

Recap of the East Town Business Partnership Annual Meeting
The History and Future of the Minneapolis Riverfront

<https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ETBP-Business-Forum-4-16-20-ANNUAL-MEETING-MASTER-SLIDE-DECK-2.pdf>

Thursday, April 16, 2020, 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.
Via Zoom Conference

I. Welcome and Announcements

ETBP Executive Director and Zoom Host Dan Collison welcomed the participants and explained this is an historic moment to meet virtually for the annual meeting. On the positive side, it's a way to still gather, make decisions, and provide a high-level review of the past year and visions for the year ahead. Then he explained a few best practices for participating in Zoom and described some of its features.

ETBP President John Campobasso officially called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone who joined under these very unusual set of circumstances. This is his last meeting presiding over as president and hopefully, it will be a fun and informative event.

Collison announced the following:

- Much gratitude to the Minnesota Vikings for being the Presenting Sponsor of this virtual annual meeting. They've been important partners to the ETBP for many years, and we're wishing them the best for their upcoming season, even as all sports entertainment companies are having to work very diligently to find solutions during this time.
- Our partnership with the Minneapolis Downtown Council is super important in that we're able to optimize our budget and keep to almost zero overhead. We'll hear from the MDC President and CEO later in the meeting.
- All our memberships, from individual up to platinum, are important and provide fuel for our work. Special acknowledgement to the following platinum sponsors who give so generously:
 - American Academy of Neurology
 - Catholic Charities
 - CenterPoint Energy
 - Clear Channel Outdoor
 - Community Housing Development Corporation
 - ESG Architects
 - Hennepin Healthcare
 - House of Charity
 - Kraus-Anderson
 - Minnesota Vikings
 - Neka Creative
 - North Central University
 - Padilla
 - People Serving People
 - Sherman Associates
 - Sherwin Williams
 - Thrivent Financial
 - U.S. Bank
 - Wells Fargo
- The next business forum, *Kicking Off the 15th Season of the Mill City Farmer's Market*, with Brenda Langton, Founder & Development Director of Mill City Farmer's Market, will be virtual on Thursday, May 21st, 12 noon (<https://easttownmpls.org/please-join-us-for-the-etbp-may-21-business-forum-via-zoom/>).

- FINNEGANS, an ETBP member, is open for curbside pickup (<https://finnegans.org/>), and work continues at the FINNnovation Lab (<https://finnegans.org/finnovationlab/>).
- Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge's 2020 Gala on May 1st will be held virtually (<https://www.mntc.org/virtual-gala-minneapolis-may-1-2020/>).
- Support East Town nonprofits for those facing homelessness during COVID-19:
 - Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis (<https://www.cctwincities.org/be-the-helper/>)
 - House of Charity (<https://www.houseofcharity.org/contribute>)
 - People Service People (<https://www.givemn.org/organization/Peopleservingpeople/>)
 - St. Stephen's Human Services at First Covenant Church (<https://www.1stcov.org/partners>)
- Visit ETBP website for city, county and state COVID-19 resources at <https://easttownmpls.org/covid-19-resources/>.
- Visit MRA website, an ETBP member, for COVID-19 business resources at <https://www.mranet.org/covid-19-updates>.
- The Office of Mayor Jacob Frey hosts city-wide calls on Fridays, 12:00-1:00 p.m., with our business/employee community focused on the challenges facing Minneapolis businesses and employees during COVID-19. For more information, visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/coronavirus/WCMSP-223299>.
- Neighborhood association meetings have pivoted to Zoom:
 - For Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association Board and Land Use Committee meeting dates, visit <http://www.thedmna.org/>.
 - For Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc., Building, Land Use and Housing (BLUH) meeting dates, visit <https://www.elliottpark.org/>.

II. Minneapolis Downtown Council-Downtown Improvement District + ETBP Partnership Report

Collison explained because he wears hats between the ETBP and the MDC, Steve Cramer, President and CEO, is his boss and it's a privilege to have him here today to give an update on the partnership between the two organizations and how life is downtown.

Cramer commented a small blessing in these times we're living in is that participation in Zoom meetings is at an all-time record high. Folks are looking for these opportunities to connect and this format has been very effective and suspect it won't go away even when some sense of normalcy or the way things used to be, returns.

