

Recap of East Downtown Council's Business Forum

Thursday, May 15, 2014

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

1010 Metrodome Square, 1010 South 7th Street, Lower Level Conference Room
Elliot Park Neighborhood of Minneapolis

- ***Welcome and introductions***

EDC President Dan Collison thanked the audience for attending then introduced himself and announced he would only be holding his position as president for a few weeks longer because the board has invited him to take on a new position as executive director. This is part of building capacity for the EDC in response to all the economic vitality that is occurring within the east downtown district and the increased role it is playing in all that is unfolding. The thrilling part about the work of the EDC is connecting with all of the parts of the district (i.e., the Elliot Park, Downtown East and Mill District neighborhoods) around some of its goals: strengthen the vitality of east downtown through private and public initiatives; be a critical source of information for its constituents; and collaborate with all of the parts of downtown Minneapolis for the common good.

Dan then explained the agenda and asked the audience to introduce themselves. Thereafter, Varun Kharbanda, co-owner of 1010 Metrodome Square and EDC director, was asked to say a few words about the building. He explained that this 6-story with center atrium building was originally constructed in 1923 for the Strutwear Knitting Company and contains roughly 250,000 square feet. They are proud to be the home base for the Vikings stadium operations with construction management primarily on the 1st and 2nd floors and three different offices on the 5th floor. The building is only 30 to 40 percent occupied so they are actively marketing it. They are very excited about the new developments going on and around the neighborhood. For more information, visit <http://www.1010building.com/>.

As an EDC update, Dan announced that he had attended a Placemaking & Public Realm panel and audience conversation with renowned urbanist Gil Penalosa at the Brave New Workshop, and what he found interesting was Gil's famous quote "It's not one thing that creates a great city, it's thousands and thousands of little ones." Dan believes that is where the job of the EDC factors into bringing economic vitality to the district by sorting through the thousands of things that are circulating around and bringing back the best ideas so that its members can be a part of making the best decisions for their businesses.

Lastly, so that the audience understands the EDC's thinking, Dan explained the four strategies under its 5-year strategic framework: connection and collaboration; advocacy and resourcing; leadership and voice; and sound and sustainable organizational structure. He also briefly explained the draft goals and potential tactics related to each strategy to illustrate how the EDC is changing its organizational structure in response to all that is unfolding in the district and how it is striving toward a more holistic picture of development and encourage all to participate in its efforts. Thereafter, he gave a brief biography of the presenters.

- ***The Minnesota Vikings New Game Day Experience***

Lester Bagley, VP of Public Affairs and Stadium Development, advised it has been a 12-year enterprise at the capitol with help from Jeff Anderson who does the heavy lifting, a number of folks in the audience, and many others throughout the state to get the deal done and they have been busy ever since. Bagley then gave an overview of their activities:

- The new stadium project is on time and is scheduled to open in July 2016, however, the design work is still evolving. Demolition, site prep and cleaning was done ahead of schedule and Mortenson is working hard to remain on schedule.
- Following this forum we will tour the Preview Center on the 5th floor where they have had a number of events. It has been a great sales tool. Also on the 5th floor are the sales and marketing office as well as the ticket office for tickets to the TCF Bank Stadium.

