

DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the Board Meeting on Monday, July 20, 2020 Via Zoom

I. Call to Order

Chair Pamela McCrea called the Board meeting to order at 5:46 p.m.

Other Board members in attendance were:

Max Erickson

Kevin Frazell, Vice Chair

Tomek Rajtar

Laurie Rice

Joey Senkyr

Carletta Sweet, Secretary

Joe Tamburino

Dianne Walsh, Treasurer

Staff member Christie Rock Hantge was also present.

Zoom guests in attendance included:

Jacob Brown, Minneapolis Public Works

Jono Cowgill, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

John Edwards, Wedge LIVE!

Steve Fletcher, Minneapolis City Council

Stephanie K

Lianna Leal, Lyft

Quentin Misiag, Ironclad Residences

Thomas Novak, American Trio Lofts

Dean Ramos, Arka Kapital, LLC

Wendy Rubinyl

Thomas Schmid, Washburn Lofts

Bri Sharkey-Smith, North Loop Neighborhood Association

Mary Suilmann, Bridgewater Lofts

II. Consideration of Agenda

McCrea moved and Frazell seconded a motion to approve the agenda.

III. Minneapolis Scooter Share Program Update

Jacob Brown, Operations Analyst at Minneapolis Public Works (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jacob-brown-mba-45880124/>), provided an update on the 2020 Scooter Share Program. He noted the City has contracted with two scooter operators this year: Bird and Lyft. This is a reduction by one from last year, which also included Lime. Due to COVID-19, there was a significant delay in the start date for the 2020 program and the scooters were only recently installed on the streets. There has been a

significant change to scooter parking regulations in Minneapolis, with a new requirement that scooters must be locked to a public bike rack, on-street corral, or municipal signpost (except bus stops and stop signs) when parked and not in use. Brown stated that there is a geo-fence up around Gold Medal Park.

Brown then responded to questions from the Board and community members participating in the Zoom meeting. Concerns raised included underage riders, riders on sidewalks, riders not wearing helmets, and lack of signage showing the rules for riding in the downtown community. Brown stated that riders must use the bike lanes as riding on sidewalks is illegal, and bike helmets are strongly recommended, but they will not enforce the use of them. He will look into getting more signage placed around downtown. Senkyr also inquired about collaborating with the City of St. Paul in the future on operators so that riders could take scooters across the river. Brown said though an interesting idea, it would be challenging to implement between two large municipalities. The current agreements with the scooter operators run through December 2021.

For more information, visit <http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/trans/WCMSP-212816>.

IV. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Update

Jono Cowgill, 4th District Commissioner

(<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/about-us/leadership-and-structure/commissioners/jono-cowgill/>), provided an update on the MPRB's recently passed resolution regarding homeless encampments in Minneapolis parks (<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/encampments/>). The new plan allows for up to 25 tents in 20 different parks across Minneapolis. Cowgill also reviewed the work the City and Hennepin County are doing to address homelessness (<http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/cped/housing/WCMS1P-081097>). Upon concluding his report, he responded to questions and concerns from the Board and community members participating in the Zoom meeting. The following points were raised:

- There is open space in downtown shelters. These locations would be a much better solution for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness than the encampments in Minneapolis parks, because of the resources they have access to and the specialized services they provide.
- Some people who are homeless are choosing not to access shelters, because they do not allow the use of drugs and alcohol. The MPRB prohibits the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco in Minneapolis parks, but it is not enforcing these rules in the encampments. The MPRB should hold the people living in the encampments accountable to the same rules related to drug, alcohol, and tobacco use as the rest of the population.
- The encampments in The Commons and along West River Parkway are a health and safety concern to downtown residents. The encampments are also hindering, if not prohibiting, the ability of residents to use and enjoy the parks. Parents with children have expressed concern about visiting the parks due to language they have heard used by people living in the encampments, as well as some inappropriate behaviors they have witnessed. The MPRB needs to monitor these locations to ensure they remain below the 20-tent threshold and to make certain that residents are following park rules related to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use.

