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October 15th, 2024

To: Members of General Issues Committee
From: Susie Braithwaite, Executive Director - International Village BIA
CC: Herb Wodehouse, Chair – International Village BIA
RE: Service Level Change for Hanging Basket Program (PW24064)

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee:

Regarding the proposed changes to the hanging basket program specifically pertaining to Downtown Hamilton, I would like to voice that I am strongly opposed to any changes to this program that would pause or eliminate any beautification efforts from the City of Hamilton. Historically downtown Hamilton has had extra attention from the city to beautification efforts so to create a welcoming environment for everyone invested in the core and to highlight that Downtown Hamilton is a tourism destination.

This year the baskets were exceptionally attractive and appreciated in our area and the BIA received nothing but positive feedback from both businesses and community members. The baskets add a pop of colour to the urban core and a sense of community. By eliminating this program, even for a year, there would be a definite void in the beautification of our streets. The BIA simply does not have the resources to manage hanging baskets and we have already approved our 2025 budget.

In a recent asset management plan done by horticulture, none of the risks they speak to in this report were identified. In recent surveys done by the City of Hamilton, hanging baskets and garden beds were mentioned as very important. Downtown Hamilton is currently facing several challenges that the BIAs are trying to manage on a daily basis. Taking away programs like this will only add to the frustrations that the businesses are facing in the core. If anything, we need extra attention and supports now more than ever. The removal of this program would have a direct negative impact on our BIA.

Please do not allow this program to be postponed or canceled especially in Downtown Hamilton. I encourage you to look at alternative solutions to the issues presented in this report that will keep downtown Hamilton moving forward and beautiful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susie Braithwaite".

Susie Braithwaite
Executive Director - International Village BIA

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