

## DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the Board Meeting on Monday, February 24, 2020  
*Mill City Museum Mill Ruins Building*  
710 South 2nd Street, 6th Floor ADM Room

### I. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Pamela McCrea called the Board meeting to order at 5:48 p.m.

Other Board members in attendance were:

Max Erickson  
Kevin Frazell, Vice Chair  
Tomek Rajtar  
Carletta Sweet, Secretary  
Dianne Walsh, Treasurer, via phone

Board Members Laurie Rice, Joey Senkyr, and Joe Tamburino were absent.

Staff member Christie Rock Hantge was also present.

Guests in attendance included:

Steve Fletcher, City of Minneapolis Ward 3  
L.B. Guthrie, Stonebridge Lofts  
Brenda Langton, Mill City Farmers Market  
Thomas Schmid, Washburn Lofts  
Ben Shardlow, Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District  
Beth Shogren, Green Minneapolis  
Dale White, RiverWest Condominiums

### II. Consideration of Agenda

*Sweet moved and Erickson seconded a motion to approve the Board meeting agenda. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.*

### III. Consideration of the Consent Agenda

After Treasurer Dianne Walsh advised she reviewed all the financial documents received from Hantge and found no issues, and Vice Chair Kevin Frazell advised although he attended the January 21st strategic planning session, he was unable to remain for the Board meeting,

*Ericson moved and Frazell seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda as amended which included the January Board meeting minutes; F2020 Budget vs. Actual for the period ending January 31, 2020; the 2019 tax filings, including the Minnesota Charitable Organization Annual Report and IRS Form 990; the 2019 CPP Report; and the Neighborhood Coordinator / Finance Coordinator staff report for January (Invoice #061). McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.*

#### IV. The Commons Management and Programming Update

Beth Shogren, Executive Director of Green Minneapolis, provided a brief background of the imminent change in management and programming of The Commons that will take place on April 1st

(<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/news/2020/03/27/minneapolis-park-and-recreation-board-assumes-operations-at-the-commons/>).

In 2017, former Ward 1 City Council Member Paul Ostrow and former Ward 1 City Council candidate John Hayden filed a lawsuit against the City, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, and Minnesota Vikings because they believed the City violated its charter in a complicated Commons Park Use Agreement that subsidized The Commons and a nearby parking ramp using \$65 million in bonds.

Subsequently, Hennepin County District Judge Bruce Peterson ruled in favor of Ostrow and Hayden's lawsuit (<http://www.startribune.com/judge-city-of-minneapolis-has-no-authority-to-operate-the-commons-park/483656801/> and <https://www.southwestjournal.com/news/parks/2019/02/judge-gives-city-park-board-until-may-to-resolve-commons-park-management/>) stating the City's charter bars it from doing what the MPRB was intended to do, i.e., govern, administer, and maintain the parks. With its control over The Commons in doubt, the City began the process of transferring operations over to the MPRB (<http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-seeks-to-transfer-commons-park-to-park-board/507544552/>).

Upon appeal, the Minnesota Appeals Court upheld the original ruling (<https://www.fox9.com/news/mn-appeals-court-rules-city-of-minneapolis-cannot-operate-commons-park>). GM's contract with the City to operate and program The Commons is extended only through March 31st, at which time the MPRB will assume those responsibilities.

Shogren considers this a loss for GM because not only did they conduct the fundraising campaign (<https://www.greenminneapolis.org/projects/the-commons/>) to enable The Commons to come into being, they also operated it since its inception and they're proud of the work they've done. The MPRB is cognizant that it's more difficult to operate than it currently has the staff, equipment and capacity, and GM is working hard to give them all the tools and assets to help set them up for success, but what concerns Shogren most that will affect the DMNA in particular is security. GM has overnight private security shared with Peavey Plaza which will cease on April 1st, and then security will be handled by MPRB Police who will respond when called until 11:00 p.m. Thereafter, 911 calls will be responded to by the MPD. If security issues should need more attention, it will be up to neighborhood and community stakeholders to step forward.

Shogren indicated if the DMNA still has excitement, energy and funding for National Night Out – last year's movie night was spectacular (<http://millcitytimes.com/mill-city-minneapolis-events/august-6-2019-tuesday-no-the-goonies-movie-night-at-the-com.html>), and we could also get East Town Business Partnership excited, we could all do something together, but it would have to take place at Peavey Plaza. If we'd like to make plans and funding appeals, Amanda Wigen, Director of Programming & Events, will be around for the next 8 to 10 weeks before she begins her own consultancy (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/amanda-wigen/>).