The state of the partnership is very strong but of course different. He thinks about the world in pre mid-March and post mid-March timeframes. In pre mid-March, for those who were able to attend the MDC annual meeting, we celebrated all the incredible progress downtown was making, much of it in East Town, and all the things we have to look forward to, many of which are still happening. Certainly, the construction industry and many of the projects in East Town are moving forward and that's one bright spot. But as the pandemic has taken hold and had this incredibly deep and broad impact on our economy, we're very mindful and conscious of how we're all feeling it, especially those of you in the hospitality industry who have felt it first and it's rippling out from there.

From a partnership perspective, he always appreciates the incredible work Collison does, not only on behalf of the ETBP, but also on behalf of NūLoop Partners on the other side of downtown, and generally being a critical connector and person within their organization who can move the ball forward on so many different fronts; thanks for all you're doing.

One of the changes he's noticed is the *Chameleon Shoppes* initiative has gone to online format, and they hope to get it back to a live shopping experience when that's possible, but the work continues. Otherwise, they're focused on, especially through the Downtown Improvement District, is maintaining basic services. While they buried DID services, especially the Ambassadors presence over the last few weeks as they reacted to different events and the

Governor's Stay at Home directive, now full service is back for a shift starting at 6 a.m. and last until 5 p.m., the theory being (a) the workers can stay safe, a first priority, and (b) because of the current downtown environment, they can do a lot of work. Part of what they're focused on is making sure downtown is ready when the economy begins to open again in whatever form and fashion that takes and whatever timeframe that involves. This environment gives the DID a chance to put a spit shine on downtown that perhaps wouldn't normally be the case when we're all working and all those other activities are taking place.

On the MDC side, they're working hard to stay in touch with all their members and key stakeholders, sharing important information, and keeping engagement up as much as possible. Later this month, they'll be going back to member engagement opportunities virtually, e.g.: Third Avenue Bridge Construction (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/mndot-third-ave-bridge-construction-project/>), and What's Next: Back-to-Business for Downtown Minneapolis (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/event/whats-next-back-to-business-for-downtown-minneapolis/>).

Lastly, Cramer thanked everyone and made a special call out to first responders, healthcare professionals, service providers, and everybody who is serving all of us as we try to keep things moving along; they're doing extraordinary service. He sent his last letter to their stakeholders and the time will come when they can thank people in person, but for now their chalk art installations will have to do. He hopes all of us continue to be healthy with our families and work colleagues and he looks forward to continuing our work together in the months ahead. This too shall pass, and our downtown will come out of it strong but different and we can all work together to make that happen.

III. 2019-2020 Year in Review

Collison thanked Christie Rock Hantge, Executive Coordinator for ETBP, with whom he is shared staff on the ETBP and NūLoop Partners, for her steady, consistent, and engaged leadership that she provides across many platforms.

Hantge shared her screen and provided an overview of the past season's business forums beginning with *Crime and Safety, Sentencing and Restorative Justice* on May 16, 2019 at Sawatdee through *What You May Not Know About The Minneapolis Federal Reserve* on February 26, 2020 at U.S. Bank Stadium. Due to COVID-19, no forum was held in March. If you were unable to attend any of these forums, she referred them to the ETBP website where they can read recaps prepared by ETBP Board member Carletta Sweet.

The Business Forum Development Committee is in the process of developing the 2020-2021 season and anyone interested in hosting one of the business forum are encouraged to contact her at christie@easttownmpls.org.

Collison thanked her for the engagement she provides throughout the year, and highlighted the newsletters she sends out subsequent to and between the business forums that provide access to the presentations and are packed with amazing information relevant to downtown and beyond.

IV. Vision for the Year Ahead

Collison noted there is a ton of continued land use and development taking place even as we're collectively facing [COVID-19] challenges, e.g.: House of Charity's Park7 (<https://www.houseofcharity.org/expandinghope>), First Covenant Church and Community Housing Development Corporation's East Town Apartments (<https://www.easttownmsp.com/>) that will open on May 15th, Kraus-Anderson's The Larking (<https://www.krausanderson.com/construction/portfolio/the-larking/>), and many more. Hence, the theme for the year ahead is People, Place and Possibility.

