

DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the Board of Directors Meeting on Monday, February 28, 2022

Via Zoom

Meeting Recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/1LxE9z8r4-Pbt7O4rq0jQXsqsdot_vSq93xc-LnYr09X0g0LtZjb4ybBAj22dSE.Nsm23hHVdxYdCZTh

I. Call to Order

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

Other Board members in attendance were:

Jim Bishop
Andrew Gittleman, Vice President
Abby Larson
Laurie Rice
Carletta Sweet, Secretary
Joe Tamburino

Board Members Douglas Pearson and Treasurer Dianne Walsh were absent.

Executive Director Christie Rock Hantge was also present.

Zoom guests in attendance included:

Larry Dole, The Legacy Condominiums	Ryan SanCartier, Ward 3 Policy Aide
Ella Graham, Minnesota GreenCorps	Elizabeth Shaffer, MRPB District 4 Commissioner
Randy Manthey, The Carlyle Condominiums	Ben Shardlow, MDC-DID
Lynn Purcell	Dustin Sprouse, River Towers
Michael Rainville, Ward 3 Council Member	Amanda Wigen, Friends of the Falls

II. Consideration of Agenda

Gittleman moved and Bishop seconded a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

III. The Falls Initiative Update

Amanda Wigen, Communications Director at Friends of The Falls (<https://thefalls.org/friends-of-the-falls/>), noted they've come before the DMNA quite a few times to talk about The Falls Initiative, the project at the Upper Lock, more specifically the land *surrounding* the Upper Lock and not the Lock itself, and because there have been some major updates in the last few months she's taking this opportunity to reconnect and help enforce the work they'll be doing in the coming months. They're pursuing two tracks to ensure the project moves forward: 1) securing a path to site control; and 2) progressing on community engagement.

On the site control side, a key milestone in December 2020 was the passage of the Water Resources Development Act or WRDA (<https://transportation.house.gov/committee-activity/issue/water-resources-development-act-of-2020>) in which Congress authorized the Secretary of the Army to convey lands adjacent to the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock & Dam to the City of Minneapolis or its designee, but Friends of The Falls felt a little setback the following spring when USACE went forward with its disposition study (<https://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Home/PN/Article/2446042/public-notice-upper-st-anthony-falls-lock-and-dam-disposition-study-draft-report/>), recommending complete disposal of the project and to seek a new owner (<https://myvillager.com/2021/01/06/u-s-army-corps-seeks-new-owner-for-upper-st-anthony-falls-lock/> and <https://fmr.org/river-corridor-and-land-use-updates/st-anthony-falls-disposition-plan-could-threaten-twin-cities>). It's Friends' hope that not only will USACE transfer the surrounding property to the City so that they can make

a public space but that they will also stay and maintain continuous ownership of the Lock infrastructure rather than look for a new owner.

Another significant milestone was they signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the City in January (<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/2022/january/city-acquisition-of-federal-land-near-st-anthony-falls/>) which designates them as the City's agent in negotiations with USACE over the acquisition of federal land surrounding the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock & Dam. This will enable them to have more purposeful conversations with USACE about its goals and to find ways through legislation and Friends' own efforts to keep USACE there. As the City's designated agent, they'll be identifying the specific parcels of land they're interested in for conveyance; however, they do expect USACE to release the final version of the disposition study which may still recommend full disposal.

On the community engagement side, at past meetings they've discussed how they're centering the process on Native voices; now they have added 2 years to that process. 2020 and 2021 were spent on initiating relationships with Dakota tribes across as well as beyond the state boundary to talk about what a process centered on Native voices would look like versus the more traditional process we'd see in public projects. A key milestone was when the MOU was signed, a community engagement plan was approved allowing them to move into a more public interaction between the Native Partnership Council (<https://thefalls.org/process/#native-partnership-council>) and the broader public, which they implemented by launching the Community Conversations series. The first was held virtually on February 15th (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/the-falls-initiative-community-conversations.html>), and thanks to the DMNA for helping to promote it. There are four more Community Conversations and the next one on March 16th will be hybrid (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/relationships-with-the-river-water-is-life-community-convers.html>), and they hope the one planned for May 21st will be held in conjunction with the Community Connections Conference (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/ncr/inclusive-community-engagement/connections-conference/>), so they're reaching out to Neighborhood and Community Relations (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/ncr/>) to start having those conversations.

