

Downtown Bloomington Association Board of Directors meeting

January 5, 2016

Present: Jan Lancaster, Carlo Robustelli, Nancy Ammerman, Steve Parker, Karen Schmidt, Carl Teichman, Jamie Mathy, Bobby Vericella, Jeff Woodard, Bobby Castillo, Ruth Haney, Joe Haney, Gemma Billings, and Bob Floyd

Staff present: Tricia Stiller, Catherine Dunlap, and Steve Rasmussen

Ruth called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Financial Report: Nancy provided the organizational finance report. For 2015, the organization ran a deficit of \$8,470. We still have reserves to cover this short gap, but it does put a stronger emphasis on the need to do fundraising in 2016. The reserves are dwindling.

Board member agreement- Ruth presented the Board Member agreement to the board and asked them to sign it and return it to Tricia as soon as possible. As part of the form, board members are being asked to indicate which committee they want to become actively involved with.

Year In Review – Tricia presented the board with the DBA year in review. This will be presented to the City Council. Also, DBA will be asking to address the city council on quarterly basis. A couple of suggestions for Tricia were to include the monetary value of the volunteer hours. (According to Independent Sector, the value of a volunteer's time in the State of Illinois for 2014 is \$24.74.) Also it was recommended to provide a "year at a glance" with summaries of all of the monthly figures to show the annual impact of the organization. This information will also be distributed to businesses within the district to recruit new members. If you have any questions about these figures, email or call Tricia.

Property Owners Association – Steve Parker asked what resulted from the meeting with this group. Tricia reported that they are still a little hesitant to fully join in with the DBA because they are worried about the organization trying to get a Special Service Area taxing area for the district passed. Ruth said that even if they don't join together, the ground work has been laid to work together on common issues facing both groups.

2016 Events Calendar- Tricia presented to the board the DBA Events Calendar and provided some highlights for the coming year.

- In February, we will once again be doing Tour de chocolate as the February First Friday. We aren't doing the Chocolate Challenge, based on feedback the office received that it was detracting from the main purpose of the event which is to drive people to the businesses.
- The dates for the quarterly council updates are on the calendar.
- In April a Trivia challenge is tentatively planned, but they are having a problem finding a venue for it. Someone recommended that the committee look at the Eagles'. Tricia will reach out to them.
- In May is the kick off of the Outdoor season of the Farmers Market. The DBA will have an informational booth/bake sale once every two months. Board members are encouraged to work at the booth. Jamie put in request that the board get embroidered polos with the DBA logo on it so they can wear at these events. Tricia will look into it.
- In June will the Downtown Cruise In. Joe Haney asked why the organization doesn't do more car shows. Tricia explained that she works with the Twin City car club and this is the only weekend

they have available. He is part of an antique car club and they are always looking for places to show their cars. The staff can look into it more, but doing a cruise in, including closing the streets, takes a city permit with 60 days lead time. Joe said that he would offer some of his parking lots for the event but they are on the peripheral of the downtown area. Tricia recommended that if he wanted to he could hold the car shows there and create a bridge between the Westside Revitalization effort and the downtown.

Farmers Market update- Catherine provided an update about the 2015 Market and changes for the upcoming 2016 outdoor season. A new farmers' market intern starts on January 11. In early December, Catherine met with the Advisory committee to talk about the 2015 market and some of the changes for 2016. Some of the highlights of that meeting are:

- The Market is running at a \$4,200 deficient. Big ticket items were advertising, barricade set up and Coliseum rental for the Thanksgiving and Indoor Markets.
- As a result of the efforts of the gleaning program, more than 5000 pounds of food was distributed to folks in need on the Westside.
- Changes for 2016 include tightening up the definition of a "community" booth. Only nonprofits can do bake sales and information community booths. Businesses that aren't DBA members can rent a space for \$50 week with a max of once a month.
- Developing criteria for conduction farm and prepared good vendor inspections for new vendors.
- Coming up with ways to cross-connect the market and the Downtown business community and the gleaning program.
 - o In April as part of the First Friday, the staff hopes to do a Farmers Market Preview with a limited edition signed poster that we will sell that night and highlight some of the vendors in area businesses.
- Soliciting a title sponsor for the market.
- Finding a new home for the Indoor Market.

Board response: They recommended that we raise the vendor fees. Catherine explained that fees were just raised and there is some opposition to doing so on behalf of the vendors. Jamie recommended that the staff do some analysis of similar sized markets and see what they charge per week to see where we rank. The DBA outdoor season rate is \$300/space, which equals out to \$11.50/week. Drop in artist pay \$20/week. Also, the board recommended that the staff inform current vendors what the weekly rate is at the upcoming vendor meeting to show them what a good deal they are getting. Also, Karen recommended that we get a sponsor for the Kids Zone.

Office relocation? – There had been some discussion about relocating the DBA offices to the Government Center. The board asked Steve R. what the status of that was. Currently the city is offering the space on a temporary basis. Karen asked what was preventing this from being permanent. He said that there are a couple of other moving parts that are being discussed currently at city hall of moving some of the city departments around city hall and into different parts of the Government Center. This grew into a larger discussion of if DBA was an arm of the city or not. To some board members, it seems that we are. The greater question does the city recognize this. It seems that see us more contract employees.

Moving Forward – Goals and Projects for 2016

Ruth outlined what the priorities of the organization were going to be in 2016. They include:

- Transparency – Add more information to website, including the agenda and minutes from board meetings and the minutes of committee meetings.

- Increase more awareness about what DBA does for the community and attract new supporters
- Increasing advocacy for downtown. Continue to have open conversations with city staff in an effort to facilitate change for the constituents downtown.
- Enhance and protect the thriving dynamic city center.

Jan outlined some of the projects to achieve these goals.

- Continue established branded events, such as First Friday, Route 66 Cruise in and the Farmers Market
- Update the walking map and kiosks
- Increase the number of public art projects
- Continue the Adopt-a-pot and planter program.
 - o Take inventory of large planters. Replace and/or order all new.
- Better define City of Bloomington's signature event. Work with the city to make those impactful
- Have an ambassador program to visit downtown businesses and increase memberships.
- Have the DBA minutes off of the City's website.

For the good of the organization - Ruth informed the board that Jan, Tricia and herself are meeting on a regular basis to help keep these efforts in motion. They are working on a list of the committee chairs and will distribute this to board members. If you have an idea for these committees, please feel free to share it with either herself or directly to the committee chair.

Tricia wanted to thank the board for their continued service to the organization and looks forwards to 2016 with the organization.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.