

DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the Board of Directors Meeting on Monday, March 15, 2021

Via Zoom

Meeting Recording*:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Kr012h2KxldbvlB2zdxayMKCN9rhPx1YD6DFG8nLSXGYtjdCx-yuD0JeOgRuRODg.lle-4sEI0Odd1Qzf>

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Pamela McCrea called the Board meeting to order at 5:49 p.m.

Other Board members in attendance were:

Max Erickson
Kevin Frazell, Vice Chair
Andrew Gittleman
Tomek Rajtar
Laurie Rice
Carletta Sweet, Secretary
Joe Tamburino
Dianne Walsh, Treasurer

Staff member Christie Rock Hantge was also present.

Zoom guests in attendance included:

Martha Archer, Mill City Farmers Market
Janelle Beenken, Public Safety Task Force
Emmy Carter, Mill City Farmers Market
Nathanael Consoli
Steve Cramer, Minneapolis Downtown Council
Susan Field, Humboldt Lofts, Public Safety Task Force
Casey Hudek, Working Partnerships
Bill Jones, Public Safety Task Force
Brenda Langton, Mill City Farmers Market
Douglas Pearson, Centre Village
Dean Ramos, Washburn Lofts
Wendy Rubinyi, Bridgewater Lofts
Elizabeth Schaffer, candidate for the MPRB
Tom Schmid, Washburn Lofts, Public Safety Task Force

Ben Shardlow, MDC-DID
Amanda Wigen, Friends of the Falls
Shane Zahn, Minneapolis DID

** Zoom meeting recording includes the pre-Board meeting discussion on the Conflict of Interest, Code of Conduct, and Media Policies and Procedures that will go before the full Board at the April meeting*

II. Consideration of Agenda

There being no changes or amendments, the agenda was approved as submitted.

III. Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District 2021 Safety Plan

After Steve Cramer, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, introduced himself, Shane Zahn, Director of Safe Initiatives at the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, provided an overview on the five categories their robust plan is based (<https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/DID-SafetyPlanVisual.pdf>):

- *Communications and collaborations.* They continue to work with downtown properties via RadioLINK that connects to the DID Safety Communications Center in the 1st Precinct (<https://www.mplsdid.com/safetycommunications>).
- *Security presence and response.* They continue operations for clean, hospitality, and safety every day even through COVID, most noticeably via the Ambassadors (<https://www.mplsdid.com/ambassadors>). They also continue the Joint Beats program which brings extra Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and Metro Transit officers to downtown; it usually kicks off around Memorial Day and runs through Labor Day (https://www.mplsdid.com/news_article/show/1106325). They continue to invest heavily in police buyback (<https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/File/2021-00392>) and leverage downtown security forces.
- *Livability outreach and street engagement.* They continue operations for homeless and mental health issues to triage resources via the Livability Team (<https://www.mplsdid.com/livability>), YouthLink (<https://www.youthlinkmn.org/>), Youth Coordinating Board (<https://www.ycb.org/>), St. Stephen's (<https://ststephensmpls.org/>), Office of Violence Prevention's violence interrupters (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/health/office-violence-prevention/violence-prevention-initiatives/> and <https://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-seeks-proposals-for-violence-interrupters-as-warmer-temperatures-loom/600029099/>), and MAD DADS (<http://minneapolismaddads.org/>).

New this year, to address a range of mental health and chemical dependency issues more effectively throughout downtown, they've contracted with Hennepin County to hire a dedicated social worker who will work with their Livability Team and other outreach partners to:

- Understand the downtown landscape;
- Respond to *nonemergency* service calls – a minivan has been purchased for noncrisis transport to Hennepin County Mental Health Center when requested by the DID Safety Communications Center;
- Conduct assessments of individuals and evaluate risks to their safety and stability by working with the Strategic Justice Partnership (<https://www.mplsdid.com/safety>), formerly known as the Downtown 100, to find backend resources to fit their needs;
- Track referrals/repeat calls/geographic demands/other trends to continuously adapt to the field work; and

- Be a part of the MPD weekly team meetings to understand crime trends and social service solutions.
- *Advocacy for a safer downtown.* This is done through their committees (<https://www.mplsdid.com/committees>), but they have a lot of work to do on this front.
- *Activation, vibrancy, and crime prevention through environmental design.* They're working with the Minnesota Twins to roll out the red carpet and reanimate downtown in time for their opener on April 8th. For more information, visit <https://www.mplsdid.com/tui>.

