

DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the Board Meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2014
Open Book

1011 Washington Avenue South, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Minneapolis, MN

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Board Chair Nick Cichowicz called the board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Other board members in attendance were:

Chad DiDonato, Vice Chair
Laurie Jones
Claudia Kittock
Ken Searl via phone
Carletta Sweet
David Tinjum
Peter Zenner, Secretary

Staff member Christie Rock Hantge was also present.

Guests in attendance were:

Lauren Brown, Whitney Residences
Burt Coffin, ESG Architects
Gina Fox, Stinson Leonard Street
Erik Hansen, Minneapolis CPED
Tom Hoch, Hennepin Theatre Trust
Trace Jacques, ESG Architects
John Lassaux, Mortenson Real Estate Development
Dan Lessor, Mortenson Real Estate Development
Doug Lynch, Bridgewater Lofts
Thomas Novak, American Trio Loft
Mary Schrader, Bridgewater Lofts
Doug Verdier, RiverWest Condominiums
Joan Vorderbruggen, Made Here

II. Consideration of the Agenda

Sweet moved and Jones seconded a motion to approve the November 6, 2014 board meeting agenda. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

III. Election of Officers

Sweet stated that unless the DMNA Bylaws indicate differently, the positions of President and Vice President should actually be referred to as Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair

Tinjum moved and Jones seconded a motion to nominate DiDonato as Chair. DiDonato accepted the nomination. Being no further nominations, Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

Vice Chair

DiDonato moved and Zenner seconded a motion to nominate Jones as Vice Chair. Jones accepted the nomination. Being no further nominations, Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

Secretary

Jones moved and Kittock seconded a motion to nominate Sweet as Secretary. Sweet accepted the nomination. Being no further nominations, Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

Treasurer

Tinjum moved and Jones seconded a motion to nominate Zenner as Treasurer. Zenner accepted the nomination. Being no further nominations, Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

IV. Public Comment

Cichowicz invited members of the audience to address the DMNA Board with any comments or concerns.

Doug Verdier noted that he has been designated the Crown Hydro activist for the neighborhood and was there regarding this topic under New Business.

Mary Schrader inquired about whether anyone else living in the area was experiencing problems with their Verizon wireless phone service. No one else in the audience indicated they were having any problems; they have AT&T at the Bridgewater but have discussed adding boosters there. Schrader explained that she's been having problems for quite some time with reception and dropped calls. She has spoken with Council Member Frey, who suggested that she talk with someone at the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) as there could be a connection between the Vikings Stadium construction project and Verizon's cell service. The MSFA told her they would investigate and work with Verizon to resolve the issue. Verizon first offered her an in-home amplifier for \$250 then to give it to her, or to cancel her contract, but no refund and insisted that it was the fault of the City. Schrader will inform the DMNA of any new developments. Zenner stated that he would touch base with FirstService Residential and see if anyone else had registered complaints. Cichowicz thanked Mary for bringing the issue to the board's attention.

V. Consent Agenda

Sweet moved and Kittock seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda that included the October 2, 2014 board meeting minutes, the November 2014 financial report and the 10-01-14 to 10-31-14 staff report. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

VI. Community Development Updates

- *AC Hotel by Marriott (North 4th Street and Hennepin Avenue).* Dan Lessor from Mortenson Real Estate Development explained that the last time they came before the DMNA was for a letter of support for their Hampton Inn & Suites project. It will be completed approximately a year from now and they are excited to add it to the downtown skyline.

Today they are seeking a letter of support for a new project to be constructed on a surface parking lot at 4th Street and Hennepin Avenue, i.e., a 9-story, 244-room, limited service AC Hotel by Marriott, a European brand hotel new to the city, state and U.S. Currently one is being built in New Orleans and another in Portland.

Burt Coffin from ESG Architects introduced himself and his colleague Trace Jacques, the senior designer on this project. Coffin stated that this is a great opportunity to fill in the gap in the urban fabric and to bring back activity and vibrancy to the street.

