

DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the Board Meeting on Thursday, April 3, 2014

Open Book

1011 Washington Avenue, Minneapolis, MN

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Board Chair Nick Cichowicz called the board meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Other board members in attendance were:

Chad DiDonato, Vice Chair

Gerry Ewald, Treasurer

Laurie Jones

Claudia Kittock

Carletta Sweet

Jesse Winkler

Peter Zenner, Secretary

Staff member Christie Rock was present.

Guests in attendance were:

Laura Alexander, Nordquist Signs

Carrie Aspinwall, NCR Neighborhood Specialist

Augsburg College student observer

Patrick Corkle, SRF Consulting

Jacob Frey, 3rd Ward City Council Member

Jenifer Hager, City of Minneapolis, Department of Public Works

Carol Lansing, Faegre Baker Daniels

Aaron Vacek, SRF Consulting

II. Consideration of the Agenda

Jones asked to add a discussion regarding the possibility of the DMNA providing fiscal sponsorship / serving as a fiscal agent for the North Star Lofts Legacy grant application for its sign rehabilitation project. Cichowicz suggested adding it after Council Member Frey's update.

DiDonato moved and Sweet seconded a motion to approve the April 3, 2014 board meeting agenda as amended. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

III. Consideration of Consent Agenda

Jones moved and Kittock seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda that included the March 6, 2014 board meeting minutes, the April 2014 financial report, the April staff report, and the professional services agreement between MWMO and DMNA for the Humboldt Lofts tree-planting project. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

IV. Public Comment

No speakers came forward during the public comment period.

V. North Star Lofts Sign Preservation Project Update / Fiscal Sponsorship Request

Jones deferred to Rock since she recently spoke with Kate Grutzmacher who is the association manager at the North Star Lofts. Rock stated that similar to the fiscal agent role the DMNA is serving for the Humboldt Lofts tree-planting project, the North Star Lofts is interested in the DMNA serving as fiscal agent for its sign rehabilitation project. They are in the process of preparing and submitting an application to the Minnesota Historical Society's (MNHS) Legacy Grants program for \$103,000, which Rock believes is a match to what they have been able to raised through assessments and other sources of funds. The pre-application is due on May 2nd and the full application is due at the end of June.

As in the case with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO), MNHS will not grant funds to a homeowners association. Therefore, the North Star Lofts is requesting that the DMNA serve as the fiscal sponsor / agent for the Legacy Grants application. Since Rock is familiar with the application process, she feels comfortable providing the service to the North Star Lofts and suggested charging an administrative fee, based on the grant amount and expected duties and responsibilities, which she will discuss with Grutzmacher next week.

Ewald moved and DiDonato seconded a motion to serve as the fiscal agent / sponsor for the North Star Lofts Homeowners Association's Legacy Grant. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

VI. Community Development Update

In the absence of Community Development Chair Jesse Winkler, Chair Cichowicz reminded the presenters to state what they are seeking from the DMNA board, then he introduced the following:

- ***Fox Sports North new sign variance application.*** Carol Lansing from Faegre Baker Daniels and Laura Alexander from Nordquist Signs represented Fox Sports North variances application for a new dynamic wall sign at 19 South 8th Street. Their prior request was for a curved dynamic sign that wrapped the corner facing both Hennepin Avenue and South 8th Street. The FSN new dynamic sign needs a variance to increase the allowed height of a dynamic sign from 14 feet to 25 feet to the top of the sign, and to increase the allowed sign area from 32 square feet to 64 square feet. Lansing and Alexander presented several display boards showing what the sign would look like positioned above the Capital Grill, the City's regulations for dynamic signs, and a letter of support from the Managing Partner for the Capital Grille.

The DMNA Board asked numerous questions about the proposed dynamic sign. The board questioned the type of activity on the sign, whether it would be sports programming, or advertising. The board also asked whether Fox Sports North has contacted the surrounding property owners, including the Capital Grill and Union Restaurant. After some discussion,

Ewald moved and Sweet seconded a motion to provide a letter of support for Fox Sports North's two sign variance applications. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed with Winkler abstaining.

VII. Guest Presentations

Third Ward City Council Member Jacob Frey reported on the following:

- City approved Ryan Companies as the developer of the Block 1 Liner Parcel and air rights over an existing parking ramp at 728 South 4th Street. The project will include a 150-room Radisson Red hotel and 200-unit apartment tower. Ryan is giving the City nearly \$6 million upfront, as well as quite a bit of tax revenue down the line, that will hopefully go toward the proposed new park.
- City requested \$25 million in state bonding dollars for the Nicollet Mall rehabilitation project (total project is \$50 million). They currently have \$4.5 million in the budget as a placeholder/negotiating chip.
- Leading efforts to enforce the City's surface parking lot ordinance that requires certain beautification elements (<http://www.startribune.com/local/west/253670271.html>).
- Numerous development projects coming down the pipeline that have easy access to all forms of transit:
 - Redevelopment of the 5.4-acre Superior Plating site at 315 1st Avenue NE into residential and retail;
 - Conversion of the former Cameron Transfer and Storage Company Building at 756 North 4th Street into affordable workforce housing;
 - Akquracy's proposed LEED-Platinum certified recycled shipping containers office building at 506 North 4th Street;
 - Dock Street Flats Phase II commercial and residential project at 337 Washington Avenue North;
 - Green and art space for the parcel below I-394 and I-94 near Target Field; and
 - Proposed 20-story office tower at 350 North 5th Street across from Target Field (http://www.pickardchilton.com/mobile/350_north_fifth.html).
- Webster School / Downtown School Initiative moving forward and parents have been receptive and involved.
- Working on encouraging developers to incorporate some affordable units into their projects. Right now, in order for developers to obtain funding to do affordable housing, 20% of the units need to be allocated as affordable. However, developers have indicated that at that percentage it is difficult for them to sell the remaining 80% units at market rate. Therefore, the City is recommending having a sliding scale to allow all residential properties being built will have at least some (5-10%) affordable units to mitigate the affordable housing crisis.

