

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

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Present: Carina Aleckson, Marc Berg, John Campobasso, Chris Fleck, Daniel Gummit, Vanessa Haight, Cyndy Harrison, Tom Hayes, Tom Jollie, Varun Kharbanda, Paul Mason, Brian Maupin, Carletta Sweet  
Staff: Dan Collison  
Absent: Siyad Abdullahi, Marita Albinson, Elizabeth Campbell, Christie Rock Hantge, Phil Huebner, Paul Mellblom, Beth Shogren, Kelly Stenzel, Tim Tucker

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**I. Call to Order**

Vice President Carletta Sweet called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m., and thanked EPNI Executive Director Vanessa Haight for hosting.

**II. Consideration of Agenda**

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

**III. Consideration of Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda was approved as submitted which included the minutes from the February 7, 2019 Board meeting; Treasurer's report for February which was the F2019 Budget vs. Actual as of February 28, 2019, Wells Fargo bank statement for the period February 1-28, 2019, MN Charitable Organizational Annual Report for 2018 and \$25 filing fee, and IRS Form 990; Director of Downtown Partnerships for Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District and Executive Director for East Town Business Partnership and 2020 Partners' report for February 3-March 3, 2019; and Executive Coordinator's report for the period 2/1/2019 to 2/28/2019 (CS/TH).

**IV. Presentations**

**A. Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc.: Past, Present and Future.** Because Elliot Park was the neighborhood where the ETBP had its origins in 1979 as the Elliot Park Business and Professional Association (EPBPA), Executive Director Dan Collison asked Vanessa to bring to the Board her February 12th presentation she delivered at the We♥Elliot Park Neighborhood Breakfast.

Vanessa began by giving the boundaries of the neighborhood which is the southern portion of the East Town district, i.e.: 5th Street South to the north, I-94 to the south, I-35W to the east, and 5th Avenue South to the west. Interestingly, the only image she found on the world wide web of East Town was from the south along the I-35W corridor looking north at the downtown skyline which she believes may be worth discussing in the future.

One of the oldest neighborhoods in Minneapolis, EP is home to the first two public works, first public school, and one of the first established medical campuses. It also has seven notable historic landmarks:

1. The Armory ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneapolis\\_Armory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneapolis_Armory));
2. South 9th Street Historic District ([http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/landmarks/hpc\\_landmarks\\_south\\_ninth\\_street](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/landmarks/hpc_landmarks_south_ninth_street));
3. Hinkle-Murphy House ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinkle%20%80%93Murphy\\_House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinkle%20%80%93Murphy_House));
4. Band Box Diner ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Band\\_Box\\_Diner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Band_Box_Diner));
5. Elliot Park ([https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/parks\\_destinations/parks\\_lakes/elliott\\_park/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/parks_destinations/parks_lakes/elliott_park/));
6. T.J. Jones Memorial Library ([http://www.placeography.org/index.php/T. J. Jones Memorial Library%2C 915 East 14th Street%2C Minneapolis%2C Minnesota](http://www.placeography.org/index.php/T._J._Jones_Memorial_Library%2C_915_East_14th_Street%2C_Minneapolis%2C_Minnesota)); and
7. Madison School ([http://www.minneapolismn.gov/hpc/landmarks/hpc\\_landmarks\\_15th\\_st\\_e\\_501\\_madison\\_school](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/hpc/landmarks/hpc_landmarks_15th_st_e_501_madison_school)) [which is

currently being used as housing, <http://madisonapartmentsmn.com/>].

Because of its proximity to industrial development along the Mississippi River, EP was a very practical place to live. European settlers first landed here in the mid 1800s and as the neighborhood rose in wealth toward the end of the century it became a fashionable place to live.