Shogren advised she is transitioning to a part-time role and will steward the transition to the MPRB with whom she has a good relationship. Hantge advised she has Shane Stenzel, Manager of Permits and Events (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/stenzel-shane-73276826/>), scheduled to present before the Board in April.

## V. Greening Lab Funding Request

As a follow up to their presentation at the January 21st Board meeting, Beth Shogren and Ben Shardlow, Director of Urban Design at Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, provided another update on the Greening Lab's Tree Watering project (<https://www.greenminneapolis.org/projects/greening-lab/>), a partnership between GM, DID, MPRB, MWMO and the DMNA to help grow the downtown canopy.

Last year they were able to demonstrate the practices being implementing – most significantly soil testing and additional watering – had a tremendous effect on the trees, i.e., broke the failure cycle of dying trees, trees grew from a 1 inch caliber to a 1.4 inch caliber, and the #1 way to increase the tree canopy is to plant more trees and grow the size of the trees already here.

In 2020 they very much want to not only continue the last 3 years' work but also to expand it. Funding supports watering of trees within the expanded district boundary, Tree Census events (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/green-minneapolis-invites-you-to-participate-in-the-fall-tre.html>) two of which were held last year with overwhelming volunteer participation and will be repeated this year, and they've secured a Healthy Tree Canopy Grant (<https://www.hennepin.us/trees>) from Hennepin County which will support additional user engagement events over the summer, e.g., walks and talks with arborists, scavenger hunts, and a fantastic Arbor Day celebration on April 24th, the first in downtown Minneapolis geared to adults ([https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/activities\\_events/events/arbor\\_day/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/activities_events/events/arbor_day/)).

They thanked the DMNA Board for their ongoing support and requested renewed support for the 2020 Tree Watering Program in the amount of \$10,000. Thereafter,

*Frazell moved and Sweet seconded a motion to approve a \$10,000 contribution to Green Minneapolis for the Greening Lab's 2020 Tree Watering program. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.*

## VI. Ward 3 Update

Council Member Steve Fletcher reported on the following:

- The City is working with everyone who has been engaged with The Commons to ensure a smooth transition.
- He's been digging into recent crime stats and explained what's been happening in Downtown East; it has between one and two violent crimes per month (typical for any small town downtown, e.g., Hibbing, Fargo), in 2019 it was closer to two on average, and in 2018 it was closer to one on average. If you look at where the crime intensity was, a lot of it happened near The Commons, i.e., Mills Fleet Farm Ramp and the LRT station. He's not concerned criminal activity will increase as a result of the change in management because the area is patrolled by multi-jurisdictions, i.e., the City has intensified MPD in that area anyway, Metro Transit Police for the LRT, the MPRB Police for The Commons on April 1st, and pro-active private security teams on the perimeter of The Commons. The situation requires continuous attention but is not something to lose sleep over.
- The takeaways from the recent shootings in the Warehouse Business District (<https://www.startribune.com/gunfire-inside-downtown-minneapolis-nightclub-wounds-2-one-critically/568123322/>), are they have to get all of the safety initiatives they've been working on up and running, smart policing to ensure public safety for everyone, work with Business Licensing to

figure out a gun got into Rouge at The Lounge, and do all the de-escalation work out in the neighborhoods to prevent this from happening.

McCrea commented on recent requests from the media regarding crime in the downtown community, particularly in Downtown East. She wants to make sure the media isn't sensationalizing crime, only reporting the facts. She wants to think creatively about how the DMNA can use the new Police Safety Center to promote the good things that are happening to address crime. She also talked about having a public forum on crime and safety.

CM Fletcher noted the City is working with Charlie Zelle (<https://metro council.org/News-Events/Council-News/Newsletters/Charlie-Zelle-named-Met-Council-Chair-2019.aspx>), recently appointed Chair of the Metropolitan Council, to develop a package of strategies that will roll out this summer complementing the work of the MPD.

Frazell then mentioned he attended Fletcher's 3rd Awards in Northeast last week (<https://www.facebook.com/events/food-building/the-3rd-awards/1753400804791070/>) and despite the weather there was a big turnout.