- They have been working on the new stadium partnerships through sponsors, partners, and season ticket owners to match them to zones based upon their current location and longevity of ticket ownership. They have about 52,000 season ticket owners in 16 different zones for the new stadium. They have completed discussions and the sales process for zones 1 and 2 are ahead of expectation.
- They are exciting about partnering with the Ryan Companies project overall and the park and have committed to \$1 million upfront investment toward the green space and look forward to the opportunity to create a great game day experience for fans as parking lots and tailgating opportunities become more limited.
- They have invested in capital improvements for the Gopher stadium where they will play the next two seasons to add a couple thousand seats (just under 52,000), install field weatherization, upgrade restrooms, and are working with the U of M for concession adjustments. Tickets sales are going well and they are using the same concept to match up season ticket owners in zones they currently have at the Metrodome. They will generate less revenue than they would at the Metrodome due to limited capacity and fewer premium products. They have established a Good Neighborhood Fund and Jeff has been working on that with the U of M faculty and neighborhood associations for enhancements in the neighborhood (<https://www.myu.umn.edu/metadot/index.pl?id=3684831>).
- In mid June of this year they will have a free Vikings practice at the Gopher stadium to give ticket owners and the public an opportunity to check out the stadium facilities and the team. It will be an all Minnesota invitation and Jeff will get us more details.
- On August 8th they kickoff their preseason against the Raiders.
- On September 14th they open their second game of the NFL season at home against the New England Patriots.
- The new stadium was designed to host the Super Bowl. HKS, one of the best multi-purpose sports architects in the world who designed the new stadium, also designed Dallas Cowboy's AT&T Stadium and Indianapolis Colts' Lucas Oil Stadium and each have hosted a Super Bowl.
- They have passed the 2-year mark in passing the stadium bill and since then they began a more aggressive lobbying effort within the NFL to host the Super Bowl that will bring 100,000 people to the market and millions of dollars of economic impact, and some headaches, but overall a great experience and net benefit to the community, their brand and tax revenue to our state and local government. Last October, they were selected as one of the three finalists for the Super Bowl 2018 bid along with Indianapolis and New Orleans. The Vikings final bid went in on iPads donated by Best Buy on May 7th. The governor's appointed corporate co-chairs, Richard Davis of U.S. Bancorp, Doug Baker of Ecolab, and Marilyn Carlson Nelson of Carlson Companies, have been doing a great job of coalescing the community to orchestrate the event. It has been a truly community partnership with Meet Minneapolis, the MSFA, business community, organized labor and the public sector with our elected officials. This world's most watched event will also have a tremendous public relations and media impact. Their corporate leaders already got commitments in excess of \$30 million from the private sector to help fund the activities. They have to organize a tailgating event by the stadium, Super Bowl Boulevard (the entire length of Nicollet Mall), the Convention Center will host the NFL Experience, the NFL Honors awards show (at Orchestra Hall or Ordway) and other events for the duration of the week. They will discover on Tuesday, May 20th in Atlanta whether they have won the bid.
- They secured in the legislation the right and 5-year exclusive window to bring Major League Soccer to the stadium. Part of the stadium investment was directed to include a multi-purpose venue. The great indoor/outdoor space with clear roof and pivoting glass doors will make a great venue and MLS is excited about having the opportunity to have a franchise in this market. They are working with the architect and MSFA to include a mechanism in the design to bring down the size of the house to 20,000 to 30,000 to make it a more intimate experience. They are in discussions with Don Garber, Commissioner of MLS, as well as the owners and operators of the Seattle Sounders, about how to build grassroots soccer and how to take advantage of this market.

Thereafter, Bagley responded to questions from the audience, e.g., how the Super Bowl task force worked

and how they will proceed if the bid is secured. More details will follow if they are successful.

Tayna Dreesen, Manager of New Stadium Partnerships, showed an iPad app video they usually present to corporate partners in order to introduce them to new Vikings assets. The video tells the story of the Vikings (Part 1), shows the design of the new stadium (Part 2), and describes their corporate partnerships (Part 3). For the purposes of this audience, Dreesen went through Parts 1 and 2.

A couple years ago, the Vikings celebrated their 50th season. Thankfully they have 12 Hall of Fame and 21 Ring of Honor members to recognize and they will do an excellent job of saluting them in the Hall of Legends at the new stadium. Dreesen explained the NFL market and its power; it's the world's strongest and most influential brand in sports. She also explained what they do pre, during and post season (e.g., Community Tuesdays, Vikings Children's Fund, Taste of the Vikings).

Dreesen explained that the stadium design was inspired by Minnesota's elements, climate and history, and described the materials to be used in its construction. It will bring us closer to the action than ever before with state-of-the-art technology, expanded concourses with 360-degree circulation, spacious suites, multi-faceted public plaza, excellent site lines for the best game day experience in the NFL, Aramark concessions, just signed on Andrew Zimmern as a celebrity chef, year round restaurant, 6 exclusive clubs with different personalities, and 116 suites.

- **Conclusion**

Dan thanked Varun for hosting the event, Lester Bagley and Tayna Dreesen for their presentations, and the audience for attending, then announced the following upcoming events:

- Thursday, May 15th, 6:00 p.m.: Joint neighborhood community meeting at Open Book regarding Ryan Companies' East Downtown project.
- June 19th at TBD: "Meet the Three East Downtown City Council Members: Lisa Goodman (Ward 7), Jacob Frey (Ward 3), and Abdi Warsame (Ward 6)."

Thereafter, tours were conducted of the 7,500 square-foot, state-of-the-art Preview Center containing an experiential tunnel where players will pass through field clubs, an architectural display model of the new stadium, and full size suite replicas <http://www.vikings.com/news/article-1/Vikings-and-Van-Wagner-Open-New-Stadium-Preview-Center-Near-Construction-Site/0e489831-5404-43cf-878f-efbd2e7d21bb>.