

**Recap of Joint East Town Business Partnership and  
Minneapolis Downtown Council Business Forum  
Thursday, May 18, 2017, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
St. Olaf Catholic Church, 215 South 8th Street, Forliti Gathering Room  
Downtown West Neighborhood of Minneapolis**

- **Welcome and Announcements**

Dan Collison, Executive Director for the East Town Business Partnership and Director of Downtown Partnerships for the Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District, welcomed the audience to the May joint business forum and expressed gratitude to St. Olaf Catholic Church (<http://www.saintolaf.org/>) for hosting. Established in 1941, and judging by all the banners one walked under to arrive at the event representing all the groups and programs that serve the community, SOCC is indeed “providing an atmosphere of welcome, warmth, and beauty for assembly, reflection and prayer for all people” as stated in its mission statement from which Collison quoted.

Steve Cramer, President and CEO for the Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District, also welcomed the audience and noted they were gathered in the Forliti Room, named after Father John Forliti, parish priest at St. Frances Cabrini before he came to SOCC. Cramer and his family attended SFC when Father Forliti was there and started an overnight shelter in the early 1980s. Now SOCC has come full circle with its Adult Shelter Connect (<https://www.simpsonhousing.org/adult-shelter-connect-simpson-shelter/>), an important and innovative program to help adults experiencing homelessness connect with the right resources.

Cramer then announced the following upcoming MDC events:

- *Wednesday, May 24th:* A Morning with Steve Cramer: Peavey Plaza Update (<https://mplsdowntown.com/a-morning-with-steve-cramer-peavey-plaza-update/>) at Minnesota Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Target Atrium; and
- *Thursday, June 1st:* Happy Hour Networking with Meet Minneapolis (<https://mplsdowntown.com/event/happy-hour-networking-meet-minneapolis/>) at Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Avenue.

Collison advised this is the 8th year he’s had the privilege of being a part of what is formerly known as the East Downtown Council and now known as the East Town Business Partnership, and it is astonishing what is going to take place in the next 12 months. For those unfamiliar, the ETBP’s business forums are held on the third Thursday of each month from September through June. The next and final one of this season will be on:

- *Thursday, June 15th:* Business Case for Regional Equitable Development (<http://easttownmpls.org/june-15-etbp-business-forum-at-the-millwright-building/>) with Shauen V.T. Pearce-Lassiter, Director of the Center Cities Competitiveness Initiative at Greater MSP, and Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges. This event will be held at Ryan Companies’ new headquarters in the Millwright Building, 513 South 3rd Street. Tours of the property will follow.

Other activities he announced included:

- *Friday, May 19th:* Twin Cities Bike to Work Day (<http://www.tcbiketoworkday.org/>).
- *Thursdays, May 18th-June 8th:* Party on the Plaza (<https://www.usbankstadium.com/events>) free live concerts at U.S. Bank Stadium, 401 Chicago Avenue South, by SMG, the company that manages the stadium.
- *Ongoing community engagement on Water Works* between Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board ([https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/news/2017/05/02/2458/minneapolis\\_park\\_and\\_recreation\\_board\\_minneapolis\\_parks\\_foundation\\_seek\\_community\\_input\\_on\\_evolved\\_water\\_works\\_design\\_c](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/news/2017/05/02/2458/minneapolis_park_and_recreation_board_minneapolis_parks_foundation_seek_community_input_on_evolved_water_works_design_c))

oncept) and Minneapolis Parks Foundation (<https://mplsparksfoundation.org/projects/water-works/>), a \$30 million redevelopment project on the riverfront overlooking St. Anthony Falls and the Stone Arch Bridge. Your input is welcome on this regional public asset.

- *Saturday, June 10th:* 2017 Northern Spark <https://2017.northernspark.org/>) free overnight event.
- *Sunday, June 11th:* 2017 Open Streets Downtown (<http://www.openstreetsmpls.org/downtown>).

Alex Tsatsoulis, Development and Communications Director for the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition, advised they host Open Streets and this will be their third year in Downtown. If unfamiliar with the event, he invited everyone to attend their longest running one, Open Streets Lyndale on June 4th to get an idea of how fun and successful an event it can be. They close the street to vehicular traffic between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. to allow the neighborhood to engage with local businesses and community groups by biking, walking or rollerblading to the event. Over 80,000 attended OS last year with 7,500 attending Downtown. It is a great opportunity to connect with the 40,000 people who live Downtown to talk about their businesses and services and to encourage the 160,000 who work Downtown to see it as a destination. More information, Tsatsoulis directed them to their website and to the flyers he left on the tables.