With aerials and architectural renderings, Trace Jacques described the geographic context of the project with the Lumber Exchange, Xcel Energy, Gay 90s, Nic on 5th, the Central Public Library, and the LRT all in the immediate vicinity. This project is situated in a mix of building types and environments that they are responding to architecturally, i.e., the Warehouse District structures, the Central Business District, and the Theater District. The building will have primarily glass and stone on the lower floors, a combination of stucco and metal panels with glass on the upper floors, with a composite metal panel tower.

The AC Hotel brand has a unique teal blue signage component on most of their buildings and it will be integrated into this project as a tower. The design is custom urban and neighborhood friendly. They will not be allowed to have any curbside drop off on either Hennepin Avenue or 4th Street so they created a courtyard midblock that becomes a drop off and pass through for the owner of the parking ramp. The price point is expected to be less than \$200 per night. Groundbreaking should begin in April of 2015, with completion anticipated around the end of the second quarter/beginning of the third quarter of 2016.

Coffin and Jacques also reviewed the various land use applications that Mortenson Construction is submitting to the City, including:

1. Site Plan Review;
2. CUP to allow 9 surface parking stalls in the Downtown Parking overlay district;
3. CUP to allow signs that exceed 28 feet in height on a building that is greater than 6 stories in height;
4. A variance to allow signage on a non-primary building wall;
5. Variances to allow the 2 projecting signs that exceed 28' in height (these are the 2 self-park blade signs); and
6. A variance to allow signage on a non-primary building wall (the signs on level one where cars pull under the building).

After questions and discussion, Tinjum moved and Sweet seconded a motion to approve the site plan, two CUP applications and three variance applications for Mortenson's limited service AC Hotel by Marriott project. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

VII. Guest Presentations / Speakers

- *Made Here Initiative.* Tom Hoch from the Hennepin Theatre Trust (HTT) introduced himself and advised that they operate three of the four historic theatres on Hennepin Avenue: Pantages, Orpheum and New Century. He is back to provide an update on the activities within the cultural district along Hennepin Avenue from the Walker Art Center to the Mississippi River, from Nicollet Mall to 1st Avenue North. As a result of the strategic planning conducted 4 years ago, they were told that (1) Hennepin Avenue and much of downtown was an uneven pedestrian experience shifting from good blocks to bad blocks; (2) they hold the HTT responsible; and (3) the HTT should do something about it. Thereafter, HTT went to the National Endowment for the Arts who funded a planning initiative, i.e., Plan-It Hennepin, and ultimately came up with a Cultural District Plan (www.hennepintheatretrust.org/culturaldistrict) that the City approved. Hoch is now holding the City to this plan.

The first trial initiative HTT launched this past summer was The Parklot, a pop-up park on the surface parking lot adjacent to the Orpheum Theatre. It wasn't an unmitigated success but they figured out the issues related to it and will rethink some of the materials used and configuration of space. They are now hunting for four more parking lot spaces, two over the winter and two or three for next summer. This dovetails nicely with the City's initiative to get parking lot owners to do more greening.

The second initiative HTT launched was Made Here (www.madeheremn.org) to turn storefront windows into galleries. Hoch explained that one of the reasons the pedestrian experience in uneven is because of vacant storefronts; they suck the energy off the streets and people don't feel safe when they walk by. HTT's strategy was to use arts and culture as a vehicle for filling in those storefronts and exposing local artists to pedestrians by giving them a gallery and weaving together the blocks as a main initiative. They have 34 windows on 16 downtown city blocks and now have another project that will be unveiled on November 28th.

Hoch then introduced Joan Vorderbruggen, HTT's cultural district artist coordinator, who distributed a packet and described Brilliance! Made Here. Learning from this past summer's event, they convened a panel of 17 diverse artists and arts professionals to inform Made Here and Carried Made Here. With Brilliance! Made Here there are 38 windows across 16 city blocks, the biggest storefront project of its kind in the world. Knowing that Holidazzle is no more and new holiday traditions are being born downtown, the panel decided to do something that would speak to the holidays and the darkness of winter but remain inclusive of the community that this public art project serves, thus Brilliance. They took an open call asking artists to propose any kind of window display that interprets this theme. They got amazing responses and the curation was blind. They have 46% artists from communities of color and were equal men and women. Brilliance launches on November 28th and Vorderbruggen will give an abbreviated guided walking tour at 6 p.m. beginning at the Marin. The event runs through March 2015. Currently they are in the process of installing displays in the windows. In addition to Anderson Windows, they have also partnered with Marin's Restaurant & Bar and Constance Crawford from Macy's to create "gingerland" because Marin will not be doing the ice bar this year. For a map of the windows that will be activated, reference the packet distributed or visit the website.