In addition to the Community Conversations, Wigen also noted that residents can provide input through an online survey (<https://new.maptionnaire.com/q/3wl7hpa3pdx7>), and there is an immersive exhibit to explore from your home computer that allows you to interact with other participants (<https://thefalls.org/immersive-exhibit/>).

IV. Consent Agenda

Rice moved and Bishop seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda which included the January 24th Board meeting minutes; F2022 Budget vs. Actual for the period ending January 31, 2022; and the Neighborhood Coordinator / Finance Coordinator staff report for January (Invoice #085). McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

V. MPRB 4th District Update

Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer reported on the following:

- A. 2022 Scooter Share Program.** She met with the MPRB leadership – i.e., Deputy Superintendent Jennifer Ringold (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-ringold-7a0ab2a/>), and Director of Customer Service Annie Olson (<https://www.zoominfo.com/p/Annie-Olson/1422828041>) – who are handling the contract issues with the program, and they were positive about the information presented and thought it was viable to do a speed geofence at 10 mph throughout the riverfront as well as the number of scooters. A new idea that came up when she met with Council Member Rainville was the idea of a curfew, i.e., scooters could

shut down at the same time as the park closes, an unknown she'll have to investigate.

- B. Land Policy.** They are wrapping up the public comment period which is open until March 17th (https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/project_updates/comment-period-for-draft-of-minneapolis-park-and-recreation-board-land-policy-extended-to-march-17/). Their Land Policy which deals with the rules around land acquisition and disposition, and an important part of that is input from Hennepin County, the City, cable and utility companies, on how to use that public space and how to work with partners who may not have the same priorities. We're encouraged us to participate in that discussion.
- C. Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan.** They are also wrapping up the public comment for this Master Plan (https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/cedar-lake-lake-of-the-isles-cedar-isles-master-plan/). The online survey is closed and all comments are being compiled and findings will be shared in April. People can still share feedback with project staff during public comment time at these upcoming Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings (https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/project_updates/cac-meeting-9-scheduled-april-7-6-8-pm/).
- D. Strategic Priorities for Next 4 Year.** This is a work in progress.

Then, during Q&A, she advised there are different Master Plans that have been revised, so there are pickleball courts coming to Loring Park (<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/news/2021/10/26/minneapolis-park-and-recreation-board-to-consider-new-pickleball-courts-at-loring-park-and-lake-nokomis/>), the closest to the DMNA population. She noted the new Commissioners all played pickleball at their last onboarding.

DMNA Land Use Committee member Randy Manthey commented he's excited to be partnering with Shaffer and her staff, and believes her staff is on point and touched upon the high-priority items which are the most impactful opportunities in reducing the number of scooters, enforcing the rules, and creating a uniform area of management that encompasses the whole riverfront.

In response to Rice's query about the possible operational impacts the updated Land Policy will have, Shaffer stated one practical one is U.S. internet on parkways. Some of the cable companies really want to get high-speed cable installed but it's currently prohibitive due to the cost per foot they charge. It's a challenge in this day when so much is being done virtually and having difficulty getting a high-speed connection. Also disposition, detailing if and when they have to get rid of land, is a big deal and some of that was covered in their Comprehensive Plan: Parks for All (https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/mprb-comprehensive-plan/).