- *July 13th-16th:* ESPN X Games are coming to Downtown Minneapolis and the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association will host a forum about it at its next board meeting on Thursday, May 25th (<http://www.thedmna.org/may-25-dmna-board-at-the-mill-city-museum-at-545-p-m/>). Visit the DMNA website for other meetings and events.
- *Thursday, May 25th:* Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.'s Building Land Use and Housing meeting featuring the Minneapolis Armory redevelopment project. Visit the website (<http://elliotparkneighborhood.org>) for other meetings and events.

## • Sponsorship Spotlight

Cynthia Froid, owner and founder of Cynthia Froid Group, thanked the ETBP for inviting her and acknowledged co-sponsor Brenda Langton, co-owner of Spoonriver Restaurant (<http://spoonriver.com/>) for providing delicious and nourishing food. She noted when Collison first asked and she agreed to be a part of this event 6 months ago, he was unaware that she too is a “Catie” and when she asked whether there were others in the room, several members of the audience raised their hands.

Froid then gave a brief history of her background (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/cynthia-cindy-froid-a5b3b67>). She graduated from St. Catherine University in 1993, the perfect spot to land in at that time having transferred from the University of Minnesota having had too much fun living in the dorm with the entire Gopher basketball team. Her mother hoped SCU would settle her down, but the opposite occurred because there's nothing like a room full of Caties and a couple nuns from St. Joseph's to get a girl fueled for what lies ahead. It was at that time a spark was ignited and she went from a rebellious girl to a rebellious girl with education and confidence.

CFG (<http://www.cynthiafroid.com/>) is a small real estate shop at 709 South 2nd Street, conveniently located kitty-corner from Spoonriver and across from the Mill City Museum. Froid acknowledged her teammate, Lynn Burn who was in the audience (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lynn-burn-5548bo68/de>), and advised they had the privilege of selling real estate in downtown for 21 years. At that time, she was asked to join the late Sheldon Hoffman (S.R. Hoffman & Associates) to work on the sales and marketing of the North Star Blanket Factory with Peggy Lucas, co-founder of Brighton Development and one of the pioneers of the revitalization in downtown (<https://www.minnpost.com/business/2012/11/brighton-development-winding-down-after-spurring-riverfront-revival>). Froid displayed a 1997 image of the area when they were selling the 36 NSBF lofts (not shown) for \$100 per square foot. Last year a unit at Washburn Lofts sold for almost \$1,500 per square foot; that's what happened in 20 years so buy right now before prices rise even more. Then she displayed a current image of the area showing how much the Mill District has grown and commented how it's been a huge privilege to be a part of all this fantastic growth as many of those in the audience have as well. She noted the importance female models have been

in fueling her business and life, coaching her along the way, and getting her and her team to the place they are today. While we'll never see her face on a bus bench or bulletin board, we will see her face at all of the organizations CFG supports (<http://www.cynthiafroid.com/our-partners/>), and the more they support the organizations that support CFG, the more the city grows and it will all pay forward.

In the spirit of women in business and education, Froid then quoted her friend Langton: "We love each other, we support each other, and we make shit happen!"

Collison then announced CFG's 3rd annual Izzy's Ice Cream Social on June 15th, 4-6 p.m., at Gold Medal Park (<http://millcitytimes.com/mill-city-minneapolis-events/june-15-2016-wednesday-3rd-annual-cynthia-froid-group-izzys.html>).

- **The Commons Park Programming Overview**

Amanda Wigen, Director of Programming & Events at Green Minneapolis (<http://www.greenminneapolis.org/about/staff/>), reminded the audience The Commons opened just last year (the grand opening was on July 21, 2016, <http://finance-commerce.com/2016/07/downtown-east-park-opens-to-public/>) and initially they focused on maintenance and sanitation, but now are working on creating a vibrant and active destination park in downtown. Using a slide presentation, she displayed and described a list of activities they have been working on for the coming year and encouraged the audience to help promote and attend these events (<http://www.commonsmpls.com/eventcalendar>).

During her recitation, she expressed excitement over working with Brenda Langton to bring the Mill City Farmers Market to The Commons on Tuesdays, beginning July 18th, 3:30-7:30 p.m., and a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) valet to have food assembled in advance. There will also be the first designated Bring Your Own film festival with a large format LED screen on the following Thursdays at 7 p.m.: June 29th, July 27th, August 10th and August 24th. Films will include popular titles as well as local filmmakers.