Hoch explained that this is an opportunity to build on the retail downtown. HTT finds the

space, executes the agreement with the landlord, provides the insurance, and pays the artists. Vorderbruggen noted that it is a turnkey experience because they clean the space, professionals install the works of art, and it is an easy opportunity for the property owners to participate.

Hoch then explained a couple of other initiatives HTT is working on: (1) as part of a NEA Our Town grant they will be submitting to the City an artists-designed crosswalks proposal for Hennepin Avenue from the Walker Art Center to the Central Mississippi Riverfront to help knit together these disparate parts of Hennepin Avenue; and (2) an artists installation proposal at the underpass by The Basilica of Saint Mary as an artful gateway.

VIII. Community Development Updates (*continued*)

- **Nicollet Hotel Block RFP.** Erik Hansen, Principal Project Coordinator at Minneapolis CPED, introduced himself and distributed copies of the Request for Development Proposals (RFP) dated October 15, 2014. He explained that the purpose of the RFP is to find a developer for the vacant, surface parking lot located at 30 South 3rd Street that the City has owned since 1991. This project has gotten a lot of press and CM Frey who wants to see a better and higher use for the property has been the City's primary spokesman for this development. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to add a substantial, high-quality development on this block. The built structure would be at least 20 stories and should be integrated into the Nicollet Mall Mile, Hennepin Avenue, and the Washington Avenue redesign. As the defining building for this part of downtown, developers are asked to provide some open, publicly accessible space that would help tie into the Cancer Survivors Park and the public space leading to the Central Riverfront. The MPRB, through its RiverFirst Initiative, has its Gateway Park plan connecting this area to the riverfront, and this will also be the crossover block for the streetcar coming down Nicollet Mall.

Hanson indicated that responses to the RFP are due December 11, 2015. A pre-proposal conference call with developers was conducted that morning and was well attended. The selection process is a 2-level City process in late December/early January then a community process where they would come back to the DMNA Board. They don't know yet what they would come back for until the proposals are submitted and reviewed by City staff. If all goes well, selection of the developer will occur next spring followed by negotiation of the terms of the redevelopment contract. Sale of the property will likely take place at the end of 2015. Barring any problems, construction could start in the first quarter of 2016 and take 2 years to complete and are hopeful that the streetcar will be open about the same time.

Responding to questions from the board and the audience, Hanson advised that the funding for the streetcar has not been determined; they are lining up for a Federal Transit Administration's Small Starts program grant (www.fta.dot.gov/12304_222.html) and the City is expecting it to come through.

For more information about the 1.7-acre block known as the Nicollet Hotel Block RFP, go to <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-132418.pdf>.

- **Dan Kelly's Pub (212 South 7th Street).** Rock indicated that Matt O'Reilly was unable to attend the board meeting, but was looking for the board's support for his liquor license

application. It is not a new application, since there is an active bar/restaurant at this location, but rather a transfer of an existing license to a new owner. DiDonato advised that O'Reilly also owns: Republic 7 Corners; Republic Calhoun Square; Red River Kitchen, a Minnesota food truck; and 318 Café in Excelsior.

Sweet moved and Jones seconded a motion to support the Class C liquor license application submitted by Matt O'Reilly for Dan Kelly's Pub. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

- **2015 Downtown Pavement and Resurfacing Program Update.** Rock noted this was a written update distributed via email with the board packet materials. Chris Trembath from Minneapolis Public Works presented the 2014 program to the board last spring and felt there wasn't a need to attend another board meeting in person; however, he is very willing to respond to questions or concerns if there area any. Rock offered to gather any questions and to forward them onto Trembath. No action was required or taken on this matter.
- **North 3rd Street / 2nd Avenue South Intersection Update.** Rock noted this was a written update distributed via email with the board packet materials. No action was required or taken on this matter.

IX. Committee Updates

- **Outreach and Engagement Task Force.** Kittock advised that as of yesterday, she has received 51 responses to the DMNA Survey then passed around charts indicating the results. She reported that two of the reasons people do not attend DMNA board meetings is because they don't know what we do, and that Thursdays are inconvenient, however many indicated that Mondays are preferable. While 42% said they would attend if the meetings were held at a local business, 52% said it didn't matter, however many listed anywhere in the Mill District (e.g., Day Block, The Depot, Open Book, Vikings Stadium when completed, Shout House, Zen Box). 65% were satisfied with the annual meeting and they basically liked most everything that went on.

The most critical issues listed were economic development at #1, the stadium park at #2, homelessness and crime at #3, followed by education. 27 people said they would be willing to serve on a DMNA committee. Topics they would like to see at future meetings included relative demographics of the area, businesses coming to the neighborhood, priorities for neighbors, increasing streetlights, tree canopy goals, continued crime discussions and improving bike safety, Crown Hydro, volunteer opportunities in the neighborhood, more information about the Webster School, and how decisions are being made relative to neighborhood changes, and traffic management. Additionally, someone said that the DMNA is doing a good job.

X. Old / New / Other Business

- **Discussion about date/location of next board meeting.** The board decided to conduct its final meeting of the year on Thursday, December 4th at Open Book, and to switch the board meeting date to the third Monday in January 2015. DiDonato recommended that the board first meet to decide what its agenda and programming should be and that he has scheduled a closed executive session with NCR Neighborhood Specialist Carrie Aspinwall on Tuesday,

November 18th at the Bridgewater Community Room.

- **Discussion and next steps regarding Crown Hydro.** Tinjum summarized the status of the project to date and highlighted some background information he sent to the board prior to the instant meeting, including a letter from FERC to Crown Hydro dated April 15, 2013, and a letter from the MPRB to FERC dated August 14, 2014. Finally, Tinjum introduced a letter that he proposed the DMNA send to FERC, along with a resolution outlining the DMNA's position statement regarding the existing Crown Hydro license. After some questions and discussion,

Tinjum moved and DiDonato seconded a motion to support DMNA Resolution 2014-02. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

Copies of the information noted above is available by contacting DMNA Neighborhood Coordinator Christie Rock Hantge at Christie@hantge.com or David Tinjum at dave@millcitymedia.org

- **Consideration of appointment to the MPRB Downtown Service Area Master Plan Community Advisory Committee.**

Tinjum moved and Zenner seconded a motion to appoint Cichowicz to the MPRB Downtown Service Area Master Plan Community Advisory Committee. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

- **Consideration of review and update of Neighborhood Coordinator job description.**

DiDonato moved and Kittock seconded a motion to review and update the Neighborhood Coordinator job description, with a final recommendation by February 1, 2015. Cichowicz called for discussion. The motion passed.

This review and update will occur at the November 18th closed executive session with NCR Neighborhood Specialist Carrie Aspinwall.

- **Outreach and collaboration with other downtown organizations.** Reference the Outreach and Collaboration chart Sweet provided in advance of the meeting.

Kittock advised that the Webster School is pursuing Target to conduct same type of reading program it does at the FAIR School. Target provides 200 volunteers to read one-on-one with the kids 2 nights a week. Kittock has also been in contact with Augsburg College so that students will put in X amount of volunteer hours at Webster.

Tinjum announced that an organization is forming called The Saint Anthony Falls Alliance to address the general issue of hydro at St. Anthony Falls. This organization will probably end up having representatives from neighborhood associations and there are already people involved, e.g., Doug Verdier as well as folks from Marcy-Holmes, St. Anthony West, Nicollet Island/East Bank. Tinjum will keep the DMNA apprised of developments.

Cichowicz advised that through his work with the Tactical Urbanism Task Force's Nicollet Mall livability project, it has been a great opportunity to come together and find out from business partners, residents, visitors, and St. Stephen's Human Services what issues they need

to address to make Nicollet Mall more livable. This effort was done in conjunction with the design work of the Nicollet Mall project. As a result, an overall strategic plan has been developed that will go before the Downtown Improvement District's executive committee next week for final approval.

XI. Adjournment

Being no further business, Jones moved and Sweet seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cichowicz called for discussion. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Chair

Secretary