VI. Land Use Committee Report

In the absence of both the DMNA LUC Chair Kevin Frazell and Vice Chair L. B. Guthrie, DMNA Board Liaison Laurie Rice reported on the following projects presented at the February 1st meeting:

- A. Royal Sonesta Hotel CUP and Sign Variance Applications** presented by Austin Odom, Designer at Schad-Tracy Signs in Burnsville (<https://schadtracy.com/team/>). There are seeking a Conditional Use Permit to increase the maximum height for two wall signs; and a Variance to allow a new wall sign on a non-primary building wall. He reviewed elevation drawings showing the placement of the signs, which are proposed for the same height as the signage for the former Radisson Blu Hotel, and explained that they would like to add a second sign to increase visibility of the property.

The LUC recommended support for these two applications (<https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DMNA-Letter-of-Support-Royal-Sonesta-Hotel-CUP-and-variance-for-signage.pdf>).

- B. Hell's Kitchen On-Sale Liquor License Application** presented by CEO / Founder Cynthia Gerdes (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/cynthia-gerdes-ba888737/> and <https://tcbmag.com/hells-kitchen-founder-cynthia-gerdes-to->

[retire/](https://www.hellskitcheninc.com/about-us)). Hell's Kitchen, an ESOP (<https://www.hellskitcheninc.com/about-us>), is a full-service sit down restaurant located underground and when her daughter's business moved, Angel Food Bakery conveniently connected by a doorway at the top of the stairway (<https://www.startribune.com/angel-food-bakery-is-leaving-downtown-minneapolis-and-relocating-to-st-louis-park/600034470/>), they snapped up the lease for AFB to take advantage of the quick service traffic lost by many skyway operations that closed due to the pandemic. The new concept they're putting into that space is an old school style cafeteria called Hell's Cafeteria that will be open for breakfast and lunch. Gerdes is seeking a liquor license to appeal to convention attendees, entertainment venue visitors, hotel guests and other downtowners. Nothing high end as they consider themselves as the Rodney Dangerfield of downtown. Operations will be managed by the same team using the same POS system, the menu will be the best of HK that can be executed upstairs more quickly, and they'll finally have a retail shop. They plan to open on March 7th. Because the two spaces are connected without going into the public hallway, they're allowed to apply for an extension of their current liquor license. Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman helped get the concept approved.

The LUC recommended support for this liquor license application (<https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DMNA-Letter-of-Support-liquor-license-application-for-Hells-Kitchen.pdf>).

- C. **800 Washington Avenue South** presented by Matt Johnson, Senior Project Manager at AECOM Hunt (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/matt-johnson-76722113b/>), who was accompanied by Brian Dusek, Managing Principal of Real Estate Development at AECOM (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brianmdusek/>), and Emily Stern, Senior Project Coordinator at Minneapolis CPED (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/emily-stern-2178905/>).

Because of questions raised at their presentation last month about the context of the building within the site and neighborhood and how it appears at night, they returned to share some lighting images, landscaping features, and to answer any additional questions, e.g., where they are in the approval process; unit mix, size and affordability; type of external materials being used above the podium level; landscaping; and short-term rentals.

They have their hearing before the Planning Commission Committee of the Whole later this month (<https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/Board/Agenda/CPC-COW/3030>), and once they get pass the MDR submittal (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/business-services/licenses-permits/construction-permits-certificates/development-review-services/>), then City Council does its final vote to transfer the land, then it's a 2 to 3 month process thereafter, so they anticipate acquisition of the land from the City sometime around May to June, then shovels in the ground no later than late August/early September.

The LUC recommended providing a LOS for the revised plans for 800 Washington Avenue South (<https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DMNA-Letter-of-Support-800-Washington-Avenue-South-Updated-Project.pdf>).

- D. **Aeon-St. Olaf Catholic Church Affordable Housing Project Update** presented by Jen Small, Real Estate Project Manager at Aeon (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/smalljen/> and <https://www.aeon.org/staff-board/>), who is sponsoring, developing, and managing this joint project between St. Olaf Catholic Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church.

