyone in the food industry. Yellowknife needs to celebrate the variety of it's food industry in a way that attracts visitors and engages locals.
3. Sole Food Tour (visited inner city market gardens)
  - a. Good use of empty downtown spaces.
  - b. Engaged local homeless or disadvantaged persons by offering employment with very positive results.
  - c. Able to sell fresh produce to commercial food vendors and farmer's market venues.
4. Place making

- a. This was a very interesting discussion; cheap, quick and simple. Yellowknife has recently accomplished this with the outdoor ice rink at the Tommy Forest Ball Park. A simple idea that many people enjoyed. Perhaps Yellowknife can expand this concept to other projects.

I look forward to contributing to the group discussion as there are many other observations to act upon.

Regards,

Murray  
Curbside Treats 'N Eats Ltd.