They have about a \$60,000 gap in their safety budget this year and are moving ahead with a lot of their plans, most of which doesn't start until after Memorial Day. As of January 1st, they were 60% out of the gate to be in early. The safety plan isn't perfect but they'll be adapting, pivoting, adjusting and learning as they go.

Cramer commented our community and the DMNA has been debating and dialoguing about the right approach to public safety strategy for some time and last year the DMNA adopted some guiding principles (<https://www.thedmna.org/guiding-principles-for-police-reform-public-safety/>). Zahn's third category is tied to the notion that a good comprehensive safety plan needs to employ a number of different strategies and law enforcement needs to be a critical part of it. Downtown has been behaving and investing in that way through the DID for many years.

Furthermore, the enhancement, which is the partnership with Hennepin County, was very purposeful. DID has known that HC has had this [Sequential Intercept Model (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequential_Intercept_Model)] they implemented in a few suburban communities with police departments, and the more they learned about it (https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/your-government/projects-initiatives/documents/Criminal_Justice-Behavioral_Health_Initiative_Report_2020.pdf), the more it seemed like a great proven model to bring into downtown and pair it with their Livability Team which in turn is well networked with all the law enforcement resources. They're excited about it and think it will be a real enhancement of the commitment to law enforcement plus strategy for downtown safety.

Cramer reiterated they have about a \$60,000 gap in their safety plan budget, and they're always grateful for the DMNA's consideration of the projects they bring forward. Since the DMNA indicated an interest in the new partnership with Hennepin County, they welcome its support of the social worker component. Hantge clarified it will be discussed but not acted upon later in the meeting.

IV. Updates from DMNA Funded Groups

- A. Mill City Farmers Market.** Brenda Langton, Founder, shared that last summer when they pivoted to make the market safe, they had to make the tough decision to get rid of half their vendors for physical distancing, but people came and said it made the neighborhood alive and they felt safe versus what they felt at other markets. For 2021, they'll be opening the same as last year, on the

first Saturday in May. They were able to keep a lot of their sponsors like the DMNA but lost a couple big ones and are working on getting new ones. Then she advised the Birchwood Café and the Minnesota Farmers Union who bought Spoon River is doing some remodeling and will probably wait for patio season to open; she's excited to see that space bringing more energy to the neighborhood to make it safe, vibrant, and healthy. She thanked the DMNA for its past financial support and expressed gratitude for the DMNA's long-standing partnership with the MCFM.

After Development Manager Emmy Carter (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/emmycarter/>) introduced herself and stated she's looking forward to meeting everyone, Executive Director Martha Archer (<https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/our-team/>), while using a slide presentation, recapped what transpired since the country shut down last year due to COVID and MCFM opened as an outdoor Winter Market and has done so since as an essential business. They did such a good job they were asked to present best practices on what they were doing to stay open and making it a safe place to grocery shop across the country. There are three more Winter Markets left until they open for the Summer Market on May 1st.

Archer also described what funding supports, e.g., extra staff, volunteers, early morning security (an added expense they never had to incur) and, thanks to the DMNA, a handwashing station. Income is down and expenses are up but the MCFM is continuing to lift the neighborhood and community and share all the successes. She extended kudos to the DMNA for the good work it's doing in our community.

For more information, please visit <https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/>.

B. Greening Lab. Ben Shardlow, Director of Urban Design at Minneapolis Downtown Council & Downtown Improvement District (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/benshardlow/>), thanked the DMNA for its ongoing support of the Greening Lab (<https://www.mplsdid.com/greeninglab> and <https://www.greenminneapolis.org/projects/greening-lab/>) and presented the 2020 (Year 4) Year in Review by describing the following accomplishments:

- Eighth Street Stormwater Planters (<https://www.mwmo.org/projects/eighth-street-stormwater-planters/>)
- Educating the public on smart salting techniques (<https://www.mwmo.org/news/to-protect-its-greener-downtown-minneapolis-turns-to-smart-salting/>)
- Watering of over 250 trees, not a normal year due to a monsoon-level rain events and civil unrest
- Scavenger Hunt with automatic texting to add a level of engagement
- Fun videos to learn more about the Greening Lab
- Tree census event in partnership with the DMNA
- Created a citizen science kit for soil sampling
- International Downtown Association Downtown Achievement Award (https://www.mplsdid.com/news_article/show/1126477)

Shardlow also reviewed the scope of work for the Greening Lab in 2021 highlighting the following:

- Research, which includes soil sensors, discovery kits, tree tags and the tree census;
- Maintenance, which includes tree watering and the re-planting of empty tree sites; and
- Engagement with the community, which includes a scavenger hunt and tree census.

