

Draft Minutes from the East Town Business Partnership Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, December 3, 2020, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Via Zoom Conference

(https://zoom.us/rec/share/XxBJIIFBUI_0wO3RNPYf9JxmbBCCdWQ15uGLN4rB8y_kGo5KrlpFB1ICYckw1DVwY.ohGVkfxN_oFprxj; Passcode: 05Fm&?2Y)

Present: Carina Aleckson, Jacquie Berglund, John Campobasso, Amy Carlson, Cyndy Harrison, Brent Hanson, Tom Jollie, Richard Kiemen, Vanessa Haight, Julia Lauwagie, Brian Maupin, Deborah Moses, Michael Noble, Kelly Stenzel, Carletta Sweet
Staff: Dan Collison, Christie Rock Hantge
Guest: Cara Deanes, Roho Collective
Absent: Charlie Boeckenheuer, Rinal Ray, Reid Struck

I. Call to Order

President Carina Aleckson welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m., and asked everyone to introduce themselves in turn when called upon.

II. Consideration of Agenda

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

III. Consideration of Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was approved as submitted which included minutes from the November 5, 2020 Board meeting; Treasurer's report for November which included the F2020 Budget vs. Actual as of November 30, 2020, and Wells Fargo bank statement for November; Director of Downtown Partnerships for Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District and Executive Director for East Town Business Partnership and NūLoop Partners' report for November 1-28, 2020; and Executive Coordinator's report for the period 11/1/2020 to 11/30/2020 (JC/CS).

IV. Presentation: Chameleon Shoppes Holiday Program and Roho Collective

Executive Director Dan Collison advised he was introduced to Cara Deanes, Owner/CEO of the Roho Collective (<https://caradeanes.com/home/golden-rule-a4rne> and <https://rohocollective.org/about>), by Lisa Middag, Director of Nicollet Activation at Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisa-middag-066b65b/>), and he has spent a lot of time with her over the last 30 days to put together some wonderful artisan artwork into a digital platform – reference his December 2nd Chameleon/Roho Collective Virtual Markets email which has links to the Roho Holiday Market (<https://rohocollective.square.site/>), and a Promotional Video on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyCiV9ucFFs&feature=youtu.be>).

For Deanes' edification, Dan explained the ETBP is where he got started in his business civic work. There has been more than \$3 billion invested in the Downtown East and Elliot Park neighborhoods of East Town, and the ETBP has sought to encourage this investment thoughtfully across the many cross-sector organizations and voices at the table. As shared staff with the Minneapolis Downtown Council (<https://www.mplsdowntown.com/about-membership/our-team/>), he and the ETBP have created a bridge between the two organizations by focusing on initiatives and programs both do well and reflect their purpose and mission; inclusion, economic development, and acceleration of diverse small businesses is a real sweet spot. He's had the privilege of getting to know both Deanes and her husband, Christopheraaron Deanes (<https://www.mnartists.org/christopheraaron-deanes>), and thinks the Roho Collective is amazing.

Deanes thanked Dan and stated she's excited about this cool and rapid partnership that has developed over the last 30 days. Then she provided information about her background, i.e.: raised in Minnesota; started her work career in youth development which grew and accelerated; her true passion became business and business development which landed her in a Director of Development position at a nonprofit; did some consulting on the side because she had a passion for entrepreneurs, especially women of color, helping them develop a platform – e.g., putting events together, writing business plans, looking for grants – for their businesses in the creative field which she naturally gravitated towards being a self-proclaimed wife to a husband who is a fine artist, walking alongside him and delving into the art world in a more meaningful way.

The RC has been around for a while, and in 2014 it got its 501(c)(3) status. She's been a part of the organization as a partner who went to all the events and put events together; became the Board Chair 2 years ago and moved into her current role then took over the organization on an executive and ownership level from the previous leadership almost 1 year ago during which they have made amazing strides, the Holiday Marketing being one part of that.

RC works with artists of color here in the Twin Cities, and their platform/organizational pillars are business development, professional growth, curated events, and investing back into the community which are done in a variety of ways. They represent all sorts of mediums, e.g., visual artists, dancers, comedians, and are trying to expand the lens of what an artist and creative looks like.

Dan noted he has a ton more video content from having spent the last 10-12 days filming and photographing the artwork, talking to the artists, getting Cara and Christopher Aaron on camera, and he'd like to do more down the road to help shape their story. He has found that intersection of economic development, black artists, and art itself engaging culture, meaning and ideas, to be compelling, e.g., when they did a pop-up at MartinPatrick3 this past July, it was a great opportunity to feature RC and get their artwork into the marketplace. The connection with him and Chameleon Shoppes felt intuitive. Dan then asked Cara how she sees the potential advancement of their artists in downtown spaces, how artists can impact the downtown environment, continue to change the face of retail, and help RC be a part of that.

