

**Draft Minutes from the
East Town Business Partnership Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, February 7, 2019
Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. at Impact Hub MSP, 817 5th Avenue South, Suite 400
Elliot Park Neighborhood of Minneapolis**

Present: Siyad Abdullahi, Marita Albinson, Marc Berg, John Campobasso, Chris Fleck, Daniel Gumnit, Vanessa Haight, Tom Jollie, Brian Maupin, Paul Mellblom, Beth Shogren, Carletta Sweet

Staff: Dan Collison

Absent: Carina Aleckson, Elizabeth Campbell, Christie Rock Hantge, Cyndy Harrison, Tom Hayes, Phil Huebner, Varun Kharbanda, Paul Mason, Kelly Stenzel, Tim Tucker

I. Call to Order

President Paul Mellblom called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m., and thanked EPNI Executive Director Vanessa Haight for hosting. Vanessa explained their new headquarters occupies a small space here at Impact Hub MSP, an international network focused on building entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale (<https://www.impacthubmsp.com/blog/2018/7/20/the-story-behind-impact-hub-innovation-lab>). There are all sorts of people here who are doing good things for the community, e.g., Software for Good, Victus Engineering, Drewes Law, and several startups. John Campobasso, whose company developed this full block, added there are approximately 165 individuals who contract the co-working and incubator space for several hours up to longer-term periods.

Thereafter, everyone was asked to introduce themselves.

II. Consideration of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted (JC/BM).

III. Consideration of Consent Agenda

Due to a lack of quorum, consideration of the consent agenda was postponed until the March Board meeting. Paul advised he will not be in attendance.

IV. Presentations

Bill Dossett, Executive Director of Nice Ride Minnesota, called during the instant meeting to advise he was no longer able to attend. However, see his TV segment on KTSP of the same date (<https://kstp.com/news/nice-ride-minnesota-2019-proposals-ebites-expanded-quity/5238439/>).

V. Action Items

NONE

VI. Updates

A. Executive Director Monthly Overview

- 1. Roundtable on East Town Brand.** Dan explained at the last regular meeting with Paul to review the Board agenda, as a follow up to a conversation they had with Council Member Steve Fletcher, they decided to conduct an internal roundtable on the East Town brand and ground the Board in its purpose.

When Dan was first getting to know Fletcher during his campaign run for Ward 3 City Council, Fletcher had expressed dislike for the East Town brand. Since that time and in recent conversations, Fletcher's opinion has not waned. As a consequence, Dan and Paul held an in-depth conversation with Fletcher to understand his objections and anxieties.

As background, the branding of the district began in early 2015 when the area was undergoing unprecedented development as a result of the billions of dollars being invested here and the ETBP, in accordance with its *Leadership and Voice* goal under the *Strategic Framework*, took the reins to provide direction and advocacy for this emerging neighborhood, achieve a cohesive sense

of presence, and prevent becoming known as the “stadium” district. To accomplish branding for all businesses and people who work, live and recreate here, the ETBP (which was subsequently joined in the effort by Minneapolis Downtown Council, City of Minneapolis CPED, McKnight Foundation) reached out to Tom Jollie and his team at Padilla who conducted a 2-year pro bono district branding process that included a half-day community branding workshop (July 28, 2015); ETBP Board retreat (October 29, 2015); and numerous community listening sessions with an ubiquitous group of stakeholders, all of which culminated in the East Town brand.

Dan believes we’ve accomplished our goals and have elevated narratives for those reinvesting in the area. The ET brand is not a bumper sticker campaign nor a technical delivery nor a replacement of the neighborhoods, rather its aspirational and high level so that the whole world understands our evolving district.

Discussion ensued wherein Board members expressed opinions on the branding process, e.g., it was a transparent, broadly-publicized process that gave coherence to what people conceive as three separate neighborhoods: (1) Elliot Park; (2) the stadium area in the middle (officially part of Downtown East); and (3) the riverfront Mill District (also officially part of Downtown East).

Other comments elicited included:

- How the brand is being applied in Elliot Park is considered problematic and, as a consequence, the EPNI Board has held discussions around how to market themselves within the whole East Town narrative. Since they’re in the political landscape where their existence is being threatened, Neighborhoods 2020 (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/2020>) probably also plays into their anxiety.
- We need to communicate more in the marketplace that we’re an inclusive business organization that welcomes relationships with nonprofits, property owners, and residents.
- We need to engage with those who care about and own the ET brand. In the policy world when lobbying, create a document with logos of those in support and present it to the appropriate committee chair.
- Our previous name was “East” Downtown Council; we didn’t invent East, we’ve been East since 1999.
- The brand will rise or fall based upon the strength of it as a concept; it’s a work in progress and will take longer to rise as in the case with the North Loop.
- The business partnership, i.e., ETBP, needs to be distinguished from the East Town district.

Dan thanked everyone for their feedback, apologized for any unintended nuances but assured he has been doggedly persistent and articulate about what the brand is and isn’t wherever he appears, and advised the website has always had information about what the ETBP is and the organizations that comprise its membership.

- 2. Inclusive Downtown Think Tank.** After a year-long series of guided conversations with over 60 cross sector organizations at the YMCA’s Equity Innovation Center to imagine, define and create an inclusive downtown using the collective impact model (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_impact), a common agenda was developed, i.e.:

We believe

- ❖ All people belong downtown;
- ❖ That an inclusive downtown is possible;
- ❖ In the economic case for inclusion;
- ❖ If we increase cultural competency, we will increase inclusion;
- ❖ In the values of equity, innovation, sound economics, leadership, collaboration, and accountability.

Therefore, our work is to identify and address systemic barriers and redesign our systems to create a more inclusive Minneapolis downtown, led by culturally competent leaders who are committed to making a community that is an

equitable place to live, work, and play and where all people have the opportunity to thrive, belong, and contribute.

From this common agenda, three design groups were formed to develop a “prototype” to address their specific diversity, equity and inclusion issue:

- *Systemic Barriers and Redesign.* This group used the existing Chameleon Consortium as it drives emerging, small and minority-owned businesses in downtown retail space.
- *Culturally Competent Leaders.* This group will gather professionals engaged in diversity, equity and inclusion work for networking and programming in order to shift the consciousness of the entire marketplace.
- *Thrive, Belong and Contribute.* This group will be tied to the rebooting/restructuring of the 2025 Plan for mapping all of the services and resources needed to help people meet their basic necessities.

Dan will be forming a leadership team that will be thrice annually to help keep these conversations going. Dr. Hedy Lemar Walls and her staff will be key to this effort.

Next Tuesday, February 12th, he'll be presenting the “call to action” for the three prototypes developed; he'll bring the presentation to a future Board meeting. It will also be a part of the June joint business forum with the MDC.

- 3. Chameleon Consortium.** They are less than 60 days to piloting the April 2019 pop-up at the ground level DID space and skyway level space above at Gaviidae. The website (<https://www.chameleonconsortium.com/>), developed by Neka Creative which had a contract through a Great Streets grant and provided tens of thousands in pro bono work, is up and running. In the next few weeks, they'll launch a consumer-to-business (C2B) portal to highlight the pop-up vendors which includes top barbers and salons by North MPLS (<https://www.northmpls.org/>) who will occupy the former Regis space.

It's a rigorous project that he's both excited and anxious about. He's seeking sponsors to help pay for wayfinding and creating the retail experience (approximately \$10,000-\$20,000) and would appreciate any support from the Board's businesses. The Vendor Retail Design Information Meeting, held on January 31st at Impact Hub, where the Board was currently meeting, was attended by 45 vendors. Joe Skifter, General Manager of Open Book who co-owns Dancing Bear Chocolate with his husband, also attended.

CC also applied for a \$200,000 Bush Foundation grant for a long-term accelerator/incubator to drive more meaningful and ongoing commerce in a dedicated space.

They were not awarded the contract for the City's Concessionaire/Retail Master Lessee for their new Public Service Building; the name of the single proprietor who was awarded the contract has not yet been released.

- B. Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association.** Carletta Sweet referenced her report for February on the Board Members Only page.
- C. Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.** Vanessa Haight referenced her report for February on the Board Members Only page and highlighted their We♥Elliot Park Neighborhood Breakfast on Tuesday, February 12th, 7:00-8:30 a.m., at the Elliot Park Hotel (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/we-elliott-park-neighborhood-tickets-53449989357>) with Hennepin County District 4 Commissioner Angela Conley (<https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/leadership/4th-district>).

D. Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District. Covered above under Dan's ED overview.

VII. Consideration of Consent Agenda

Now that a quorum was present, the consent agenda was approved which included the minutes from the January 3, 2019 Board meeting; Treasurer's report for January which was the F2019 Budget vs. Actual as of January 31, 2019, the Wells Fargo bank statement for the period January 1-31, 2018; Director of Downtown Partnerships for Minneapolis Downtown Council / Downtown Improvement District and Executive Director for East Town Business Partnership and 2020 Partners' report for December 30, 2018-February 2, 2019; and Executive Coordinator's report for the period 1/1/2019 to 1/31/2019 (MB/CS).

VIII. Committee Reports

- A. Executive.** Paul advised no meeting because there was no topic to discuss.
- B. Board Development.** Paul advised since this committee is in the process of vetting candidates for the five Board vacancies, he'll set a date for their next meeting.
- C. Business Forum.** Dan is formulating the content for the 2019-2020 season for presentation at the April annual meeting.
- D. Membership, Marketing and Communication.** MMC Chair Chris Fleck referenced the Membership Report as of February 7, 2019 which can be found on the Board Members Only page at <https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ETBP-Membership-Report-2-7-2019.pdf> and thanked Christie Rock Hantge for preparing it. Then he provided a summary of activities to date.

We're in the final month of the extended membership drive that was added due to space limitations at January's forum. Then he extended a formal invitation to all Board members to invite colleagues and neighbors to upcoming forums and to follow up with them thereafter.

Because the committee discussed best practices for marketing and communications and leveraging the larger machine of the MDC, Dan, Chris and Tom Jollie met with Leah Wong (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leahwong>) who will attend the March Board meeting to present their practices and methodology. Tom will develop a Venn diagram to understand visually the commonality of their mission, memberships and spaces in which they operate as a launching point for how each organization communicates.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:44 p.m. (BS/SA).