Then he explained because other funders cannot fund care of trees, every year there is gap in funding, so their ask of the DMNA will be focused on watering of trees downtown and why he comes back year after year with the same request. He'll make sure the request will be tightly formulated.

- C. Midwest Skateboard Alliance.** Ben Shardlow provided an update on the Midwest Skateboard Alliance's (<https://www.midwestskateboard.com/downtown-breakroom>) proposal to establish a skate park called the Downtown Breakroom in a multi-use pocket park located at 2nd Avenue North and North 4th Street in the North Loop. The MSA recently received its 501(c)(3) status and is working to secure funding to complete the build out of the park. Shardlow is asking the DMNA to provide a letter of support for the project.

Frazell moved and Walsh seconded a motion to provide a letter of support (which was included in the Board package) for the Midwest Skateboard Alliance's Downtown Breakroom skatepark. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

- D. Working Partnerships.** Casey Hudek, Campaigns Manager for the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation (https://www.minneapolisunions.org/cluc_about.php), the umbrella organization for unions in Minneapolis and core partner of Twin Cities Hospitality and Event Workers' Relief Fund (<https://www.twincitieshospitalityfund.org/>) for which Working Partnerships (<http://workingpartnerships.org/>) is the fiscal sponsor, thanked the DMNA for its support last year and explained the TCHEWRF program has provided support for nearly 1,300 workers through direct grants and navigation services that the DMNA's contribution has gone towards. Because nearly 80% of the industry is still laid off due to business closures and event cancellations, and there is still an ongoing need for Navigators, they are launching another round of fundraising to cover an \$18,000 deficit in their budget (<https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Twin-Cities-Hospitality-Worker-Relief-Program-Update-03-15-2021.pdf>).

To exemplify the level of need for their program, he enumerated the downtown employers – e.g., Downtown Cabaret, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis Convention Center, The Normandy, Target Center, Target Field, U.S. Bank Stadium – who received a grant or navigator support for at least 6 of their employees. They're also working with the Dislocated Worker Program (<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/dislocated-worker/>) and Hennepin Theatre Trust workers to ensure they're connected with their program.

Hudek extended gratitude to the City and the DMNA for their support in helping workers get back on their feet.

V. Consent Agenda

Frazell moved and Rice seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda which included the amended February 2021 meeting minutes; F2020 Budget vs. Actual for the period ending February 28, 2021; and the Neighborhood Coordinator / Finance Coordinator staff report for February (Invoice #74). McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

VI. Land Use Committee Report

Committee Chair Frazell reported on the following items that received letters of support at the March 2nd LUC meeting:

- **Disposition of the Lock and Dam.** Amanda Wigen from the Friends of the Falls provided the same presentation to the LUC as she did to the DMNA Board on February 22nd. The LUC supports the recommendation of the Friends of the Falls regarding the disposition of the Lock and Dam. The LUC agrees that partial disposition is the best path forward, i.e.:
 - The Army Corps continues to own and maintain the Lock, sustaining its essential functions such as managing floods and ensuring a reliable drinking water supply for one million Twin Citians.
 - Land around the Lock, which the Army Corps no longer needs, is transferred to the City of Minneapolis or its designee to create a community gathering place at the river.

For more information on the Friends of the Falls position on the disposition of the Lock and Dam, visit, <https://thefalls.org/disposition-study/>

- **425 South 6th Street.** Interstate Parking is seeking three sign variances for the parking ramp located on the parking lot next to the former Thrivent Financial building. The purpose of the signs is to provide a clear wayfinding route for vehicle traffic and to help reduce street congestion. In addition, Interstate Parking will use the signs to advertise parking rates, which can differ based on time of day or due to events, as well as to display the standard parking “P”, commonly used to indicate entrances to public parking ramps.