For those who've been connected to us for a while, the East Town narrative and brand includes three pillars: Vibrant urban community, Multifaceted enclave welcoming a diverse population, and Connected as a focal point of the city. As a business association we connect businesses of all sizes, for profits and nonprofits, and find that all levels rise when we continually focus on how we connect neighborhoods, and people whether they live or work or come for entertainment. On a deeper level, we've had these goals to increase residential growth, strengthen the Park and Portland corridors as connectors, and expand and improve the public realm, and to reinforce and support these goals, we continue to create these compelling business forums where everyone has a chance to connect and network as well as hear from people who are on the frontend of these conversations. Collin then described the 2020-2021 business forum series (<https://easttownmpls.org/2020-2021-business-forum-series/>) that will be released in the next email beginning with the celebration of the new Thrivent headquarters on September 19th, ending on June 17th with *What's All This I Hear*

About the Lock and Dam. There are so many priority issues bubbling up on the Central Riverfront, after today's presentations we'll need to have the group come back a year from now and track their progress. Meanwhile, if anyone has any ideas or themes they'd like to share or would like to serve on the Board or any of the committees, he'd love to connect with you.

V. ETBP Board Business

A. Outgoing Board Members. Campobasso explained the ETBP has been in existence for 40 years, 26 of which he's served on the Board and, consequently, term limits were enacted. Currently, there are three members whose terms are expiring:

Marc Berg, J. Selmer Law
Chris Fleck, North Central University
Varun Kharbanda, Timeshare Systems, Inc.

Campobasso thanked them for their participation and contributions.

B. Incoming Board Members. After the Board Development Committee reviewed its Board Profile to determine areas of professional expertise it lacked, received referrals and conducted interviews, it put forth the following slate of candidates, all of whom agreed to serve:

Charlie Boeckenheuer, Mgr of Season Ticket Sales at Minnesota Vikings (<https://www.vikings.com/team/front-office-roster/charlie-boeckenheuer>)*;
Brent Hanson, VP of Corporate Properties Group at Wells Fargo (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brent-hanson-a48a558/>);
Brian Maupin, General Manager at Allied Parking (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brian-maupin-21329223/>);
Mike Noble, Owner of the Normandy Inn & Suites (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mike-noble-66223048/>); and
Kelly Rice from, Director of Housing at Cassia/Augustana Care (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kelly-rice-01880a59/>).

Campobasso asked the audience to vote by using the Reaction feature on Zoom. Then, based upon the number of "thumbs up" received, the slate of candidates was approved.

Campobasso welcomed the new Board members and encouraged others who wish to serve to reach out to him, Collison or Hantge. Then he expressed appreciation for the partnership ETBP has with the MDC.

**elected subsequent to the annual meeting via email vote*

VI. The History and Future of the Minneapolis Riverfront

A. Minneapolis Parks Foundation. Paul Bauknight, Project Implementation Director (<https://mplsparksfoundation.org/2019/02/05/news-release-minneapolis-parks-foundation-hires-paul-bauknight-as-first-project-implementation-director%EF%BB%BF/>), thanked the ETBP for the invitation and gave an overview of the MPF – its mission being transforming human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision – and their work on the riverfront, specifically Water Works in the Central Riverfront and Great Northern Greenway River Link/26th Avenue North Overlook in North Minneapolis.

As we're experiencing this pandemic, he can't think of anything more important than people and the importance of parks, public spaces, connections, access, inclusion, and diversity. Referencing John Surico's *The Power of Parks in a Pandemic* article in CityLab (<https://www.citylab.com/perspective/2020/04/coronavirus-nature-city-park-funding-accessibility-location/609697/>), he noted we're blessed with a great park system, they continue to be developed and maintained, everyone has equal access and a chance to interact with nature and the amenities of the Mississippi River, the foundation of our city.

Water Works (<https://mplsparksfoundation.org/projects/water-works/>), the redevelopment of the former Fuji Ya restaurant that's part of the RiverFirst initiative, is under construction and slated to be completed next fall with The Sioux

Chef (<https://sioux-chef.com/>) opening in the spring. They've raised close to \$18 million for this project.

The Great Northern Greenway River Link (<https://mplsparksfoundation.org/projects/26th-ave-n-trail-link-pier/>) started construction 2 days ago and is important because it marks the first time North Minneapolitans that will have a direct connection to the river; most access has been cut off by I-94 and industry. They've raised just over \$1 million for this project.

B. Mill City Museum (https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MCMPresentation_EastTown-4.16.20-EMAIL.pdf?mc_cid=8d8f68a59e&mc_eid=c601721787). David Stevens, Site Manager for Minnesota Historical Society at Mill City Museum (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-stevens-5282114/>), shared the history of the Minneapolis riverfront by acknowledging the riverfront and all of Minneapolis is on Dakota homeland, and the sacred place for them at the waterfall is called Owamniyomni, the basis for Minneapolis being here at all. Owamniyomni made this an important place for many people for many different reasons for thousands of years. For the Dakota, Owamniyomni is part of a larger spiritual landscape centered at Bdote where the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers meet, that had many other important places in the Twin Cities including Spirit Island and Nicollet Island. Oral tradition suggests the Dakota were frequently fishing and maple sugaring on the riverfront, walking trails that became Hennepin and Hiawatha Avenues, and Dakota is everywhere in the region in place names including Minnesota itself.