Other large single events include: Northern Spark on Saturday, June 10th, 8:59 p.m., the only downtown Minneapolis location; a 72-person German youth orchestra performance led by conductor Roland Hauf on Monday, June 12th, 7 p.m.; in conjunction with the X Games, a series of X Games Concerts, June 14th-16th; and in collaboration with the MDC and Core Power Yoga, an Aquatennial event on Friday, July 21st, 5:30 p.m.

- **Women in Business and Education**

Collison introduced Becky Roloff, President of St. Catherine University, by giving a summary of her biography (<https://www.stkate.edu/about/university-leadership/office-of-the-president>) and noted he met her when she was the President and CEO of the YWCA of Minneapolis where she was responsible for leading the organization with the mission to eliminate racism and empower women and girls. Under her leadership, the YWCAM successfully completed a capital campaign, grew its revenue substantially and significantly increased the diversity of its board of directors. Then he asked the audience to be cognizant that her kind of leadership and what she brings to this conversation about diversity and gender equality is transformational to the marketplace and social fabric of our region and it is a privilege to have her present

Roloff explained she's here today because of Collison's persistence and noted she misses the MDC on whose executive committee she has served until her new role at SCU. She loves having an update of The Commons and how it has come along, and how the renovation of YWCAM (<http://www.rjmconstruction.com/project/ywca-minneapolis-downtown-renovation/>), once the largest invisible building in downtown, is no longer invisible and will be a welcoming asset to Nicollet Mall once that reconstruction is complete.

To demonstrate her linkage to the community, she explained the YWCAM raised most of the \$12.5

million needed and when they received \$3 million in State bonding funds, several commas were missing in the appropriation which led some to believe it could not use any of it for HVAC. That required pausing the project and going through the bonding process again to receive the full allocation and after 2 years it was done. The irony is her son and daughter-in-law moved back from Washington, D.C., finished their graduate work, he's at U.S. Bank and she's at RSP Architects, they're having their first baby, and in June Roloff's granddaughter will be at the YWCAM. She thought the circle has closed on all that she has worked for when she was there.

Other linkages she has in the community include dining at Spoonriver before performances at the Guthrie; she and her husband have had season tickets since 1982. People Serving People, and other nonprofits, have SCU students volunteering at them for credit. And she will be making referrals to CFG whenever possible.

Roloff then described how her career came about. She was born and raised in western North Dakota by a father who owned a gas station and a mother who was his bookkeeper, both of whom had an 8th grade education. Education was a big deal for she and her two younger brothers and younger sister and they knew they had to put themselves through college. Roloff put herself through SCU; her brother went through the University of North Dakota on a basketball scholarship and recently retired as the Vice Chair of Cargill; the other brother went to St. John's University and owned several companies in the Twin Cities; and her sister went to SKU and achieved her master's degree in English but unfortunately passed away at the age of 33. Why Roloff left the corporate world, went to the YWCAM, and how that led to SKU, was a story her brother told at her sister's funeral in Our Lady of Victory Chapel at SKU where she and her sister were married.

This story was relayed to Roloff's brother by their sister 2 weeks before she died. A woman who loved carnivals knew it was coming to town for a day and found out how much each ride costs. She saved enough money where she could ride each ride but didn't have enough time to ride them all so had to choose. Her brother's eulogy was that their sister had made very good choices with the rides she had chosen in her life. When Roloff was at American Express Financial Advisors and got the call to consider being the CEO at the YWCAM, her brother's eulogy was the story that went through her head, i.e., our mothers were alright and leave the party while you're having fun. She loves large complex things, loved working for AEFA, her years at Pillsbury and those big things you can do once you get a big organization moving. Another trigger for her was being asked by a man at AEFA what's the number you need to no longer have to earn a salary. Because she got that number was why she was able to go to the YWCAM.

When she left AEFA and went to the YWCAM, she learned how to work with a low margin and no money and the most creative team versus in corporate life where there's a lot more money than any nonprofit or college institution for which you'll ever work. The key at SKU she discovered from a book she read in her first class is if you don't control your economic destiny, you don't control your destiny. She had never made the link that strongly and then the lights start clicking on and you realize there is something in that and later she switched to business and enjoyed her career very much.