In advance of their City entitlement processes and in preparation for the Minnesota Housing Tax Credits Application (<https://www.mnhousing.gov/sites/multifamily/taxcredits/4percentonly>), they returned to update the Letter of Support the LUC provided after their presentation in September 2021.

They still plan to build up to 500 units in three buildings on the St. Olaf Catholic Church campus. In Phase 1, they'll build a new 20-story building with 150-270 units of workforce housing (North Tower) on the St. Olaf Catholic Church parking lot at 3rd Avenue South and South 8th Street; and rehabilitate the Exodus Residence being vacated by Catholic Charities (<https://www.cctwincities.org/a-new-home-for->

[exodus/](#)) at 819 2nd Avenue South for 60-67 studio units for people transitioning out of homelessness. In Phase 2, they'll build a South Tower adjacent to the Exodus Residence with 150-210 units of affordable housing (<https://www.startribune.com/st-anthony-aeon-st-olaf-catholic-church-join-on-largest-affordable-housing-project-in-downtown-mpls/600064587/>).

They are moving forward with the Exodus Residence and the North Tower and are still early in the design process. They hope to go before the Committee of the Whole in March, submit the Land Use application in May, and get approval from the Planning Commission and potentially City Council through the summer. They hope this will position them well to receive funding around the end of the year.

Since she last presented before the LUC, they've been pursuing different funding sources for both the Exodus Residence and construction of the new tower, and have had some funding awards from Hennepin County, St. Olaf Church, and remediation dollars for the Exodus from the Metropolitan Council. They also have the robust support of Ward 7 City Council Member Lisa Goodman.

Given how expensive it is to build anything and affordable housing isn't exempt and there's the complexity of all the funding sources, she's excited that there's a renovation part of this project; from an environmental standpoint the most sustainable building is one that is already built

The LUC recommended support for Aeon's applications for financing related to the affordable housing project at St. Olaf Catholic Church.

Rice moved and Larson seconded to approve the four above-mentioned letters of support from the February 1st Land Use Committee meeting. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed.

- E. MnDOT I-35W North Gateway Study** by Aaron Tag, West Area Engineer (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/aaron-tag-4832b661/>), Stephanie Roth, Senior Strategic Communications Coordinator at HDR (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/stephanie-bornetun-roth-93892511/>), and John Griffith, Senior Project Manager at HDR (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-griffith-72819a2a/>).

Tag advised they've been working behind the scenes on this project (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i35w-north-gateway/>) for the last couple years and will be coming out this year with a lot more engagement to reintroduce the project to people along the corridor. It's a bridge-intensive section of I-35W and they're working with four cities and two counties on this study. Just to the south is the 35W@94 project (<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/35w94/>) that opened last fall, and to the north is the E-ZPass, formerly MnPASS, project (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/35wnorthmnpass/index.html>) that also opened last fall. They reconstructed I-35W from when it was originally constructed in the 1960s and 1970s from Lino Lakes down to Burnsville, so this section is coming due for major preservation and rehabilitation work. As they go through their planning process, they start with what are the problems they're trying to solve and they went out to the public a few years ago and asked what works and doesn't work about this section and got a lot of feedback, and through this information along with a lot of data they came up with the project needs, i.e., fixing the assets (pavement, bridges) that need to get replaced, and creating more reliable and safer trips especially in the southbound direction in the morning. Other items they also took into consideration during the planning process include current and future land use, transit service and the cost benefit of alternatives, pedestrian and bicyclist safety and access, and sustainability. As they move forward in this process, later this year they'll be talking about the solutions to the problems they identified.

Roth then described their community engagement process that began in late 2018 when they held one-on-one interviews and meetings with community stakeholders and commuters throughout the corridor

in the cities of Minneapolis, St. Anthony, Rosedale, and Lauderdale to create a baseline of information. This led to a digital survey in the first quarter of 2019 from which they received 2300 responses, and the issues that were elevated were congestion, trip reliability, highway connection, safety, and crossing experiences over the freeway. In early summer 2020, they digitally checked the purpose and need statements through robust online communications and promotions to get the word out that they were looking for people to respond to the data.

Griffith then talked about the things they'll want to address as they think about future projects and alternatives that will help with issues identified. The main driver of projects are pavement or bridge conditions or the funding source coming from Washington, DC, or the state. As they look at the entire corridor, the first priority will be to focus on the high stress pedestrian and bicyclist crossings (there's 11 across the corridor), and specifically in Downtown East it will be Washington Avenue which connects downtown to the West Bank and the University of Minnesota. As they were moving the project into 2019, a lot of events caused them to pause and respect people's space, but now they're back in the concept development phase and as they move into summer, they'll continue that conversation and then come back out to formalize concepts for the full corridor and get people's reactions. Then they'll finalize the study, do the environmental document on the preferred design, and by the summer of 2023 they'll have the blueprint on which to move forward.

VII. Ward 3 Update

Council Member Rainville reported on the following:

- A. 2022 Scooter Share Program.** He had a good meeting with MPRB Commissioner Shaffer and they all agreed limiting the number of scooters available on the riverfront and geofencing. He mentioned the issue of a curfew and she was comfortable with that if it was in sync with the MPRB, so he'll contact their staff to understand what the hours are because the contract hasn't been written yet.

Also, he's had at least three meetings with Danielle Elkins, the Mobility Manager (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/danielkins/>), as well as her supervisor, Jon Wertjes, Director of Traffic & Parking Services (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/wertjes-jon-b651b1125/>), so they're on it.

- B. Residential Developments.** Housing continues as a problem in Minneapolis, but because he sits on the Planning Commission, he's amazed at the number of apartments and condominiums going up in Ward 3, e.g.:

- They're finalizing the approvals for 285 units in the mixed-use project at Chicago and Washington Avenues (<https://thedevelopmenttracker.com/mpls/site/800-washington-avenue/>);
- The 80 units at Forte on the Park at 1125 South 2nd Street (<https://www.forteapts.com/> and <https://www.apartments.com/forte-on-the-park-minneapolis-mn/bmtqjg9/>) will be ready for occupancy in about 4-5 months;
- Over 300 units are going up in the mixed-use North Loop Green project (<https://thedevelopmenttracker.com/mpls/site/405-4th-avenue-n>) across from Target Field;
- The mixed-use Intersect project will have 96 units (<https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2022/01/26/crowe-revamps-north-loop-apartment-development.html> and <https://thedevelopmenttracker.com/mpls/news/new-plans-revealed-for-prime-north-loop-site>); and
- A 123-key boutique hotel will be built around the former Commutator Foundry Building (<https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2021/10/12/proposed-north-loop-boutique-hotel-lands.html> and <https://thedevelopmenttracker.com/mpls/site/125-1st-street-ne>).

The good news is building continues and the overall confidence in the city remains high.

C. **Public Safety.** All this development is in peril by public safety issues, so he continues to work on that by serving on the Public Health & Safety Committee (<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/city-council/about-city-council/committees/public-health-and-safety-committee/>). Tasks he's engaged in include:

- Organizing our neighborhoods into a higher level of block clubs and he has some great volunteers in the North Loop who are working with people in the Mill District to understand how to organize buildings as a vertical city block.
- Working with the Office of Violence Prevention and Deputy Chief Kathy Waite (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kathy-waite-04342891/>) to understand how the highest crime rate areas are evolving.
- Spoken with Interim Police Chief Amelia Huffman about staffing the police substation at 205 Park Avenue and she assured him their first priority is to staff Community Emergency Response Teams or CERT (<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/emergency-preparedness/Pages/citizen-corps.aspx>) in each precinct that deal with problem housing and behaviors, and the second priority is getting beats back. Once that occurs, they'll be able to look at community policing strategies like our police substation.
- Going to meet with the Minneapolis legislative contingency at the State Capitol to advocate for funding to recruit and train more officers. There are many reasons why our youth no longer want to serve us as police officers, so we must change that and all work together. In Minnesota there are 50 agencies looking for police officers, Minneapolis is 300 officers short, St. Paul is 100 officers short, and even State Troopers is 100 officers short.
- His first role call event is on March 18th at the First Precinct, 6:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m., and he's bringing community leaders to this event to show appreciation for our police officers.

Then during Q&A, Tamburino thanked him for focusing on public safety, and for working with the police and at the legislature. McCrea said it was a super report and thanked him for following through on what he said he would do and then she asked him to let us know how we can help. Rainville encouraged everyone to reach out to him and his staff Ryan SanCartier or Henry Jarvinen if they have any questions or concerns.

VIII. Raising Awareness of Greening Stewardness

Ben Shardlow, Director of Urban Design at Minneapolis Downtown Council–Downtown Improvement District (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/benshardlow/>), and Ella Graham, Member of MN GreenCorps (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ella-graham-008096197/>), provided an update on a new stewardship program they are working on. Shardlow began by thanking the DMNA Board for its ongoing support of the Tree Watering Program. They then talked about the various greening activities that take place in the downtown community that people are unaware of. They want to raise awareness of the volunteer opportunities that neighborhoods are offering such as street cleanup events and planting opportunities, as well as working more collaboratively with neighborhood organizations to get residents involved in their activities like the Tree Census. Hantge stated the DMNA has hosted cleanup events in partnership with the North Loop neighborhood in the past, and we're having some new conversations with them in the coming weeks. Shardlow and Graham will keep in touch with Hantge regarding progress made on developing the stewardship program.

For more information on the Minneapolis DID's greening work, visit <https://www.mplsdid.com/greeninglab>.

IX. President's Report

McCrea had no report to give.

X. Committee Reports

A. **Branding.** In Walsh's absence, no report was given.

- B. Historic Signage Committee.** In Walsh’s absence, no report was given. The next meeting of this group is Wednesday, March 9th at 7:30 p.m.
- C. Civic Engagement Committee.** Larson said they are working on recruiting new members, and are also having some preliminary discussions about events. The next meeting will take place on March 10th.
- D. HOA Advisory Group.** Chair Dustin Sprouse reported the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 8th at 5:30 p.m., at The Bridgewater’s Community Room. They are asking the presidents of the HOAs to use SignUpGenius and bring either food or a beverage. They have two amazing guest speakers, CM Rainville who was on earlier his evening, and Mayor Jacob Frey, so they’ll ask them questions about what’s the plan for downtown and what are they doing to reinvigorate it and make it safer. This is their first event back in person, and hopefully they’ll have more over the next couple of months as a means to getting to know each other and socializing after 2 years in quarantine. McCrea asked the DMNA Board members to encourage their HOA Board presidents to RSVP and attend or send someone to the meeting in their place.

XI. New / Old / Other Business

- A. North Loop Crime and Safety.** Bishop reported on efforts by a grassroots group to organize block clubs in residential buildings. They have met with MPD Crime Prevention Specialist Renee Allen to talk about the process and the benefits. It is possible that the DMNA could explore this same idea in the residential buildings along the riverfront if the North Loop experiences some success with their effort. A few condo associations have expressed an interest.
- B. Renters Advisory Group.** Larson presented a draft Renters Advisory Group Guidelines. She will take the comments and feedback she received and incorporate them into the final draft for presentation at the March Board meeting.

XII. Next Board Meeting

Monday, March 21st at 5:45 p.m., via Zoom. Agenda items include updates from Martha Archer with the Mill City Farmers Market; Wendy Underwood from Catholic Charities; and Andrea Brennan from CPED.

XIII. Adjournment

There being no further business,

Sweet moved and Rice seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. McCrea called for discussion. The motion passed at 7:39 p.m.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2022

Chair

Secretary