## VII. Mill City Farmers Market Funding Request

Brenda Langton, Founder and Development Director, distributed a one-sided *Growing A Healthier Community* information sheet and provided updates on the following programs:

- Remaining dates for the *Winter Market* and planning for the upcoming *Saturday Market*.
- *Greens 4 Good* (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/learn/greens-for-good/>) sponsored by Delta Dental.
- *Power of Produce* (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/learn/power-of-produce-pop/>) largely sponsored by George Sherman.
- *Meet Your Vegetables* (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/impact/meet-your-vegetables/>) sponsored by Allina.
- *Live Music* (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/visit/music-inquiries/>) sponsored by the DMNA.
- *Next Stage Grant* (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/impact/next-stage-grant/>) event recently held at Day Block Brewing.
- They're thinking about incorporating *Sidewalk Talk Community Listening Project* (<https://www.sidewalk-talk.org/>) into this year's Saturday Market; she was too late for the Saturday, February 15th event at the Minneapolis Central Library by the Twin Cities Chapter but will continue with it.

McCrea explained because the Board discovered from last summer's survey that 90% of the respondents didn't know what the DMNA stands for, one of their goals is to let people know it exists by asking its partners to help tell the value the DMNA adds to the community.

Langton explained they sold Spoonriver to the Minnesota Farmers Union/Birchwood Alliance (<https://www.spoonriver.com/>) who will now be sponsors of the MCFM and they'll be helping to raise its brand awareness as well. After they refresh their logo, font and colors, they'll add the DMNA logo to their information sheet and weekly e-newsletter and will ask the musicians to mention the DMNA during their weekly performances. They'll also have a new musical logo for the DMNA if they should need it for a new sign, bags, etc.

Lastly, she made her official request for sponsorship of the MCFM 2020 season in the amount of \$10,000 and thanked the DMNA Board for their ongoing support. Thereafter,

*Erickson moved and Frazell seconded a motion to approve a \$10,000 contribution to the Mill City Farmers Market for the 2020 season. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed with McCrea opposing.*

### **VIII. Pianos on Parade Funding Request**

After distributing a 2-page, 2-sided document, Meghan Gustafson, Director of Events and Programming at the Minneapolis Downtown Council, presented a snapshot of the 2019 Pianos on Parade program (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/pianos/>) that strategically places 25 local artists-painted pianos throughout downtown Minneapolis during the month of June in partnership with Keys4Kids (<http://keys44kids.net/>), and Juxtaposition Arts (<https://juxtapositionarts.org/>) and Perpich Arts High School (<http://perpich.mn.gov/>) who painted the pianos. Once a week each piano is programmed with musical performances; last year there were 100 performances and they're planning the same this year.

Thanks to the support of the DMNA, last year they able to add three new downtown locations: Minneapolis Community & Technical College, First Covenant Church, and Gateway Park. Those in Downtown East include MacPhail Center for Music, American Academy of Neurology, StoneArch Creative, and The Commons. Gustafson stated they've been successful at reducing criminal activity at hot spot locations in Downtown West, particularly at 5th Street and Hennepin Avenue. The MDC and the DID receive a lot of positive community feedback about the program and more and more businesses are requesting to sponsor a piano at their locations. The total budget for the program is \$35,000; they pay the artists and performers.

Lastly, she made her official request for sponsorship of the 2020 Pianos on Parade program in the amount of \$10,000 and thanked the DMNA Board for their ongoing support. Thereafter,

*Sweet moved and Erickson seconded a motion to approve a \$10,000 contribution to the Minneapolis Downtown Council for the 2020 Pianos on Parade program. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.*

### **IX. Old / New / Other Business**

- A. Police Safety Center.** As a follow up to the January 21st Board meeting at which Walsh expressed comfort over the revised license agreement that she, Joe Tamburino, and the DMNA's Attorney Jess Birken reviewed and was awaiting approval by Sherman Associates' Attorney Jessica Welk, Walsh advised all issues have been resolved and we now have a license agreement with the revisions requested to the DMNA's advantage, and the resolution she reviewed with the Board addresses our fiduciary responsibilities. She commended Tamburino for his email outlining his responsibility and commitment to the DMNA and the PSC.

Furthermore, Walsh believes it's a good thing to support the PSC at The Vicinity because it addresses the safety issue and brings a police presence into the neighborhood through strong oversight and involvement by the DMNA. This could pass this evening, but because of all the work done for this DMNA-sponsored substation, led by Tamburino who is out of time, there should be a

press release to let the community know what we're doing.