Roloff then relayed the history of SKU which was founded in 1905 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelett ([http://www.csjstpaul.org/our\\_heritage.aspx](http://www.csjstpaul.org/our_heritage.aspx)). It stemmed from the nervousness among Catholic men whose daughters didn't have access to this high-quality education as some of their Protestant counterparts and, therefore, feared they wouldn't do as well in the marriage game. The SSJC, whose origins go back to the 1600s in France, saw women became prostitutes because they didn't have skills. So that they could regain their dignity and earn a living, the skill they figured out to teach them was lace making. A group of nuns left and settled in Louisiana during a period of time when there was an effort to convert Native Americans to Catholicism, and subsequently traveled up the Mississippi River to Carondelett, Missouri. After the settling of the Minnesota and Dakota territories, they came up with the idea of a launching school, not a finishing school.

Roloff then shared a quote from Mother Antonia McHugh when SKU was founded: "It is true that

changes in this world at present seem rapid. However, the world with the help of God's providence and righted itself even when times are more difficult than now. We cannot, it is true, ignore the economic facts of the world outside the home, nor can we do much about careful consideration of them. But we know that we must summon to our aid all the intelligence and stamina of which women are possessed in order to be able to muster in the face of these emergencies courage and strength for future career."

SKU was modeled on the University of Chicago, a strong liberal arts foundation and 55% of all credits at SKU are still in liberal arts. Roloff then described the colleges and schools within SKU (<https://www.stkate.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/>). In the College of Women, 44% of last year's incoming class was women of color. When she walked into campus in 1972, 1.6% would have been young women of color. That is a huge strength SKU has today and they should be catnip for employers in aspects because they have these great young women. One of the challenges in education today is financial aide. When she attended (1972-76), the total amount available from the federal government would have been 80% in grants and 20% in loans versus today when it's 80% in loans and 20% in grants and why there is the amount of debt incurred. The bucket is larger but the composition has changed. It is important to understand as a voter to pay attention to increasing the grants available or getting rid of the interest; she's read recently that the interest rate went up another percentage point to over 5% on federal loan programs and over 8% on private loans. We as leaders need to know what to do to change this situation.

Another challenge is that survey after survey business leaders seek the following skills in new hires: effective communicators, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. However, the system is not lined up to support and encourage those in the liberal arts (e.g., chemistry, biology, music, English, history) and a general assault on basic education that gives you the lifelong skills to keep learning. If you have the privilege of a liberal arts education, you learn the skills to keep on learning. Roloff then gave the example of how SKU took their liberal arts skills and partnered with 3M to introduce young women to make sales a profession, a great path to get into an organization and earn a good living. The partnership has grown into a national program and involves 13 colleges and universities. They also go outside the United States and professors taking students all over the world to learn diversity and breadth from another perspective.

SKU's mission is to educate women to lead and influence, and their vision is to find, education and unleash these young women so that they help make the world better whether it's running a successful business like Froid and many of you in corporate life providing good jobs and ethical decision making and leadership and being a good neighborhood. That's how hard SKU works to try to give all of its students those experiences going forward into the world.

Lastly, Roloff discussed how businesses can identify earlier students they would be willing to support to avoid the financial burden at the end of graduation. She used the example Kalice Allen, a young African American women who had both parents die before she was 12 years old and spent a lot of her youth homeless. Along the way, she received help from some nonprofits. She started at the University of Minnesota which was too big for her and found her way to SKU. She's graduating this Sunday with a degree in public health; if you've got the intellectual chops we can figure that out by looking at either test scores or GPA or both. We should treat all students like snowflakes because one thing wouldn't work for all of us. Her issue was not math or science, it was organizational skills from all the homelessness she experienced while growing up. Once she was made aware of it and learned about planning ahead, she is able to start full-time work on Monday and is the face of the Young Women's Initiative (<http://www.wfmn.org/category/news-feed/press-releases/>), the Women's Foundation of Minnesota's campaign Roloff is working on to raise \$9 million.

The magic of SKU is to be able to pull the liberal arts women and Catholicism and that broad viewpoint into a single unit, strategy, passion, mission and history. Roloff's job is to make sure SKU is standing 100 years from now and, if she doesn't wish to sleep at night, to remember that in 1960 there were 200 women's colleges in the United States, today there are 39. That should sober you up because it is terrific to have an education and a place for young women to be strong and grow. She could beg for food or

medicine for her children (which she's done in a prior career), and she could beg to keep the doors of SKU open and that's why her roads led her to SKU and to use all her experience to ask for all the help she could get so they could soar well into the next century.

Thereafter Roloff entertained questions from the audience.

- **Closing Remarks**

Collison extended gratitude to the speakers for presenting and the audience for attending. Then he highlighted MDC's free Explore Downtown Living (<http://exploredtliving.com/>) event this Saturday, May 20th at various downtown residential properties and advised CFG could be contacted directly with inquiries about specific properties.