Over time the neighborhood transitioned and lost over half of its population – down by 54% in the 1970s – following the construction of the highways and flight to suburbia. In 1979 a group of dedicated residents came together and formed Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc., which, because of all of the disinvestment and deterioration that had occurred, focused primarily on revitalization to bring the neighborhood back to life. In the 1980s they began the Neighborhood Improvement Company (NIC) which allowed them to build and renovate 500+ units of housing, e.g., Old Town in Town Housing Cooperative (<https://oldtownintowncoop.org/>) and Elliot East Flats. And in 1990, the City of Minneapolis began the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (<http://www.nrp.org/>) which funded the type of work EPNI had already begun.

As a consequence, EPNI spent over \$4 million in Phase 1 funds on protecting and preserving resources such as the Band Box Diner, Hinkle-Murphy House, Community Gardens, and one of the first police substations. Phase 2 funds, which came around in the early 2000s, were spent on their Master Plan which they still use today to guide development, and \$4.2 million on leveraging \$150 million in public and private investments to build and/or restore East Village Apartments (<https://www.aeon.org/properties/east-village/>), Lenox Brownstones (<https://mplslist.com/properties/lenox-brownstones-for-sale/>), Sexton Lofts (<https://sexton-lofts.com/>), and Grant Park (<https://grant-park-condos.com/>). Those investments were the beginning of what we see blooming in EP today.

The EP neighborhood is changing as well as the landscape for funding and how EPNI does its work. They have a long successful history of revitalizing the neighborhood through investments in housing and restoration of properties, which is changing a bit because of the growth that's happening. Just last year they reviewed seven proposed developments and several others the year before, and in total they're expecting an increase of over 1,000 units, a 30% increase in the housing stock. As the neighborhood grows and the housing stock increases, they've seen a surge of young professionals take root in buildings such as HQ Apartments (<http://www.hqminneapolis.com/>) and what they expect will happen at the 8th Street Apartments (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-214021.pdf>). Affordable housing is also part of the mix, e.g., Park7 Apartments (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-212397.pdf>) and East Town Apartments (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-215654.pdf>).

Because of this change in population, EPNI also has to change and they are spending more time out and about getting to know the newer residents and checking in with those who have resided here for decades to reevaluate the current issues and challenges they face here.

Because of the dramatic change in funding from the City, i.e., going from millions of dollars under the NRP Program for reinvestment work down to approximately \$66,000 annually under the Community Participation Program ([http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/programs/cpp/ncr\\_community-participation](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/programs/cpp/ncr_community-participation)) for community engagement, their work has had to shift.

Many of their activities in 2018 were spent on finding out from the community what their priorities were and what they wanted EPNI to focus on, working with the Board of Directors, and planning and developing a plan for 2019 and beyond. One of the top priorities for 2019, which has always been a priority, is influencing development ([https://www.elliottpark.org/influence\\_development](https://www.elliottpark.org/influence_development)); this has been EPNI's bread and butter, but how they do it is changing. Now they bring the community together to review and discuss developments directly with the developers. They've a strong track record of working well with developers, supporting developments, and asking for small changes to ease the experience for those living next to the developments, and because the landscape of the area has

changed so much, they are due for a refresh of their Master Plan which has been guiding development.

A second priority for 2019 is improving community safety (<https://www.elliottpark.org/safety>) by building relationships with the Minneapolis Police Department and Downtown Improvement District, addressing unsafe pedestrian crossings, and improvements to their parks.

A third priority is addressing community issues ([https://www.elliottpark.org/community\\_issues](https://www.elliottpark.org/community_issues)), one of which that rose to the top is gaining access to fresh and affordable food. They applied for a Headwaters Foundation for Justice grant (<https://headwatersfoundation.org/grants/community-innovation-grant>) to fund a year of exploring the issue. They are also advocating for renters' rights and working with tenants in negotiating with landlords to make improvements to their properties and daily quality of life issues.

To implement all of the work previously mentioned, they connect neighbors with neighbors through a variety of programs, e.g., the biannual clean up, entrepreneur training, a backpack school supply drive, and street music to support a local business.