- There is growing concern about the economic impact the encampments are having on the city. Minneapolis is widely known for its park system. In fact, the Trust for Public Lands recently named it the Best City Park System in the United States (<https://www.minneapolisparke.org/news/2020/05/20/minneapolis-named-best-city-park-system-in-u-s-on-trust-for-public-lands-annual-parkscore-index/#:~:text=As%20the%20world%20weathers%20the.after%20placing%20second%20last%20year.>). Because of the encampments there is concern people will choose not to visit Minneapolis. This will have a negative impact on the business community.
- There is a need to develop a long-term plan for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Minneapolis. There is concern that the MPRB reacted too quickly to the encampments. There is a big difference between reacting and responding. A response is well thought out; a reaction typically provokes more reaction, and nothing gets accomplished. We appreciate that the MPRB is now working on a coordinated plan with Hennepin County and the City to help people living in the encampments find more dignified housing before winter.

McCrea concluded by stating the DMNA wishes the MPRB, City and Hennepin County to work together to address this challenging issue, and that it looks forward to staying in communication with Commissioner Cowgill to provide regular updates at Board meetings.

V. Ward 3 Update

City Council Member Steve Fletcher reported on the following:

- Enforcement of the City's mask mandate.
- Mike Mulrooney (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mike-mulrooney-356b0621/>), owner of Pog Mahone's, is expanding his business into the former Sanctuary restaurant space.
- The Birchwood Café and the Minnesota Farmers Union will be opening in the former Spoonriver space next spring (<https://growlermag.com/order-up-birchwood-cafe-and-the-minnesota-farmers-union-look-to-build-on-their-state-fair-success-in-the-spoonriver-space/>).
- The Mayor's revised 2020 City Budget relies heavily on the transfer of funds as opposed to layoffs at this point. This will leave the City with some tough decisions in 2022 and 2023. The City Council is generally supportive of this concept.
- The City is looking at ways to address policing challenges with significant staff shortages. They plan to invest more dollars in violence prevention programs.
- Charter Commission met today and will meet again multiple times before making a final decision on August 5th, on whether to place the proposed Charter Amendment on the November ballot.
- There are three transitional housing projects coming online soon. Permanent, supportive housing is the best solution to homelessness.
- The City needs the State's help / support to address racism.

Thereafter, Fletcher responded to questions from the Board and members of the community participating in the meeting via Zoom. Tamburino asked about the recently passed City Council resolution that declares racism a public health emergency

(<http://news.minneapolismn.gov/S2020/07/17/city-council-declares-racism-a-public-health-emergency/>). He's

concerned about language in the resolution related to decarceration, reserving arrest only for violent and other major crimes, and easing and dismissing cash bail. Frazell expressed concern that the City may lose some of its best officers due to recent City Council actions.

Questions and comments from community members related to confusion and worry over the City Council's proposed Charter Amendment and how it has been presented / represented to the public. What does it mean? What is the difference between defunding and disbanding? They are worried about how the City will respond to violent crimes without a police department. Community members are also concerned about the increase in crime and vandalism in downtown; criminals seem emboldened by recent events. It also seems like the MPD is taking longer to respond to calls. Fletcher said he takes all these comments seriously, but that now is the time to make substantial reform to the MPD. He assured the Board and community members there will be opportunities for the public to engage in the discussions regarding the future of policing in Minneapolis.

VI. Consideration of the Consent Agenda

After Treasurer Dianne Walsh advised she reviewed all the financial documents received from Hantge and found no issues,

Walsh moved and Tamburino seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda which included the June Board meeting minutes; F2020 Budget vs. Actual for the period ending June 30, 2020; and the Neighborhood Coordinator / Finance Coordinator staff report for June (Invoice #066). McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

VII. Land Use Committee Report

Board Liaison Kevin Frazell reported on the following:

A. Certificate of Appropriateness Application for partial removal of the chimney at The Depot (<https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/download/Agenda/823/PLAN11057-300%20Washington%20Ave%20S-SR%20and%20attachments.pdf/45881/1761/PLAN11057-300%20Washington%20Ave%20S>) presented by Melissa Ekman, Architect at Miller Dunwidde (<http://www.millerdunwiddie.com/people/melissa-ekman/>), and Dan Hustad, Construction Project Manager at CSM Corporation (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-hustad-bbb8a928/>).