The Dakota look at The Falls as a spiritual place and the Europeans and Americans that came later looked at it differently. For many, they saw the awesome beauty of The Falls and in the 1830s through the 1850s this was a tourist destination where folks would come and spend their summers and drink from the mineral springs that still flows in Father Hennepin Bluff Park. However, most who came saw water power, the energy to power the lumber and flour mills that made Minneapolis the Mill City, and the riverfront the greatest direct drive water power district the world had ever seen.

It wasn't just The Falls that made this a great place for a city. Its fortunate location to other resources such as the pine forests upstream, and rich prairie farmlands to the west, combined with capital from the East Coast, growing industries like lumber and flour, and hydroelectricity, made this a great place for a city.

By the 1880s the city was a metropolis of the Northwest with immigrants from all over the world fueling growth, and related industries like banking, barrel making, and artificial limbs taking hold. But by the 1920s, the original industries began to decline and the big milling companies began to move elsewhere so the riverfront went into a long period of decline with the Washburn A Mill shutting down in 1965.

The City began its response by bringing river navigation for the first time, barge traffic coming upstream with a series of locks that opened in the 1950s and 1960s, but never living up to the boosters' expectations with the Upper Lock shutting down in 2015.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the riverfront was on hard times, and the City turned its attention back from the City of Lakes to reexplore and reinvest in the riverfront, and we're in that third period of revitalization that continues today, including the opening of the MCM in 2003. They serve 115,000 visitors annually, a third of which are school kids, and they host walking tours, concerts and weddings that serve many more each year.

Stevens then shared ideas for the future of the MCM. For the immediate, figuring out when they'll reopen; they've been closed since March 14th and today they extended it through June 30th. They're making plans for when they reopen, revising the experience to ensure staff and visitors are safe and able to explore the story of the MCM, working on a new interpretive framework with expanded stories beyond the riverfront to other topics they don't cover in great depth with the goal toward revised exhibits in the next 5 years. Additionally, they have a partnership with American Institute of Architects Minnesota which is looking to build a Center of Architecture and the feasibility of using some of the unused buildings in the Washburn A Mill complex. And finally, they're keeping an eye on doing underground tours across the river at the Pillsbury A Mill where the waterpower tunnel still exists.

C. Friends of the Lock and Dam (https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Freinds-of-the-Lock-and-Dam-Presentation-for-ETBP.pdf?mc_cid=8d8f68a59e&mc_eid=c601721787). Mark Andrew, President (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/former-county-commissioner-mark-andrew-joins-initiative-to-t.html> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Andrew_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Andrew_(politician))), congratulated the neighborhood for all its work in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and seeing so much positive things going on. He explained the riverfront holds a lot of the key to the future growth and prosperity for our community and Bauknight and Stevens’s presentations are instructive in pointing us in the right direction regarding the riverfront.

The Falls initiative is not just focused on the Lock and Dam, it’s also focused on the historic district and the potential contribution that a redo of the Lock and Dam might make to all projects happening on the riverfront. Andrew then guided the audience through the FL&D’s timeline beginning with the decommissioning of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock in June 2015 due to the reduction in barge traffic and invasive carp (<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/06/08/upper-st-anthony-lock>); FL&D’s formation in 2016 by community leader Paul Reyelts, former CFO for Valspar Corporation who is dedicated to park-related issues, to repurpose the Lock to a world-class destination; several actions taken in 2017 encouraging the creation of a Visitors Center; in 2019 they were recommended for \$2.8 million in funding through LCCMR where they’ll have the opportunity to augment the work Bauknight described at Water Works and early enhancements at the L&D; and now they’re in a new era of the evolution of the Central Riverfront. This month they’re initiating a series of community engagement efforts. They want to be partnering on the other riverfront projects, and listening very closely to what the Minnesota Historical Society and St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board have stated. They want the site itself to be an historic reference site and opportunity to delve more deeply into the historic value and profound impact that indigenous people have had on the riverfront and they’re dedicating the organization to building that capability to articulate that vision, and hopefully the future of the riverfront through the eyes of the indigenous people who came before us.

