

DMNA Land Use Committee
June 2, 2020
Meeting Summary

Discussion of LUC goals and activities in reference to issues presented by COVID-19, and the current civil unrest. What challenges do these crises present to our core goals, and what are possible actions for addressing them?

- Both crises undermine the collective trust that is necessary for a safe, active and inclusive public realm. The civil unrest has also greatly heightened concern for the City's capability to provide adequate protection of its downtown residents. There is growing concern nationwide that an increasing number of people will come to view the downtown areas of large cities as unsafe. The association and the City must counteract this view by providing a public realm that is safe, active, and welcoming for everyone.
- The DMNA & LUC should develop or support projects that keep public spaces active and welcoming. Specific public space projects discussed at the LUC meeting are:
 - Graffiti and vandalism in public spaces should be addressed immediately, by demanding attention to the problems by the city or relevant private entities, or by acting directly on the problems when necessary.
 - Because downtown green space has become even more valued during the pandemic, the LUC should continue and enhance its ongoing efforts on landscaping issues and responsible pet ownership (and extend these efforts to include hammock-caused tree damage).
 - The DMNA board has recently established a project to distribute face masks to neighborhood residents during the pandemic. This commendable project directly contributes to a safer and more active public realm. The board should consider other short- and long-term projects that promote public health, including hand washing stations and public restrooms.
 - PLEASE NOTE THAT PAM HAS ASKED THAT WE FORWARD ANY PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM DMNA FUNDING.

- Other thoughts and ideas brainstormed by the LUC are:
 - The DMNA should establish a public safety task force or standing committee, in order to give the neighborhood a more effective voice on public safety issues. Emphasis should be placed on reinvigorating community policing while also supporting necessary reforms. This group should oversee DMNA’s sponsorship of the new Police Safety Center at The Vicinity, serve as the go between for the MPD and neighborhood residents, and help the association to engage residents in public safety issues.
 - Public transit is fundamental to a safe, active, and welcoming public realm, and this becomes even more critical under pandemic conditions. The DMNA should consider how it should take a more active role in demanding necessary changes to ensure the security and health of Metro Transit passengers and employees.
 - DMNA board members are meeting with the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District to discuss common interests on public realm initiatives. The Land Use Committee, which has considerable experience in public realm issues, should have an active role in these discussions.
 - The DMNA has had two long-standing organizational challenges: to develop a communication network among HOAs and to engage renters in DMNA activities. The crises have demonstrated that meeting these challenges is more important than ever. This is a matter of neighborhood identification in general and of neighborhood-wide problem solving in particular. While there are often strong social connections within specific buildings, the DMNA is one of a few community organizations that can and must build wider social networks, to provide “eyes on the street” and to address the LUC goal of a “stable, civically engaged residential neighborhood”. We encourage the board to redouble its effort on meeting these challenges.
 - The DMNA should strive to expand its role as an information resource for downtown residents, especially through public forums on community issues or development projects that affect the whole community. Creating a network of HOAs and apartment buildings would also help the DMNA to more effectively share emergency preparedness and response information during periods of crisis.
 - After the crises have subsided, the DMNA should sponsor musical events, ice cream socials, or other social events that bring people from the neighborhood together. The pandemic has helped to redefine “essential workers” in our neighborhood, and these events should be used to express appreciation to workers, from grocery store employees and building caretakers to police officers and other first responders.