Ekman gave an overview of the property's history (<https://thedepotminneapolis.com/history/>, and <https://www.minnpost.com/politics-policy/2018/04/how-depot-saved-downtown-minneapolis/>), the 150-foot chimney itself, and explained its current condition. Over the past year, structural engineers thoroughly evaluated the chimney to verify its conditions after debris fell from the top and broke a car window. At the time of the incident, CSM Corporation performed emergency temporary repairs to remove any and all loose material until structural engineers could perform a more thorough assessment. The final assessment confirmed the chimney is currently 12-inches out of plumb leaning towards the river. Additionally, the topmost 50-feet of the chimney is in the worst condition, requiring a significant amount of custom brick replacement (approximately 40%) and repointing (100%). The lower 100 feet is in better condition needing only approximately 5-10% custom brick replacement and repointing.

Ekman outlined three possible solutions: (1) Restore the full chimney; (2) Remove the topmost deteriorated section of the chimney; or (3) Remove the chimney completely. CSM's preference would be to remove the topmost deteriorated 50 feet to salvage brick for repairs at the lower 100 feet. This will also reduce the visual impact of the lean which is a liability to the owner, staff and guests of the hotel.

The LUC recommended support for the CoA application for option 2, the partial removal of the chimney. It's the LUC's position to support CSM's proposed approach to repair the old chimney; it's a fair and economical solution to fix the deteriorating chimney that is no longer used. This chimney is next to an underground parking garage so a heavy crane cannot be used to help with the repair effort. It would be expensive to repair the entire existing chimney. The committee appreciates CSM Corporation's interest in retaining the historic character of the Milwaukee Road Depot property, while protecting the public's safety.

- B. On-Sale Wine and Strong Beer Liquor License Application** for ETC Coffee Shop at Thrivent Financial (<http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/licensing/WCMSP-225412>) presented by Chad Hexum, VP of Operations at Euresst Dining Services (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/chad-hexum-b855aa30/>). He noted food will be available during the hours of operation, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., however, he provided no specific menu. There will be no live music inside or outside, and no speakers in the outdoor areas. The plan is to open it to Thrivent employees at some point this fall, and to open it to the public at a later date pending changes to COVID-19 restrictions.

The LUC recommended approval of the liquor license application for ETC Coffee Shop.

- C. Affordable Housing Trust Fund Application** for Housing Project on St. Olaf's parking lot (<https://finance-commerce.com/2019/04/st-olaf-catholic-church-plans-affordable-rentals-in-downtown-minneapolis/>) by Mark Lucas, Real Estate Developer (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/markdlucas/>), along with representatives from Aeon, St. Olaf Catholic Church, and Westminster Presbyterian Church. Lucas explained this is a collaborative effort between St. Olaf Catholic Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church. St. Olaf owns a surface parking lot next door to the church and has partnered with Catholic Charities on the Exodus Residences since 1995. Catholic Charities will cease the relationship with the Exodus property after they complete a renovation of the former Augustana property in Elliot Park. Westminster intends to contribute a significant amount of money to St. Olaf to help replace housing they demolished as part of their previous expansion project. The plan is to construct a new mid-rise building with 120 units of affordable housing for ages 55 plus on the St. Olaf parking lot, and to remodel the Exodus property, plus build an addition with 120 units of supportive housing.

The LUC recommended support for Aeon's application and expressed appreciation for the contributions this project will make to affordable housing opportunities in the downtown community.

VIII. Chair's Report

A. Crime and Safety Challenges in the Downtown Community. Because McCrea has received a lot of calls regarding crime taking place on Hennepin Avenue and the Nicollet Mall, she has been in contact with Steve Cramer at the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Ward 3 Council Member Steve Fletcher about the problems. The DID plans to concentrate its Ambassador Program and Street Outreach in this area.