Deanes said a part of their vision and unspoken driving forces of RC members and artists is to be able to put them in front of the audience they desire to be in front of, and however/whatever that looks like is an individual journey for each artist. But as a collective, what they're trying to achieve is bring voice, advocacy, and culture to the masses, and break down these strong existing silos within the art and community world, not just in the Twin Cities but abroad as well. She feels one of the driving forces of their work as an organization is to come alongside the artists and have meaningful conversations about what's going to help their artistry and business goal to the next level. For most artists, it's the backend piece of working their business – e.g., gaining access to funding to be able to execute their artwork, telling their story in a compelling way, connecting with museums, getting their artwork seen in downtown, logistical and business pieces of entrepreneurship – where help is needed in creative and unconventional ways.

Dan, who was impressed with the array of participating artists from the semi professionals to the deeply sophisticated, and is interested in onramps, bridges, and organizations as they evolve continue to find ways to reach upstream and downstream, asked how has that woven into the fabric of the way they build their membership, and how does mentoring and cross informing take place.

Deanes stated there are cool elements you get when you have a collective, e.g., world renowned artist Ta-coumba Aiken (<https://www.ta-coumba.com/>), an enthusiastic 21-year-old just starting out in his journey, so it's how they formally and informally collaborate and utilize those contrasting strengths. Historically, Collective members have been more in the professional field where they're already living off their arts and they'll be expanding upon that in 2021.

Their next goal as an organization will be to mentor youth, 18- to 21-year-olds. It's a new branch and as a youth worker at heart she's really excited about it. This summer they had two high school interns and it was amazing. It's a continuum of using the expertise of all age groups and professional levels.

The RC is like a buffet for artists, members don't have to participate in everything offered, they get to pick and choose based upon where their careers are at, so it's an individual journey and RC will jump in to support them where they feel it will be most beneficial.

With their level of sophistication and reach, Dan recommended RC for any of our potential public art. For more information, she can be reached at caradeanes@rohocollective.org.

V. Action Item: Consideration of the 2021 Budget

Because a couple more checks were recently received, Carina noted our financial forecast is looking better than even a week or two ago and thanked each organization that is continuing to make the ETBP a priority.

Treasurer Julia Lauwagie advised this is the time of the year when we look at our budget going into the next year, then gave an overview of the 2020 budget and the 2021 budget (<https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ETBP-2021-Budget-for-presentation-the-board.pdf>). It's been tough for a lot of organizations, including us, maintaining the membership level needed to just meet monthly expenses. Fortunately within this last week, a lot of membership dues we were hoping to come in by the end of the year have come in; however, we're still waiting for a few regular members to bring in what was expected.

She, Carina, Dan, and Executive Coordinator Christie Rock Hantge met to go over what was needed to get through to the next

membership season in mid-July, and although we're doing okay, the budget submitted for approval today requires that Dan and Christie take a pay cut of 15% and 10% respectively, not what they had hoped.

For those newer to the Board, Dan explained we're a place-based organization that has always been super streamlined: there is virtually no overhead as First Covenant has been providing office and storage space for many years for free; and we've complemented instead of competed with the MDC's membership dues. We've seen increases in the budget over the last several years as we've gotten new members, new projects have come online, and revenue has supported this incremental work. We've always had a decent cash reserve ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, but this year has been so different because it took a little longer to get the campaign rolled out, and the huge tourism and hospitality area in downtown has been gutted so a lot of folks who are engaged and support us just can't cut a check this year. He's super grateful to those who could and can support us. They're likely to run the organization to almost no cash to get to next summer

Julia highlighted that Dan and Christie are doing all the legwork in getting membership dues, and Christie takes care of all the details; we're literally a barebones organization. She thanked those organizations that have continued with us. The goal is to approve the budget as is with the idea of revisiting it later in the year with the intention of increasing Dan and Christie's wages back to where they were.

Carina advised they ran through a bunch of scenarios before they landed at the 10% cut for Christie and 15% cut for Dan. This truly was a team effort and the percentages were offered by Christie and Dan, and they're hopeful they'll be able to revisit it in early 2021.

Christie reported she updated the membership reports found on the Board Members Only web page as this meeting began and announced within the last 48 hours they brought in \$4,650 in payment dues, and still have \$6,900 that will be paid by the end of the year; her hope is to get closer to the \$48,000 range in total dues collected. Then she echoed the sentiments of the rest of the team by expressing appreciation to everybody who able to support us this year.

Thereafter, the 2021 Budget was approved as submitted (JB/RK).