Erickson inquired about outlining specific goals for the term of the lease to determine whether this program was a good investment for the DMNA and community. Walsh noted we need to evaluate the program annually and, according to Attorney Birken, we could commit future boards to this agreement; however, we can cancel at any time if it doesn't work out. Why we're doing this, what we hope to gain is all laid out in the resolution and once approved she'll pull from it to draft the press release. Thereafter,

*Walsh moved and Sweet seconded a motion to approve the Resolution for the DMNA Police Service Center at The Vicinity. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.*

## **X. Land Use Committee Report**

Because LUC Chair Thomas Schmid did not attend the February 4h meeting, Board liaison Kevin Frazell reported on the following projects presented:

- A. OX-OP Gallery and Residences Conditional Use Permit and Variance** application by Chris Judd, Sales Executive at Albrecht Sign Company (<https://albrechtsigns.com/albrecht-signs-installation-fabrication-team/chris-judd-sales-executive/>). They are seeking to install three signs on Washington Avenue and one sign on 11th Avenue. One of the signs on Washington Avenue is a cube shaped sign that rotates 360 degrees. This makes it a dynamic sign, which requires a CUP. In addition, because the City calculated the size of the sign using all four sides of the rotating cube, they also need a variance to increase the maximum size from 32 square feet to 48 square feet. Judd indicated they need the larger square footage to make the sign easier to read.

Based on the information presented, the LUC made the following recommendations:

- **Support the CUP for the rotating sign.** There is precedent for this type of signage at Open Book at 1011 Washington Avenue.
  - **Do not support the variance for the rotating sign.** The LUC determined the applicant simply did not meet the criteria for granting the variance. It had nothing to do with the size of the sign. The applicant created their own "practical difficulties" as a result of wanting to do a rotating sign that now needs to be bigger to be legible.
- B. Washington & Portland Avenues Mixed-Use Project** update by Bob Loken, Principal at ESG, and Ross Stiteley, Senior Developer at Sherman Associates. This Planned Unit Development has essentially remained the same since it was last presented to the LUC in September 2018. Since then they have been working on securing financing for the four components – 22-story market rate tower with 238 dwelling units and 5,400 square feet of commercial space; 6-story affordable apartment building with 90 dwelling units; a fire station which relocates the existing Minneapolis Fire Department Station 1; and principal parking facility – and advanced the conversation at the Planning Commission Committee of the Whole on January 30, 2020 (<https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/Board/Agenda/CPC-COW/1423>). Now they're preparing a Land Use Application and are seeking a Letter of Support in time for a hearing on March 23rd and will return

once it has been submitted. Phasing of the various components drives the Site Plan Review.

After some questions and discussion, the LUC:

- **Supports** applications 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
- **Does not support** application 5 (Site Plan Review), i.e.:
  - **Installation of "painted fiber cement panel" material on the street level floor of the affordable apartment building.** It is important to understand this building is in downtown Minneapolis and fiber cement panels are not consistent with the material on the other buildings in the neighborhood. All other recently constructed residential buildings in the neighborhood are brick, cast architectural concrete or a type of metal panel, e.g., the Mill City Quarter, an affordable apartment building on 2nd Street, is all brick on all four sides. Using the excuse this is an "affordable" apartment building and thus brick is too expensive is not acceptable. Only two elevations of the building are exposed so it is not a significant amount of additional brick. There are four floors above the first floor that are already brick so it is not a hardship or technical problem to install brick on the first floor of the building. This building is in downtown Minneapolis and the public realm deserves a quality building material such as brick to support the quality and integrity of the public realm. Painted fiber cement panel material is simply not acceptable for a downtown building. Every building around this site is made of brick, stone, cast architectural panels or metal panel. This building needs to be of that same standard. Fiber cement panels are appropriate only outside the downtown core.
  - **Three curb cuts.** It supports allowing only two curb cuts: one off Portland Avenue and the other off 5th Avenue. This is a pedestrian safety concern. Having two curb cuts is consistent with what exists at the recently constructed Fleet Farm parking garage.
  - **Installing a vegetative wall on the two exposed elevations of the parking garage.** The developer has already committed to the neighborhood organization to install instead a building-like wall elevation that is constructed with quality materials such as brick panels. These exposed garage elevations should give the appearance of an occupied building rather than a parking garage.
  - **Allowing alternative compliance for the identified blank walls on the project.** This is a project in downtown Minneapolis and the building elevations must be respectful to the neighborhood contexts, the pedestrian scale, and the public realm.