B. Strategic Planning Task Forces Updates

1. Branding. Walsh reviewed her plan for distributing the DMNA branded face masks within the community. She would like each DMNA Board member to give out at least six masks. She plans to reserve 50 masks for the grand opening celebration for the Public Safety Center and future in-person forums and events. She also brought up the idea for distributing masks at Trader Joe's, but no specific date was set.

Walsh moved and Rajtar seconded the motion to approve Walsh's plan to distribute the DMNA branded face masks. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

2. Outreach and Collaboration. Frazell had no new information to report at this time.

3. HOA Advisory Group. Rice reported this group will meet again on August 27th. The agenda includes a presentation by the Minneapolis Downtown Council / Downtown Improvement District. There are currently 16 condo buildings with representation.

C. Public Safety Forum. McCrea stated that Tim Bildsoe, President of the North Loop Neighborhood Association, reached out to her to see if the DMNA would be interested in co-hosting a public safety forum in the near future for the purpose of giving CM Fletcher the opportunity to provide a more detailed explanation of the City Council's proposed Charter Amendment. Some Board members wanted representation from the MPD to participate in the forum as well, others did not. Some expressed concern about the outcome of the meeting if both CM Fletcher and the MPD were participating together; they want the forum to be informative as opposed to contentious and argumentative. McCrea stated that Bildsoe plans to have a moderator for the forum, possibly Dave Tinjum from the *Mill City Times*, to help keep things on track.

Rajtar moved and Rice seconded a motion to co-host a public safety forum with the North Loop Neighborhood Association if there is representation from the MPD. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed with Senkyr opposing.

D. Ad Hoc Committees Discussion. McCrea explained she is seeking support from the Board to establish two ad hoc committees:

1. Civic Engagement. McCrea introduced Bri Sharkey-Smith (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bri-sharkeysmith/>), Board member of the North Loop Neighborhood Association, to talk about their Civic Engagement Committee. Sharkey-Smith gave examples of projects their committee has worked on and events they've hosted, e.g., neighborhood cleanups, voter

registration, blood drives, and recently a donation drive for communities in North and South Minneapolis whose businesses have been impacted by the social unrest (<https://northloop.org/outpouring-donations-hurting-communities/>).

Quentin Misiag (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/quentinmisiag/>) introduced himself and stated he is interested in organizing cleanup events for the DMNA. He lives at the Ironclad, but previously lived in the North Loop where he participated in their cleanup events. He suggested the following dates and times for this event:

- Saturday, August 8, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Sunday, August 9, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Misiag suggested starting at 205 Bark at The Vicinity (<https://thevicinitympls.com/205-bark/>), and then allowing volunteers to disperse throughout the neighborhood. Hantge will order garbage bags and gloves from the City and have them delivered to Misiag's residence.

McCrea is willing to round up volunteers for this committee. There was no specific motion to establish the committee at this time.

2. **Public Safety.** McCrea stated that due to recent City Council decisions, it makes sense for the DMNA to consider establishing a Public Safety Task Force and Tom Schmid is possibly interested in chairing the committee; he has a background in sociology and criminology. The hope would be to attract members to the committee with similar experience. The DMNA would invite potential candidates to submit an application to explain their interest and the skills they would bring to the table. Anyone who lives, works, or owns property in Downtown East or Downtown West can participate on the task force. Schmid would like to get this started ASAP, due to the Charter Commission's pending decision on the City Council's proposed Charter Amendment.

Walsh moved and Rajtar seconded a motion to establish a Public Safety Task Force. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

Hantge will work with McCrea to prepare an announcement that the DMNA is seeking members for a Public Safety Task Force to post on the Website, Facebook, and distributed through the weekly eblast. She will also forward the announcement to the *Mill City Times*.

IX. New / Old / Other Business

The DMNA's annual meeting is scheduled for October 27th at Open Book. It will likely be virtual because Open Book is still closed with no expected date for re-opening to the public. McCrea is still looking for Board members to help with the planning.

X. 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 July 2020 Board materials on the DMNA's website.

XI. Next Board Meeting

Monday, August 17, 2020, at 5:45 p.m. via Zoom.

XII. Adjournment

There being no further business,

*Rice moved and Tamburino seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. McCrea called for discussion.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.*

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2020

Chair

Secretary