

Recap of East Downtown Council's Business Forum
Thursday, January 16, 2014
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
First Covenant Church, 810 South 7th Street
Elliot Park Neighborhood of Minneapolis

- ***Welcome and introductions***

EDC President Dan Collison introduced himself, welcomed the audience to the January business forum, and explained to newcomers that the EDC is a business association that's been in existence since 1979, borne out of Elliot Park and now looks after the vitality of all that is happening in the east side of downtown which includes the Mill District, Downtown East and Elliot Park. It is a privilege to be the kind of like the Switzerland of all these wonderful neighborhoods and institutions, advocating for and listening to everybody and connecting to the central business district and elsewhere downtown.

The new stadium project broke ground in December and has a huge hole in the back that he thought looked like the children's book he read when he was a kid entitled *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*. Even in this children's book published in 19349 you see what we see today: stress, pressured timelines, outcome based metrics and the construction business generally changing. As he looks at the general contractor for the stadium, Mortenson Construction, estimating 7,500 construction workers who will work more than 4.5 million labor hours on the new stadium over a 3 year period, that there is a significant level of importance heretofore unseen. And because there is so much public money invested in this project that the stated workforce goals for minority- and women-owned companies are essential for this project to benefit a diverse range of Minnesotans that in turn will help us work on our historic economic disparities in such a way that more people are empowered to do more and the entire Minnesotan economy grows together.

The audience was asked to introduce themselves then Dan gave special thanks to Bill Woodson, Associate Director of the MBA program at St. Thomas School of Business and Nekima Levy-Pounds Professor of Law at St. Thomas, for their role in helping him understand some of these issues.

Thereafter Dan introduced and gave a brief biography of the guest speaker and panelists.

- ***Stadium Construction Update***

Michele Kelm-Helgen, Chair of the Minnesota Sports Facility Authority, explained that they had to get traffic police out on Monday as a result of the crowds coming to the Metrodome to purchase the seats. The seat sales are complete and it was amazing to see how many organizations that were interested in them. Tentatively, the roof deflation will happen this coming Saturday, but if its windy they will not do so due to safety issues and are not encouraging people to attend. The power will be cut and the roof will slowly deflate. That same day they will cut out big strips from the roof to prevent it from blowing away. Frattalone has specific uses for the roof fabric and will be cutting it apart and taking it away for re-use. Over 90 percent of the Metrodome, e.g., seats, concrete, copper wire and light fixtures, will be re-used and recycled and must be removed by this Saturday then demolition will start in a counter-clockwise format.

During this process there will be issues for businesses and some residents so they want to communicate with everyone as often as possible. Their job is to work with everyone to construct the best stadium they can hile recognizing the need to respect the surrounding community.

Kelm-Helgen then mentioned the Equity Plan and explained that it will have a huge economic impact. They have put in place a systematic organization that will help them be successful in reaching their goals.

Lastly, Kelm-Helgen announced that the MSFA has now moved out of the Metrodome and is located in the 511 Building.

- **MSFA Equity Plan**

Alex Tittle, Equity Director for the Minnesota Sports Facility Authority, explained that his role is to be transparent and to spread the gospel to the community about how the Equity Plan will be monitored, what activities are going on and how each of the partners they have awarded contracts to are engaging with the community (reference the *Minnesota Multi-Purpose Stadium* document) from procurement to how construction managers are awarded or secured to how the transparency process is executed.

Tittle advised that it is important that everybody has a seat at the table and a role to play. When he's at the table he wants to eat and his approach to the Equity Plan is EAT = Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency. While watching and monitoring the project that they are communicating efficiently. Each of the partners that they have hired or awarded contracts to is very capable of doing this work.

Mortenson Thor has a very excellent background and history of conducting these types of projects and is based out of Minnesota. This is important for the economy surrounding the contract to remain here. And they want to make sure to the best of their ability that they are being seen in the public. They have Stadium Equity Oversight Committee meetings and the public is invited to attend; the 2014 dates are listed at http://www.msfa.com/detail.cfm/page/msfaSite_QHAFKNZD_FJXINWJM/.

Tittle then explained the project equity goals for design services that HKS manages and for construction services that Mortenson Thor manages. The Equity Plan also has a veterans inclusion program that can be accessed via <http://www.vetbiz.gov/> as well as recognized certification agencies.

When they awarded the contract to Mortenson last year, they decided to take the leadership and put together a number of outreach opportunities that the leadership team was present for, e.g., contractor information sessions, metro and outstate. They also contact all MWBE firms in the directors via Mortenson's iSquarefoot and pre-proposal meet and greets. For more information visit http://www.msfa.com/detail.cfm/page/msfaSite_QHAFKNZD_ADWPNMGQ/.

Dan then conducted a Q&A with Tittle and remaining panelists Lynn Littlejohn of M.A. Mortenson, Ravi Norman of Thor Construction, and Robert Woods of NAMC who explained their role in guiding and helping targeted business owners seeking opportunities with the stadium project.

Littlejohn's role is to be the resource and liaison for the community in terms of how to get engaged in the project both from a subcontracting and workforce perspective and that means meeting with individual business owners and business associations and making them aware of schedule, timeline and process to get into the queue. They already put out three project packages and have one final left to go out in the spring which will be all the interiors and finishes scope of work.

Norman advised that his company is an associate construction manager with Mortenson on the project and are fully integrated into all of the construction management responsibilities. His individual role is to support the efforts of Littlejohn and being a community liaison and resource.

Robert Woods' role is to work with NAMC's members to ensure they are in the game, are registered and have an opportunity to bid. They are spreading the word and making sure that their leadership and members attend meetings of this nature. Part of their strategy was to work at the beginning of this project through architects and engineers and with Tittle who is an expert on Targeted Businesses. He is proud that women and minorities received 8 of the 16 design contracts. This time they not only see themselves as participating on the project, but they are also ready.

The panelists then entertained a few questions from the audience.

- ***Conclusion***

Dan thanked the panelists for their presentation then announced the next three business forums all to be held on Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.:

- February 20th at the Guthrie Theater: “The Impact of the Arts in the Mill District Neighborhood: Education, Performance and Medicine”; and
- March 20th at the American Red Cross Minnesota: “Disaster Preparedness for Businesses”; and
- April 17th at the Normandy Inn: “Introduction of new CEO Dr. Jon Pryor, plus update on Downtown Medical Office Building, and 5-year Strategic Plan”.