#### **But does support**

- **Covering or screening the top level of the parking garage**
- **Removing the one existing billboard.** The developer has confirmed the billboard will be removed from the property, and that it will not be re-installed in any form as part of the new project.

*Frazell moved and McCrea seconded a motion to approve the letters of support for the OX-OP sign applications and the land use applications for the Sherman Associates project at Washington & Portland Avenues. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.*

## **XI. Chair's Report**

McCrea reported on the following:

- The new DMNA banner; it and the tablecloth will be used for the MCFM or other events.
- How the DMNA communicates with the media discussion was postponed until more of the Board is present.
- She discussed a marketing / branding project for 2020. Last year she and Tomek Rajtar passed out hundreds of water bottles and she considers it worth the investment. She has 2 boxes left; they require a lot of storage and are awkward to carry. After a brief discussion about whether to purchase more, Hantge will confirm the funding sources and relevant information to present for consideration.

Another idea includes reusable bags coupled with a survey or other outreach that gives quantifiable data, but she would like the Board to brainstorm some others. Based on his experience, she invited Erickson to lead this effort.

## **XII. Old / New / Other Business Continued**

**B. East Town Business Partnership's Food & Hospitality and Restaurant Task Force.** Hantge explained that Dan Collison, the Executive Director of the ETBP, reached out to see if the DMNA would be interested in participating in a task force recently established in response to recent restaurant closings and the continuing shared concerns about the changing nature of retail in the East Town business district. The group would include representatives from hospitality-related businesses, neighborhood organizations, real estate developers and City staff. The goal would be to develop a substantive promotional and marketing strategy that will support and advance food hospitality in the East Town business district. The group would meet monthly and seek to:

- Assemble a complete master list of all food and hospitality in Downtown East and Elliot Park;
- Interview all operators and owners to understand their aspirations and pressures to be successful; and
- Consider best practices for low cost collaborative and strategic marketing and promotional initiatives that would benefit all restaurants.

McCrea expressed concern and frustration with the East Town name. She has talked to businesses and real estate professionals who don't like the East Town brand and prefer to refer to their locations in the Mill District or the Downtown East neighborhood. She isn't sure if it is in the best interest of the DMNA to participate in this task force.

Hantge expressed concerns about not working collaboratively in some way with the business group that represents this side of downtown. The DMNA should have a voice at the table if it wants to influence the direction this group takes and the outcomes of the effort. Erickson expressed an interest in participating and representing the DMNA. Hantge will pass his name and

contact info on to Collison. The DMNA Board will continue to discuss ways that it can be of value or assistance to the businesses in its neighborhoods.

- C. Thrivent Financial Employee Engagement Fair.** McCrea stated Dan Collison also reached out to see if the DMNA would be interested in having a table at Thrivent's Employee Engagement Fair coming up on April 7th and 8th. The DMNA could share information about the organization and its work. The goal would be to talk with employees who also live in the downtown community and get them engaged in the DMNA. Hantge advised EPNI is also invited to participate. Board members who expressed interest in sitting at a table for a few hours of time over those 2 days were Erickson who revealed he's a new Thrivent (<https://www.infaithfound.org/>) employee, Frazell, and Sweet.
- D. NūLoop Partners Sponsorship Renewal.** Tabled until the next Board meeting. Hantge will invite Executive Director Dan Collison to provide an update.
- E. Neighborhoods 2020 Update.** Frazell, who has attended all three community meetings, provided an update. This topic should be on our March agenda as the public comment period for the draft funding program and operating guidelines runs through April 10th.

In terms of what we pay attention to and how we do it, the DMNA is very different from most neighborhood associations operating in this city. Frazell then summarized what he heard at the Committee of the Whole on February 12th. For more detailed information, reference his email Hantge forwarded on February 25th.

**XIII. DMNA Outreach and Collaboration**

For a complete listing of the organizations and committees in which the DMNA is engaged, please reference the Outreach and Collaboration Chart prepared by Sweet included in the February 2020 Board materials on the DMNA's website.

**XIV. Next Board Meeting**

Monday, March 30th, at 5:45 p.m., in the ADM Room at the Mill City Museum.

**XV. Adjournment**

There being no further business,

*Sweet moved and McCrea seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. McCrea called for discussion. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.*

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary