

DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
DMNA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 26, 2024, via Zoom

Zoom Recording

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/g_5WKux_IJSTVDeU1wn3JZyAEgg8wzfionwLEbeVGZQZhatNdMrmIY_S6pecSk4bY.hqTj_-nk_xZtGonj

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I. Call to Order

President Dianne Walsh called the Board meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Other Board members in attendance were:

Steve Arnold
Dan Brophy
Kristen Hansen
Latonya Reeves
Isaac Risseeuw, Vice President

Executive Director Christie Rock Hantge was also present.

Board members Jim Bishop, Abby Larson, Treasurer and Carletta Sweet, Secretary, were absent from the meeting.

Zoom guests in attendance included:

Cassie Garner, City of Minneapolis, Arts and Cultural Affairs
Addy Gonzalez, City of Minneapolis, Arts and Cultural Affairs
Jasna Hadzic-Stanek, City of Minneapolis, Arts and Cultural Affairs
Miles Mercer, City of Minneapolis, CPED
Ella Rasp, Stantec
Patrick Sadler, Ward 3, City of Minneapolis
Leona VanDort, City of Minneapolis, Public Works

II. Consideration of Agenda

Walsh presented the agenda.

Arnold moved and Brophy seconded a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Walsh called for discussion. The motion passed.

III. Ward 3 Update

In the absence of Council Member Rainville, Ward 3 Policy Aide, Patrick Sadler, reported on the following:

- Public Hearing for the Blue Line expansion on September 12. More information at <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/blue-line-extension/>

- The nominee for City’s Emergency Management Director is Rachel Sayre. Supported by Commissioner Barnette. Her nomination letter is available at <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/Download/FileV2/46414/Rachel-Sayre-Nomination-Letter.pdf>
- Seeking HOAs interested in hosting a Coffee with CM Rainville.
- Applications open for City boards and commissions. For information on openings, please visit <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/Boards/CurrentOpenings>
- Information meetings being held on zoning for cannabis businesses. More information at <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/2024/august/cannabis-zoning-info/>

IV. Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts Update

Addy Gonzalez, Cassie Garner, and Miles Mercer introduced themselves and provided an update on the status of the Cowles Center (formerly the Shubert). The Center closed earlier this year due to financial challenges. The city is in the process of drafting an RFP to find a new operator for the Center. They are seeking input from the community for the Center’s future.

On August 6, Mayor Frey and ACA hosted a convening of a broad spectrum of Downtown cultural providers to discuss new ways of thinking how the Cowles can maximize its potential for use and to engage more affinity sectors including: MSP Public Schools, Higher Education, Downtown Business Community, State-wide Initiatives, City of Minneapolis, plus key leaders in dance, theater, choral, music, opera, Broadway, and entertainment leaders. The Cowles is required to provide programs that support “dance, arts education, and performing arts.”

A major discussion point was whether the space would be exclusively for dance or include other artistic disciplines. ACA indicated that historically the venue has been focused on supporting the dance community, and that is still the intention. The conversation also supported having a broader spectrum of users of the venue to showcase Minneapolis artists and to maximize the vision, impact and access of the Cowles.

The outcome of the meeting with Mayor Frey is that the Arts and Cultural Affairs Department along with CPED will continue to work on defining the role of the space in downtown Minneapolis, with an invitation for creative input and discussion.

They anticipate that the city will release the RFP in September. The presenters asked for the DMNA’s help in sharing the information. They anticipate that the City Council will approve a new operator in early 2025.

More information regarding the Cowles Center is available at <https://www.thecowlescenter.org/>

V. 1st Avenue Reconstruction Project Update

Jasna Hadzic-Stanek, Leoma VanDort, and Ella Rasp provided an update on the 1st Avenue Reconstruction Project. The city will reconstruct approximately 0.5 miles of 1st Ave N between Washington Ave and 8th St N. They noted that every day, about 2,919 - 19,501 people walk, 356 - 593 bike, and 10,348 - 30,605 people drive on this street.

The project timeline is 2023 to 2028. Some of the project goals are to build and improve:

- wide, accessible sidewalks and crossings
- green storm water infrastructure
- lighting and public art
- active public spaces
- traffic signals
- wayfinding and signage
- underground utilities

Because activating public spaces and incorporating public art are important goals of the reconstruction project, the project team is hoping that the city will include it in the Art in Public Places program. Acceptance into this program will help get public art officially included in the project. There is an application process to get into the program. The project team is asking for a letter of support from the DMNA.

Chair Walsh asked the project team if they were aware of the DMNA's well-established historic signage project. She let them know that there will be additional signs placed in the Warehouse Business District in September. While its primary function is to provide information and commemorate historical events or figures, it often incorporates artistic design elements and contributes to the aesthetic and cultural character of public spaces. By blending functionality with artistic expression, historic signage helps to shape the identity of a community and enhance the streetscape. She requested that the DMNA's program be acknowledged in our letter of support.

Walsh moved and Reeves seconded a motion to provide a letter of support for the 1st Avenue Reconstruction Project's application to the Art in Public Spaces Program. Walsh called for further discussion. The motion passed.

For more information regarding the 1st Avenue Reconstruction project, please visit <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/1st-ave-washington-ave-8th-st/>

Tonight's presentation is available at <https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/1st-Avenue-Reconstruction-Project-Update-at-DMNA-Board-meeting-08-26-2024.pdf>

The DMNA's letter of support for the application to the Art in Public Spaces Program is available at <https://www.thedmna.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/DMNA-Letter-of-Support-for-Public-Art-on-1st-Avenue-FINAL.pdf>

VI. Consent Agenda

Brophy moved, and Hansen seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda which included the board meeting minutes for July 22, 2024; F2024 Budget vs. Actual for the period ending July 31, 2024; and the Neighborhood Coordinator / Finance Coordinator staff report for July (Invoice #115). The motion passed.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Land Use Committee. In the absence of Committee Chair Laurie Rice, Executive Director Hantge reported on the following:

- LaMadre liquor license application.

Reeves moved and Risseuw seconded a motion to approve the letter of support for LaMadre liquor license application. Walsh called for further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

If there are agenda items, the next LUC meeting is on August 4th, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

B. Safety and Security. In the absence of Committee Chair Howard Cohen, Board Member Dan Brophy reported the following:

- Cedar Riverside Multi-Cultural Dinner on September 19. All are invited to attend.
- Working on joint project with the DID. Possibly purchasing safety whistles for walkers.
- Still discussing the idea of a fall forum that focuses on juvenile crime.

Next committee meeting is TBD.

C. Civic Engagement. Committee Chair Abby Larson reported on the following:

- There will be no August Service Saturday. Next event will be on September 28.

Next committee meeting is September 10.

D. Historic Signage. Committee Chair Dianne Walsh reported on the following:

- All sign prototypes have been approved by the building owners.
- Revisions to Pixelwerx this week with the hope of installing signs in mid-September.
- Walsh repaired a damaged sign.
- Hantge has uploaded all historic narratives to the website.
- Zenner working on video for website and 2024 Annual Meeting.

Hansen inquired about signage for 2025. Walsh indicated that they will likely have funds available to do more signs in 2025. Hansen inquired about American Trio Lofts. Walsh stated that they declined to participate. Hansen will investigate this.

The next meeting of this committee is TBD.

VIII. New / Old / Other business

- **Debrief of National Night Out**
 - Council Member Rainville called it a 1st Class event.
 - Estimate 2500 attendees.
 - Band set the tone for the night.
 - Need to reevaluate the kids' activities for the 2025 event.

- Burgers were the most popular food item. Consider eliminating the shredded pork sandwiches for 2025.
- Brophy stated that we definitely needed the dumpster from Waste Management, but we could consider a smaller size for 2025.
- Bring back tablecloths for the 2025 event.
- Consider putting together care packages for the homeless.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2024.

Chair

Secretary