Kjersti Monson, Director of FL&D, and CEO/Director of Civic Studio at Duval Companies (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kjersti-monson-334b458/>) explained the image shown is a couple years old. Initial design work done was mobilized around protecting the Lock from continuing as an industrial site because of hydro interest. Then she described the piece of land and assets on which they’re focused, i.e., Water Works Phase 3. They’re excited to continue to coordinate with the MPRB and MPF to achieve wholistic experience of place, and be part of the Portland Avenue journey, the primary port of access. The L&D is the jewel and heart of this bigger green yard connected directly to The Commons; it’s a hub and major feature on the skyline of the city.

Since the last time they’ve presented, they’ve dialed in more on what is the site. They’ve been working with the US Army Corps of Engineers and broad coalition of stakeholder organizers on areas of interest for acquisition and this plan reflects what they think is of utmost interest. It’s not only the land, it’s also the guide walls and points of access to the top of the Lock. The plan is not anyone’s idea; it reflects years of adopted plans and initiatives by multiple entities to come up with a vision for how the river will become the center of our community. The site today is not in great shape and there’s a ton of upside as they begin to engage and make improvements to it.

As mentioned earlier, they’re very interested in bringing to the surface the fact that the site is Dakota land and has great significance for indigenous populations, and Spirit Island was demolished to construct the L&D after it had been quarried. Right next door will be The Sioux Chef so they’re posing the question can they extend that identity and the opportunity to tell that story on the L&D. They’re happy to have received a grant from the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board to build capacity around this goal and assist in engagement with the Native American populations.

The project is part of the Great River Road, one of their most important tourism assets promoted by Explore Minnesota, and right at the heart of our Great River Road experience is our Mississippi National River and Recreation Area of the National Park Service which is already onsite. These qualities and characteristics of the site speaks to its potential as a national destination; this could be the most accessible opportunity to experience what is Minnesota, how it began, who are the first people, and the history of our economy.

Lastly, she discussed the process. In 2018, USACE was directed by Congress to expedite the disposition study of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock that is ending. They’ll release it for public comment in June and she doesn’t

believe it'll be delayed and they're hoping there'll be additional direction by Congress this year. There was also direction from our Senators telling USACE that the intent of Congress in providing this legislation was for USACE to work with the City of Minneapolis to ensure the outcome was consistent with the City's vision.

They view this site as checking every box of iconic civic places; it's historical, has ecological significance, and is a hub for recreation. They're just kicking this process off; it's tabula rasa and they don't know what the final design will look like. They'll be ready to have active interaction around specific design and programming concepts later this summer and are inviting us to it.

Collison thanked the Bauknight, Andrew, and Monson for their presentations

VII. Closing Remarks

Campobasso thanked the audience for joining by Zoom, Collison for coordinating the meeting with Hantge, and the speakers for their presentations. He encouraged everyone to join us at next month's meeting.

VIII. Other Zoom Attendees

Marita Albinson, Guthrie Theater
Carina Aleckson, Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Marc Berg, J Selmer Law
Charlie Boeckenheuer, Minnesota Vikings
Ann Calvert, Minneapolis CPED
Tyler Chapman, Allodium Investment Consultants
Robert Clapp, Bridgewater Lofts
Chris DeLaurentis, 9th Street Historic Brownstones
Chris Fleck, North Central University
Cynthia Froid, Cynthia Froid Group
Daniel Gumnit, People Serving People
Vanessa Haight, Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc.
Brent Hansen, Wells Fargo
Phil Hansen, American Red Cross Minnesota
Christie Rock Hantge, ETBP Staff
Cyndy Harrison, Sawatdee Thai Restaurant
Daniel Jacobsen, Pixelwerx
Cory Johnson, Mill City Opera
Tom Jollie, Padilla
Richard Kiemen, Sherman Associates
Kory Kingsbury, Renaissance Hotel and Residence Inn at The Depot Minneapolis
Jeff LaFavre, IAG Commercial
Julia Lauwagie, MN Adult & Teen Challenge
Fred Linehan, Bankers Life
Sean Lundy, American Red Cross Minnesota
Pamela McCrea, , Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Paul Mellblom, MSR Design
Deborah Moses, House of Charity
Aimee Robinson, North Central University
Frank Sherwood, CBRE
Beth Shogren, Green Minneapolis
Carletta Sweet, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Al Swintek, CenterPoint Energy
Wendy Underwood, Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Matthew Weiland, Clear Channel Outdoor
Marybeth Weisberg, Minneapolis Downtown Council
John Yost, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota