

Recap of the East Town Business Partnership Business Forum

Kicking Off the 15th Season of Mill City Farmers Market

(https://zoom.us/rec/share/9-hnM7Lc8VNieqvP02LBY_J5HtzJaaa80yAc_qFZyRpjB4uUipopV5iPB4E9-meB-,3d*^+*oN)

Thursday, May 21, 2020, 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

Via Zoom Conference

I. Welcome and Announcements

On behalf of the ETBP Board, Carina Aleckson welcomed everyone to the new Board year and announced she's the new President. Instead of having everyone verbally introduce themselves as would be done if in person, she encouraged them to drop their information into the chat feature. When not serving in her role with the ETBP, she's Community Development Program Manager at Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/cruhlandt/>) located [at the south end of Downtown West]. They're currently moving [several of their operations] into East Town (<https://www.cctwincities.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/release-12-2-2019-.pdf>). She invited everyone to continue to engage with the various programming they'll have going on during the summer; things will be modified during this time but she looks forward to continuing to interact with one another and seeing people's creativity on display when out and about wearing masks.

ETBP Executive Director Dan Collison thanked everyone – i.e., the DMNA and EPNI leaders and board members, and business, nonprofit and corporate leaders – for being here. He noted Aleckson has been a Board member for many years, served on the Executive Committee as Treasurer, and it was a wonderful win for the ETBP when she leaned into the role of President. The baton was passed from John Campobasso of Kraus-Anderson who's on the call and he thanked him for being here.

He highlighted the ETBP is grateful for its membership and has always had an affordable structure with little overhead which fuels staff time and allows it to keep pouring back into organizing to the benefit of the community. He extended special gratitude to the following platinum members who help put extra fuel in the tank:

- 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

Collison then announced the following upcoming events:

- The next business forum, *The Importance of Downtowns to their City and Regions*, is on Thursday, June 18th; it will be the last of this season and is co-created with Steve Cramer of the Minneapolis Downtown Council. This is leveraging a recent national study done with Cathy Lin, Director of Research for International Downtown Association (https://www.mplsdowntown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/IDA-VODT_Minneapolis_Final1.pdf).

- Minneapolis Downtown Council virtual panel events:
 - Thursday, May 28th, 11:00 a.m.: Back-to-Business | Operating Under the Influence of COVID-19 (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/registration200528/> and <https://www.mplsdowntown.com/webinar-back-to-business-in-downtown-mpls/>);
 - Wednesday, June 10th, 11:00 a.m.: Back-to-Business | Back to the Office (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/registration2005611/>).
- Minneapolis is conducting engagement about the Transportation Action Plan (<http://go.minneapolismn.gov/>) and accepting comments until tomorrow, Friday, May 22nd.
- Finnegan's Restaurant & Tap Room, although closed with other restaurateurs, offers takeout, delivery and curbside pickup (<https://www.lessings.com/corporate/restaurants/venue/finnegans>). Also, watch FINNnovation Lab's Cohort 2 give its FINNale presentation on June 11th, 4:30-6:00 p.m. RSVP at <https://bit.ly/FINNcohort2>.
- We're invited to support the work of important East Town nonprofits during COVID-19, e.g.:
 - 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/>)
- Visit MRA website, an ETBP member, for COVID-19 business resources at <https://www.mranet.org/covid-19-updates>.
- We're invited to stay engaged with neighborhood association meetings which have pivoted to Zoom and are more accessible:
 - 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/>.
- Coffee with Council Member Steve Fletcher, usually held on Wednesdays, 5:00-6:30 p.m. at varying locations within Ward 3, has gone virtual (<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MinneapolisWard3/events/>).
- Following Ward 6 Council Member Abdi Warsame's resignation (<https://www.mndaily.com/article/2020/05/n-candidates-declare-bids-for-minneapolis-city-council-special-election>), there will be an interim election in August and he'll continue to track what's happening.
- Visit the ETBP website for city, county and state COVID-19 resources at <https://easttownmpls.org/covid-19-resources/>.
- The ETBP is always looking for those unique opportunities to support all its food-based businesses, e.g., join Mayor Frey's weekly call with the business community. This Friday, learn about how the City is responding to Governor Walz's anticipated opening of businesses on June 1st (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5947637033667947280> and <https://easttownmpls.org/message-from-the-mayors-office-zoom-meeting-on-friday/>).

And today at 2:00 p.m., will be a Food and Hospitality Reopen Collaborative; there are about 15-20 owners, operators and developers who are deeply invested to collectively work together to create a place-based strategy for reopening and best practices so that all of downtown can understand what we're doing on this side of town. A small task force has been meeting for a couple months and if interested in participating, send him an email at DCollison@mplsdowntown.com.

II. Green Minneapolis Programming Update

Beth Shogren, Executive Director (<https://www.greenminneapolis.org/about/staff/> and <https://www.linkedin.com/in/beth-shogren-b31a433/>), provided an overview of the organization, its programs, the area of focus which includes all of East Town and the MDC's 2025 Plan footprint, and what was achieved in 2019.

Their first project was The Commons for which they completed the private sector fundraising campaign and operated for 4 years. On April 1st, operations were successfully transitioned to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (<https://www.minneapolisparke.org/news/2020/03/27/minneapolis-park-and-recreation-board-assumes-operations-at-the-commons/>) as a result of [litigation that began in 2017, and the Minnesota Appeals Court upheld the original ruling (<https://www.fox9.com/news/mn-appeals-court-rules-city-of-minneapolis-cannot-operate-commons-park/>)]. She's impressed with the way in which the MPRB has incorporated The Commons into their operations and they're the first to acknowledge it's a heavy lift to manage a park like this. The MPRB is working hard to maintain it to the same standard that GM has, but there are differences, most notably overnight security and a lot of resident chatter about the homeless population and a small encampment that was there for a week or so. A communications channel with the MPRB remains open and they are aware of the concerns of neighborhood residents. There is a broad safety coalition of all safety agencies – Park Police, Metro Transit Police, MPD, DID Livability – that is working hard to serve those who are experiencing homelessness and livability issues throughout downtown.

Then she noted Peavey Plaza reopened last year (<https://tclf.org/peavey-plaza-reopens-last>). However, the fountains are not yet on because there is some uncertainty about whether it's a good or bad thing, i.e., will it make people gather and discourage social distancing, and some repairs to the basin will be made in mid-June so it will not be in full operation until then.

In the meantime, GM is focusing on general advocacy and two remaining projects: Hennepin-Lyndale Crossroads (<https://www.greenminneapolis.org/projects/hennepin-lyndale-crossroads/>); and Greening Lab (<https://www.greenminneapolis.org/projects/greening-lab/> and <https://www.mplsdid.com/greeninglab>) to grow the downtown forest.

III. Kicking Off the 15th Season of Mill City Farmers Market

After Collison provided some background on her, Brenda Langton, Founder & Development Director of Mill City Farmer's Market (<http://millcitytimes.com/news/the-mill-city-times-interview-brenda-langton-founder-and-dev.html>), explained the importance of the MCFM to lifting people's spirits when they go to the grocery store now. Normally, they get 4,000-5,000 customers and about 60 vendors per day. This year is very different and they've been working hard at making it a very safe place to shop so people can trust in them.

Their mission is to inspire and nurture a healthy community by building a local, sustainable and organic food economy in a vibrant experiential marketplace; that is what they do each and every Saturday May through October. They were pleased that Governor Tim Walz and Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen deemed them an essential business, so they developed a preorder, prepaid, and pickup market. They began small by moving onto the plaza with just 11 vendors on the three remaining Winter Market dates and worked up to 27 vendors.

She described the benefits of their new COVID-19 system and noted the best way to shop is to preorder boxes of vegetables each time like a weekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). To facilitate online preordering, they've had to jump in and help build the farmers' websites. Also, their Executive Director Martha Archer jumped on national and state agricultural and farmers markets webinars to help shape how best practices worked, many of which they tried, in order to help as many people as possible get through this [health crisis].

Lastly, she described their various programs, sponsors, the ways in which they engage and conduct outreach, and how anyone can support. For more information, visit their website, recently refreshed by their neighbor Duffy (<https://duffy.com/>), at <https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/> and sign up for the weekly newsletters that are more up-to-date.

IV. Closing Remarks

Collison extended gratitude to everyone who attended and to Langton who he considers a standout human being and incredible entrepreneur bringing good, health and joy into our world; the ETBP is pleased to support the MCFM. Then he reminded everyone of the last business forum of the season on June 18th that will be jointly held with the MDC via Zoom.

V. Other Zoom Attendees

Martha Archer, Mill City Farmers Market
Ann Calvert, Minneapolis CPED
John Campobasso, Kraus-Anderson
Valerie Doleman, Sherman Associates

Dale Forsberg, Watson-Forsberg
Kevin Frazell, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Cynthia Froid, Cynthia Froid Group
Christie Rock Hantge, ETBP Staff
Cyndy Harrison, Sawatdee Thai Restaurant
Shannon Hendricks, Mill City Farmers Market
Cory Johnson, formerly Mill City Summer Opera
Richard Kiemen, Sherman Associates
Kory Kingsbury, Renaissance Hotel and Residence Inn at The Depot Minneapolis
Julia Lauwagie, MN Adult & Teen Challenge
Pamela McCrea, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Wendy Merila, Valleyfair Family Amusement Park
Aimee Robertson, North Central University
Frank Sherwood, CBRE
Reid Struck, Sherman-Williams
Carletta Sweet, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Dianne Walsh, Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association