VI. Updates

A. Executive Director Monthly Overview. Dan reported the following:

1. **Downtown Mpls News Digest.** Ben Shardlow, Director of Urban Design at Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/benshardlow/>), produces this internal publication as a resource for people who want a quick scan of all things related to downtown. He tracks with all current media and you'd probably need an account to access articles in some publications like *Finance & Commerce*, *Star Tribune*. To subscribe, contact him at bshardlow@MplsDID.com. Dan has found this to be a fabulous way of tracking current topics.
2. **Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority** (<https://msfa.com/>) conducts biweekly public meetings, and he offered comment at the last one in support of ASM Global (<https://www.usbankstadium.com/stadium-info/asm-global>) providing some outreach programming for their hourly employees who haven't been earning money. The stadium employs between 2,300 and 2,500 mostly hourly standardized union wage people. Because there's been no stadium activity, there's been tremendous hardship for those not working so they're working on a program to support them.

B. Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association. Carletta Sweet referenced her report as of November 5th on the Board Members Only web page.

C. Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. Vanessa Haight reported the following:

1. The former First Church of Christ Scientist at 614 15th Street East is an historic building that has been vacant since 2006 and is in rough condition. The developer of 1400 Park Avenue has purchased it as part of their land acquisition and their Certificate of Appropriateness application to demolish the building went before the Heritage Preservation Commission this week for consideration and it was denied (<https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/Board/MarkedAgenda/HPC/2089>). Having a long history of preserving their built assets, EPNI is hoping to encourage the developer to put some money

into it to improve what has become a community eyesore.

2. They're starting a monthly Community Safety conversation. They've been doing pop-up meetings as needed, and have targeted groups meeting about specific areas. Now they're doing a monthly meeting open to anyone who lives, works, or plays in the area. The first meeting is on Monday, December 7th at 6:00 p.m. (https://www.elliottpark.org/120720_safety).
3. The next Early Mornings with Elliot Park Neighborhood is on Tuesday, December 15th at 7:30 a.m. and the focus will be on interfaith holiday traditions (<https://www.elliottpark.org/earlymornings>).

Dan saluted the neighborhood associations for the incredible work they've been doing around the 2021 Budget, residential engagement, and suite of activities. Having access to their Zoom meetings is a real opportunity to further engage with the downtown community and he hopes the ETBP can continue to amplify their efforts.

D. Minneapolis Downtown Council-Downtown Improvement District. Dan reported on:

Chameleon Shoppes. The Minneapolis Foundation cut them a check for \$7,500 originally to support in-person markets in the IDS Center, so he went full throttle to prepare the retail spaces and then COVID changed everything.

Because of the current phase of shutdown and cancellation of in-person markets, they've leveraged the talents of Neka Creative to feature more than 25 vendors online and produce the video about Roho Collective and window displays (see his December 2nd email. They've also leveraged the MDC's Square (<https://squareup.com/us/en>) platform to put together a website. The most thrilling thing he has done was to learn the black artists' stories and take photos of their art.

VII. Committee Reports

- A. **Membership.** Reference Christie's comments above under the 2021 Budget.
- B. **Executive.** Carina advised they're continuing to review the Strategic Plan (<https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ETBP-StrategicPlan-2018-2022-Approved.pdf>), and they'll have one more session in December before they bring a report to the Board by January.
- C. **Board Development.** John Campobasso reported Amy Carlson's appointment to the Board last month was the culmination of their latest efforts, otherwise there's not a lot of people coming off the Board in April. Dan has been doing a great job ensuring we have a robust Board and it's great. If anyone has any suggestions or ideas about who they think would be a great person to have join the Board, please let them know.
- D. **Business Forum Development.** Dan noted we'll need to move Thrivent Financial's grand opening past March because a lot of downtown offices are anticipating returning toward the end of the second quarter/beginning of the third. They'll continue to develop the programming and at some point begin to discuss what it means to provide hybrid forums.
- E. **Food & Hospitality.** Cyndy Harrison reported they had a meeting yesterday with McKinsey & Company and have been meeting with them regularly to talk about all the things they could do to promote hospitality and support restaurants that are struggling most. McKinsey is working on doing a survey and has lots of ideas about how to support them. Yesterday's discussion was about two things: (1) getting big corporate businesses in downtown to support hospitality and thinking of ways to collaborate and partner with them; and (2) what they could do to push forward the Restaurant Act (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7197?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22restaurants+act+of+2020%22%5D%7D&s=2&r=1>). Marketing is going to be a big push when dining rooms reopen.

Lastly, in response to Michael Nobel's comment about how Meet Minneapolis via its We Need Us initiative (<https://www.minneapolis.org/we-need-us/>), and the Downtown Restaurants Group (<https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/10/06/restaurants-raise-minneapolis-safety-concerns.html>) should work together to promote the brand of Minneapolis, Dan added Leah Wong, VP of External Relations at the MDC (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leahwong/>), has also been spearheading a CBD group and he'll stay engaged and do his best to keep information flowing between them all.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m. (JB/CS).