Thereafter, he responded to questions and commented on the new downtown park. Funding for it will come from a few different sources: the Vikings who have contributed \$1 million, Wells Fargo who will potentially contribute more than \$1 million, plus tax revenue funds. Frey believes they will need approximately \$10 million for maintenance and programming and has pitched to developers the need to contribute more as it will be a return on their investment in the form of good programming and a great park adjacent to their development.

Frey discussed the teardown moratorium in the southwest corner of Minneapolis. As a rule, he does not like them, however, the main reason for this one that hasn't been highlighted is due to the rainwater in the sewer system. Southwest Minneapolis uses per capita an inordinate supply of the sewer system and the City is not going to be able to revamp the system for another 50 to 100 years to mitigate the problems associated with the increase in McMansions being built. Going from homes that occupy one-third to half of the property to ones that occupy 75-80% of the property results in less rain water seeping through the ground and more rain water running off roofs going

straight into the sewer system. As of today the moratorium has been lifted (<http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/253760311.html>).

VIII. Community Development Update (continued)

- **7th Street Ramp Project.** Patrick Corkle, Jenifer Hager and Aaron Vacek introduced themselves then Hager explained that she is the Project Manager for this project to realign the current exit ramp off of I-94 westbound onto 5th Street to a new 7th Street exit ramp. This is a concept the City has been working on for a number of years and is a piece of its *Access Minneapolis* Ten Year Transportation Action Plan adopted by the City Council on June 29, 2007 (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/transplan/>). The intent is to help make the one-way system in downtown Minneapolis more efficient for commuters by bringing them directly to where they need to go into the core.

Last year, the City applied for MnDOT's Transportation Economic Development (TED) grant (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/funding/ted.html>) and was awarded \$6.8 million to implement this project in the 2015 construction season. The City is contributing another \$3 million to this project bringing the total project budget to approximately \$10 million.

Hager advised that they have initiated the community engagement process: held an open house on March 31st at Bethlehem Baptist Church, presented to the East Downtown Council's board earlier that day, coordinating with Elliot Park Neighborhood, and reaching out to others wherever they can. They want to land on a preferred concept over the next few weeks to refine, get MnDOT staff approval, get City Council approval, then move into final design in order to put it out for bid in early 2015.

Patrick Corkle, Traffic Engineer from SRF Consulting, using display boards explained the two options under consideration (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cip/all/WCMS1P-121854>). In both options, they are turning South 7th Street from a two-lane roadway into a three-lane roadway and removing parking on both sides of the street from 13th to 11th Avenues with a potential for parking between 12th and 11th Avenues on the far west end.

In Option A, they would bring a 2-lane bridge from I-94 westbound onto 7th Street merging with the existing 2-lane Hiawatha ramp, adding push buttons for pedestrians and a pulsing signal at the 7th Street and 13th Avenue intersection.

In Option B, again they would bring a 2-lane bridge from I-94 westbound onto 7th Street, however, now merging with a lane reduced Hiawatha ramp, adding push buttons for pedestrians and a traffic signal further westbound to allow access to/from Bethlehem Baptist Church's campus as well as enabling a more free flow of traffic.

They are working through the technical documentation review with MnDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to determine which option would result in the least amount of backups to the project partners' system. Hager advised that City staff is leaning heavily toward Option A because it has a predictable red/yellow/green signal that traffic can anticipate with pedestrian crossing and the weaving/traffic break is addressed.

Thereafter, Corkle, Hager and Vacek entertained questions from board members. Bethlehem Baptist Church prefers Option A that places the signal at the bottom of the ramp as opposed to

midblock. Hagar noted that 5th Street would be repurposed to serve as a local connection between the Cedar Riverside neighborhood and downtown Minneapolis.

The board took no action on this item.

IX. Old / New / Other Business

- ***Outreach and collaboration with other downtown organizations.*** Reference the Outreach and Collaboration chart and attachments emailed from Sweet in advance of the meeting.
- ***Minneapolis Downtown Council.*** Cichowicz recommended appointing Claudia Kittock to serve as the DMNA representative on the Minneapolis Downtown Council's Downtown 2025 Plan Task Force to End Homelessness.

Sweet moved and Zenner seconded a motion to appoint Kittock to the task force. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

- ***Professional services agreement between MWMO and the DMNA for the Humboldt Lofts tree-planting project.*** Winkler inquired whether an attorney on DMNA's behalf had reviewed the agreement. Cichowicz advised that since the full board reviewed it and had no issues that it did not rise to the level of requiring attorney review.

Downtown Minneapolis School Initiative. Kittock reported the following:

- The task force toured two similar schools on March 24th;
- Was presented preliminary drawings for the Webster School renovation. The intent is to begin renovating on June 1, 2014. There's another meeting in a couple weeks to go over final details;
- Although on track to open in the fall of 2015, want the principal in place this fall;
- Looking into getting a running group started for the kids this fall that will transfer to Webster in 2015, e.g., Girls on the Run (<http://www.gotrtwincities.org/>); and
- Webster is immediately adjacent to St. Anthony Park and it has expressed cooperation in the full use of its facilities. They also want to put in a garden as a teaching tool and are looking for community involvement.

Kittock encouraged the DMNA to consider ideas to help support the school when it opens.

X. Adjournment

Being no further business, Sweet moved and DiDonato seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cichowicz called for discussion. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Chair

Secretary