Frazell stated the variances are necessary to allow dynamic changeable copy signs at each of the three entrances to the parking ramp. The zoning code limits the number of dynamic signs on a zoning lot to one. A variance is also necessary to place the signage on non-primary building walls. Interstate Parking would like to place the signs on exterior walls at the entrances to the ramp that face oncoming traffic, rather than the street.

- **800 Washington Avenue South.** AECOM and Beowulf Energy are proposing a mixed-use project on this City-owned parcel. AECOM has met with the LUC on several occasions over the past year. At the March 2nd meeting, the development team presented the updated site plan for the project, which reflects a reduction in the number of floors from 14 to seven. The LUC is happy that the architect retained the unique design of the building but appreciates that it complements other properties in the immediate area, both new and historic.

Frazell noted the project addresses the City's housing goals as outlined in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. It makes good use of a small, but highly visible property in the Downtown East / Mill District neighborhood that is within walking distance to transit and other amenities. The LUC is also extremely excited about the partnership with the City of Lakes Community Land Trust; it has been advocating for more affordable housing opportunities in the community and believes this project could serve as a model for other developers that need to incorporate affordable homeownership into their projects.

Frazell added the LUC has a strong interest in the public realm and wants to see the developer meet or exceed the guidelines established in the Downtown Public Realm Framework and those established for the Washington Avenue reconstruction. The LUC loves the art walk / green space located between the backside of the building and the Riverfront Municipal Parking Ramp / Guthrie Parking Ramp. The LUC looks forward to future updates from the developer on the landscaping and lighting plans.

Finally, Frazell noted the LUC also heard updates from MV Ventures regarding 240 Park Avenue, specifically about the mosaic wall along the parking structure, as well as the Harlem Irving / CA Ventures project located at 21 Washington Avenue North.

Frazell moved and Rice seconded a motion to approve the letters of support for Friends of the Falls' recommendation for disposition of the Lock and Dam, Interstate Parking's three sign variances for the parking ramp at 425 South 6th Street, and AECOM/Beowulf's updated site plan for 800 Washington Avenue South. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

The next meeting of the LUC will take place on Tuesday, April 6th.

VII. Civic Engagement Committee Report

Committee Chair Max Erickson stated the last meeting of this committee was on March 11th, then reported on the following:

- **National Night Out.** This subcommittee is led by Melanie Hess. They are working on a survey to distribute to residents and business owners to get input on what the community would like to see in a National Night Out event and how they might support it. The subcommittee believes the DMNA can host a COVID friendly event on August 3rd. Erickson will bring the survey back to the Board in April for review and approval prior to distributing.
- **Neighborhood Identification Signage.** This subcommittee is led by Wendy Rubinyi. The committee is gathering information from the City and working to identify locations for metal neighborhood signage similar to what other neighborhoods have installed on the boundaries for Downtown East and Downtown West. They are also discussing the possibility of installing banner signage that brands the Mill District potentially along 2nd Street and Washington Avenue. Hantge is working to obtain sign guidelines and requirements for the Mill District.

The next meeting of this committee will take place on Thursday, April 8th.

I. Public Safety Task Force

Task Force Chair Tom Schmid started the report. He indicated they have done more significant analysis of the resident survey results and have also started distributing the resident survey report to media outlets, along with elected and public officials. Schmid also announced there have been several resignations from the task force over the past few weeks and noted his last meeting will be on March 24th. Tamburino expressed interest in taking over as the chair and that there are approximately four or five members left at this point.

Frazell offered alternative ways that the DMNA might address public safety issues going forward:

- Continue to support the work of the Public Safety task force as it functions today, allowing it to work with a great deal of independence. This would include creating and communicating its own positions on downtown public safety issues. Also allow it to operate its own social media platforms, as the members see fit.
- Discontinue the Task Force on the basis that its desired level of independence is incompatible with the operating standards of the DMNA and need for the board to maintain accountability for positions taken under the name of the organization. Remaining task force members who are interested could reorganize themselves as a private group with freedom to advocate for their preferred solutions for the City's public safety issues as they believe best.