To support ENPI, sign up for their monthly newsletter, volunteer, introduce others, make a donation, and advocate for continued neighborhood funding by the City by showing up at City Hall with them or letting your Council Member know you value the work of neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods are about to begin a tough conversation with the City Council on the future of neighborhoods, how they would be funded and at what level. To understand the process that is occurring at City, familiarize yourself with Neighborhoods 2020 (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/2020>). EPNI is trying to advocate for all the work it does and the value it brings to the neighborhood, but they have met with a lot of resistance from the City regarding the funding.

Dan explained the ETBP doesn't have a history of taking positions on political or controversial matters, but has hosted listening sessions to gain insight and feedback on matters such as the minimum wage ordinance, and written letters of support for obvious matters of concern, i.e., development projects within the district. In this instance, since both the DMNA and EPNI have representatives who serve on the Board, he believes it appropriate to craft a letter of support.

A brief discussion ensued during which Vanessa explained revenues from the Consolidated Redevelopment Finance District (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-195788.pdf>), which has been funding the Community Participation Program, will be discontinued after 2020, hence the re-examination of the roles of neighborhood organizations and establishment of a new partnership between them and the City. Post-TIF, the City would need to decide to fund neighborhoods through general funds in the context of pursuing its major priorities to invest more in affordable housing and community police relations, and growing the economy through inclusion (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@finance/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-214163.pdf>). Vanessa believes almost all neighborhoods have been working intently on engaging underrepresented populations; almost all of EPNI's work is with that population.

The Executive Committee was tasked with drafting the letter of support. For more information, read the recommendations for Neighborhoods 2020 at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@ncr/documents/policydocument/wcmssp-216785.pdf>.

Then, upon the arrival of the following guest speaker, everyone introduced themselves.

**B. Minneapolis Downtown Council and ETBP Communication Connections.** Because of the shared staff relationship the ETBP has enjoyed with the MDC for the past 5 years, the Membership,

Marketing and Communication Committee felt it important to optimize the synergy between the two organizations by understanding how the MDC communicates and determining how the ETBP intersects with MDC's communications to ensure both organizations continue to emphasize and grow their own as well as each other's membership and programs.

Leah Wong, VP of External Relations at the MDC (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leahwong>), explained with the help of Dan, Chris Fleck and Tom Jollie, they assembled the following information to set the stage for today's conversation; she comes from the perspective that it's better to do this important downtown work together.

From the MDC's perspective, there is so much information, great content and opportunity to push information out, so they try to start from the point of what's relevant to their audience. As they think about the work of the ETBP and MDC, they ask where's the intersection of what's relevant. While displaying the Venn diagram she and Tom worked on, each organization has a mission, goals, objectives and audience, but the intersection is where they convene work.

The MDC's mission is to create an extraordinary downtown and it has three core audiences: members – there are over 450 member organizations; downtown stakeholders, i.e., elected, business and community; and the general public. These three core audiences are big and vast, but they don't all need the same touch point and level of communication.

The MDC connects, leads and empowers people to make downtown a place where everyone wants to be, and as a business association, their differential is they're hyper-focused on downtown, a big swath of land – bordered by I-35W, I-94 and across the river up to University Avenue – that draws millions of people annually. They think about how they're helping to connect, amplify, and convene work that creates a vibrant and innovative place where people are drawn.

A lot of their work is led by *Intersections: The Downtown 2025 Plan*, and they implement the plan by convening and educating around topics, leading collaborative work around timely initiatives, creating events and resourcing programs, and working with public-private partnerships.

Tom then described the ETBP's side of the Venn diagram. The mission – to promote a safe, productive business environment and communication between business and civic leaders – focuses on a geographic subset of the downtown community, i.e., Elliot Park, Downtown East and Mill City, and supports the activities of businesses, nonprofits and property owners in the area. In an effort to build stronger connections and a more cohesive community, the ETBP, through its Board meetings, shares information about activities that impact the community and how it might influence those activities, e.g., what was heard in the instant meeting about EPNI and the change in funding for the neighborhoods, and convenes [business forums and happy hours] around ideas, issues, concepts that impact what we could do as an organization to make the community better.

Dan, as staff for both organizations who is constantly mining for ideas and companies to bring to the platform, sees the ETBP membership as a subset and microcosm of the greater downtown – which includes the rising residential populations of North Loop, Downtown West, and Loring Park – because it has seen the most infusion of redevelopment in the last 6 years by far. However, the best practices of holistic urbanism that applies to the CBD and elsewhere also applies to East Town. We're a complete downtown with special neighborhoods that have unique characteristics and qualities.

Dan noted the ETBP's communications and programming overlap with the MDC, i.e., it has been doing four shared forums annually as well as shared happy hours on high interest topics that have something to do with East Town but also of interest to the greater downtown as well, e.g., the March 21st joint forum on *Economic Opportunities of Engaging Homelessness* with People Serving People CEO Daniel Gumnit moderating a panel.

Wong noted we have shared staff, membership and Board members and that's working. Then we have this other area where there's overlap that she would like feedback on, i.e., communications and

programming. Because there is so much clutter out there, they always think about what actually adds value and to distinguish between what we need versus what we amplify. What is core in their messaging and communication strategy, no matter what's happening in the landscape and space around us, is downtown is a great place for business, investments, safety, vibrancy, and public-private partnerships; they will create and curate content for these areas.

In addition to their core communication messaging, for 2019 they will also focus on (1) workforce development, (2) inclusionary zoning, and (3) retail, specifically as a result of the work that came out of the Retail Task Force focusing on retail between 5th and 10th Streets on Nicollet. Activities happening downtown outside of these areas will be amplified.

For pushing out information, there in the primary website (<https://mplsdowntown.com/>), initiative-based secondary websites such Explore Downtown Living (<https://www.exploredtliving.com/>) and Be In Business Downtown (<https://www.beinbusinessdowntownmpls.com/>), social media channels, e-communications, earned media, and seasonal channels tied to a specific initiative, event or program.

Thereafter, Wong entertained questions from the Board during which she advised their residential work and outreach began last year as a pilot project and they're doing more in that space especially with the DID brand of the organization. When they think about that audience, it is work, live and play and from a core messaging perspective, most of their membership doesn't come from the residential base, but that's changing.

John Campobasso explained although residents don't pay into the DID, they do, however, receive the benefits of it, thus they are trying to collaborate and engage more with them/residential property owners particularly since one of the MDC's goals is to double the population to 70,000 by 2025.

To illustrate how we need to determine what vehicles to use to communicate our shared resources in the marketplace, Chris noted yesterday when he visited a law firm with 55 attorneys on two floors in a building across from the Grain Exchange, the lead attorney who leases the space had no clue what the ETBP or East Town is; those who already know us is not the issue, those in the community who don't know us is the issue.

Dan stated an actionable item to ponder is what our core messaging is for the 2019-2020 season, even if it's more amplifying than leading.

## **V. Action Items**

NONE

## **VI. Updates**

### **A. Executive Director Monthly Overview**

- 1. Parking Meter Changes.** Dan presented the parking meter rate map for downtown that he and Steve Cramer received from Tim Drew, the City's Parking System Manager. There are 1,800 parking stations throughout the city, the most being in downtown. It has been a significant amount of time since parking meter rates were increased, and the ones indicated on the map will go into effect within the next 60 days.

As he has learned more about how street parking interacts with structured parking, the former is designed to keep things moving while the latter is designed for more long term. Increasing rates and shortening the amount of time is the strategy to increase turnover rather than parking vehicles all day on the street that should benefit nearby businesses and organizations. Enforcement will intensify as license plate recognition comes online in the next few years so that street parking serves its purpose.

For more information, visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/parking/meters/index.htm>.

- 2. Minneapolis Transportation Access Plan.** This will be an update to Access Minneapolis and it will lay out a new 10-year plan (<http://go.minneapolismn.gov/>) to guide future planning, design, and implementation of the transportation vision outlined in Minneapolis 2040.

2019 is the City's listening phase for feedback and the next workshop is today, 2:00-4:00 p.m., at Center for Changing Lives (CFCL).

- 3. Economic Drivers Shaping Minneapolis.** Dan provided a brief overview of the presentation (reference his email of this same date) given by Matthew Mowell, Senior Economist & Head of Americas Cities Research, Oxford Economics at the February 19th Happy Hour (<https://mplsdowntown.com/event/happy-hour-presentation-economic-drivers-will-shape-future-mpls-twin-cities/>).

- B. Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association.** Carletta Sweet referenced her report for March on the Board Members Only page.
- C. Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.** Vanessa Haight announced: (1) their annual meeting is on Monday, May 13, 2019, 5:30-8:00 p.m. at North Central University; and (2) they've begun taking applications for their entrepreneur training class through the Neighborhood Development Center (<https://easttownmpls.org/plan-it-training-coming-to-elliott-park-neighborhood-inc-in-2019/>).
- D. Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District.** Covered above under MDC and ETBP Communication Connection presentation.

## VII. Committee Reports

- A. Executive.** No report given in Paul Mellblom's absence.
- B. Board Development.** Marc Berg advised there is now a slate of candidates for nomination to the Board at the April annual meeting. This process began this past summer due to the number of members terming off in April. Candidates were selected based on the board profile matrix Paul developed to determine what areas of expertise were lacking and when terms were expiring.

Board members departing include: Tom Hayes and Brian Maupin who are terming off; Siyad Abdullahi who resigned but whose term was expiring; Paul Mellblom, whose term expires in 2021, but is becoming ineligible due to his firm's move to the CBD; and Tim Tucker who resigned due to retirement, all of which leaves the following seats to fill: three 3-year terms, one 2-year term, and one 1-year term.

The following slate of candidates was arrived at via a vetting process by the Nominating Committee and each expressed an interest in serving on the Board:

- Jacquie Berglund, Finnegan's, FINNovation Lab|Impact Hub MSP
- Richard Kiemen, Sherman Associates
- Julia Lauwage, Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge
- Deborah Moses, House of Charity
- Theresa Pesch, Hennepin Healthcare Foundation

Looking ahead to the May Board meeting, officers will be elected and as it stands now, John Campobasso will serve as President, Carletta Sweet as Vice President, and Carina Aleckson as Treasurer. Also, sign-up sheets for the committees will be passed around. Berg then requested that a current copy of the Bylaws be made available online.

Thereafter, the slate of candidates was approved as submitted (MB/EC).

**C. Business Forum.** No update was given.

**D. Membership, Marketing and Communication.** MMC Chair Chris Fleck referenced the Membership Report as of March 7, 2019 which can be found on the Board Members Only page at <https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ETBP-Membership-Report-3-7-2019.pdf> and then provided a summary of activities to date. There is one new member and four who are carryovers from the 2018-2019 season for a total of 76 members. We lost 13 members within the last 12 months and there was no growth out of the membership drive. We need to leverage our Board to invite people to future forums. At the MMC meeting on February 21st, discussed the Board's lack of engagement and how to improve it going forward, e.g., include inviting people to the forums as an expectation in the Board job description.

Regarding increasing membership, opportunities may lie within smaller businesses and restaurants, e.g., entertain the prospect of having a hospitality membership limited to coffee shops and restaurants, consider having Happy Hour events at their locations. Cyndy Harrison advised when she reached out to some of the restaurants to find out why they're not participating, the biggest feedback was from Day Block Brewing which indicated the price was too high. The other issue is because of the timing it's difficult for hospitality to attend the forums.

Chris concluded by advising as we put a focus on being proactive, thanks to Dan the presenting sponsors are healthy. He's impressed with the organizations that have stepped up as platinum members, many of whom are in the room; they are valued members who bring additional revenue to the organization.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m. (MB/VK).