If the Task Force is discontinued the DMNA Board could choose to continue its own engagement with public safety issues through one of two ways:

- Establish a new committee that facilitates public engagement on public safety issues but reports back to the board for action on any positions to be adopted as official DMNA policy. Existing Task Force members would be welcome, but DMNA would also advertise for new members. Per DMNA by-laws and City requirements for funded neighborhood associations, the committee meetings would be open to anyone who wants to attend. (Frazell offered that he is concerned it might be getting a bit late in the process to get a new group up and running.)
- The Board itself absorbs the work of monitoring public safety issues in the city, informing residents of opportunities to be involved in public discussions. The Board could take positions consistent with the adopted Guiding Principles for Public Safety and Police Reform. If the current Task Force members have reorganized as a private group, they would be most welcome to advocate that DMNA take specific actions or positions. But the Board would also hear from other groups or individuals advocating for particular positions.

The Public Safety Task Force meets again on March 24th.

VIII. Strategic Planning Task Forces

A. Branding. Walsh stated the Branding Committee is primarily working on the Historic Signage Project. The first meeting of this group is on March 16h where they'll start initially with signage for the Mill District and then move further into the downtown community. The purpose of the project is to enhance the pedestrian experience for residents and visitors and increase the sense of

community. She is still looking for volunteers to participate on this committee. If you have an interest or know of someone who might be a good member, please let her or Hantge know. Walsh also said she would talk further with Brenda Langton from the Mill City Farmers Market regarding her idea for a DMNA branded spatula for a giveaway at this year's market.

B. HOA Advisory Group. Rice reported the HOA Advisory Group has not met since the last Board meeting. Their next meeting will take place on Thursday, April 15th.

IX. New / Old / Other Business

The Board considered contributing to the following groups that presented funding requests earlier in the meeting:

A. Mill City Farmers Market

1. \$10,000 per year for 2021, 2022 and 2023 supported by funds from the Community Participation Program and Neighborhood Priorities Plan Arts, Culture and Education strategy.

Gittleman moved and Frazell seconded a motion to support a \$10,000 contribution per year for the next three years to the Mill City Farmers Market. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

2. \$7,375 in 2021 for COVID related expenses at the Summer Market supported by funds from the Neighborhood Priorities Plan Reserve Fund.

McCrea moved and Walsh seconded a motion to support a Plan Modification to move \$7,375 from the Neighborhood Priorities Plan Reserve Fund to the Neighborhoods Respond to COVID Fund to support COVID related expenses at the Summer Market. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

B. Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District for the Greening Lab

\$10,000 per year for 2021, 2022 and 2023 supported by funds from the Community Participation Program and Neighborhood Priorities Plan Downtown Development strategy.

Walsh moved and Rice seconded a motion to support a \$10,000 contribution per year for the next three years to the Minneapolis DID for the Greening Lab. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

C. Working Partnerships for the Twin Cities Hospitality Worker Relief Program

\$44,000 for 2021 supported by funds from the Neighborhood Priorities Plan Reserve Fund.

Walsh moved and McCrea seconded a motion to support a Plan Modification to move \$44,000 from the Neighborhood Priorities Plan Reserve Fund to the Neighborhoods Respond to COVID Fund for Working

Partnerships Twin Cities Hospitality Worker Relief Program. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

This contribution also requires a community vote because the Plan Modification is greater than \$25,000. The community vote will take place at the April 19th Board meeting.

D. Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District 2021 Safety Plan Social Worker

\$60,000 for 2021 supported by funds from the Neighborhood Priorities Plan Reserve Fund.

Walsh moved and Gittleman seconded a motion to support a Plan Modification to move \$60,000 from the Neighborhood Priorities Plan Reserve Fund to the Neighborhoods Respond to COVID Fund for the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District's 2021 Safety Plan, specifically the Social Worker strategy. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

This contribution also requires a community vote because the Plan Modification is greater than \$25,000. The community vote will take place at the April 19, board meeting.

E. April agenda items

1. Presentation from People Serving People regarding their Parking Lot Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project
2. Presentation from the Midwest Skateboard Alliance regarding the Downtown Breakroom Skatepark

X. Next Board Meeting

Monday, April 19th at 5:45 p.m. via Zoom.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business,

Gittleman moved and Sweet seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. McCrea called for discussion. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2021

Chair

Secretary