

VI. Presentation: The Future is Downtown Minneapolis

Leah Wong, Vice President of External Relations at the Minneapolis Downtown Council (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leahwong/> and <https://www.mplsdowntown.com/about-membership/our-team/>), said she started her morning on the riverfront in East Town and took in all the great construction before her meetings; it was fun and it always brings a smile to her face.

She comes as one person who is part of really great work to collectively come together and support the reanimation of downtown Minneapolis. They have a number of stakeholders and some of us are directly involved through our companies but there's lots of opportunities for more involvement in this important engagement.

They all know that the future is downtown Minneapolis and they're committed to that, especially with the news coming out today from the Governor (https://mn.gov/governor/news/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=#/detail/appld/1/id/480351); they're excited about what summer and fall will bring for downtown. They're not looking backwards but forwards to create the downtown we all want, desire, and deserve. They're looking to do something big, bold, and different; align together to help restore public confidence in downtown; invite people to participate in the journey of downtown; and encourage consistent messaging and graphics to cut through some of the clutter and rhetoric.

What they have done and will continue to do in this work is adhere to the following three principles: (i) involve stakeholders in the process; (ii) remain flexible, i.e., follow a phased approach by season to be mindful of cultural and current events; and (iii) be open-minded, i.e., a lot of research, data collection, and landscape analysis has been done to ensure work is in the right strategy to have the greatest impact.

Following the above principles will yield: (i) a creative platform that will include the high level messaging which they expect to rollout to stakeholders who will be expected to roll it down for employees, patrons, tenants, etc.; (ii) feasible activation ideas to add or combine events to make more of an impact; (iii) execution and implementation of the ideas; and (iv) a measurement plan for the creative actions.

They've partnered with a local agency, Zeus Jones (<https://zeusjones.com/>), and announced when work would begin with stakeholders at their annual meeting on February 10th (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2bljC7fUcE>). In March and April, they spent a lot of time on strategy and foundational work to understand the landscape, and then moved into the creative platform which they put out to testing and it'll be available later this month for their collective use downtown. Now they're thinking about their approach to activations which will start with a summer implementation phase focusing on back to play and experiences downtown, and then they'll move into the fall phase focusing on back to work.

Wong described the process they went through to understand the Minneapolis landscape: (i) Stakeholder Sessions – conducted dozens with stakeholders from across downtown to initially inform the work; (ii) External Situation – looked at downtowns across the country and Minneapolis specifically; (iii) Cultural and Consumer Trends; and (iv) Behavior Change Models – they've aligned with the academic model that believes in the nudge theory (<http://changemanagementinsight.com/nudge-theory-in-change-management/>) so their work will be a series of invitations to participate in happenings downtown in ways they're comfortable.

After analyzing the landscape, they landed on a Collective Experience strategy to signal a return to collective urban experiences with clear invitations to participate. From there, they developed a Creative Platform to solve the negativity and disassociation from an area that once felt familiar by fostering human connection and bringing vibrancy and energy back to our grayscale. The Creative Platform must be welcoming, reader-centered, and true to downtown Minneapolis.

She also described types of activations, measures of success, and additional workstreams in which they're involved.

Lastly, Wong described how we can collectively help them reanimate downtown. She'll share the toolkit the week of May 24th. For more information, she can be reached at lwong@mplsdowntown.com or 612.656.3816.

VII. Action Items (continued):

B. Committees & Task Forces. Dan explained in addition to the Executive Committee, each year an invitation is extended to all Board members to also serve on the Board Development, and Business Forum & Event Committees, and now the Restaurant, Bar and Hotel (formerly Food & Hospitality), and Engagement and Advocacy Task Forces (reference related documents included in the Board package for purpose, scope, and rhythm). The time commitment is not meant to be taxing

or burdensome but more about capturing one's wisdom and passion and looking for ways to bring them and their organization meaning, so if you have not signed up yet, let him know where your interest lies.

Cassie Garner then briefly discussed her idea of changing the ETBP tag line – *Serving the Downtown East and Elliot Park (DEEP) business community since 1979* – to something more contemporary to reflect how East Town has grown and to give voice to the thousands of residents who have moved here by conducting a survey. Richard Kiemen, who shares Garner's passion, noted knowing how many National Night Out parties there are within the ETBP's boundary would be another piece of the survey. Christie Rock Hantge advised the DMNA has a National Night Out subcommittee of its Civic Engagement Committee and included a survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DMNA2021NNOsurvey>) in her recent eblasts; she'll know more about the location (their considering The Commons) at the next ETBP Board meeting.

After reminding the Board it does not meet in July or August, Dan then reviewed the 2021-2022 Business Forum season which kicks off in September. Then he added Board member Michael Noble of The Normandy Inn and Suites offered to host a hybrid business forum on June 17th which will feature Rebecca Waggoner, Executive Director at Twin Cities Quorum (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/rebecca-waggoner-3a42016>); he'd like a sign off on it and those in person would be charged for the meal. Seeing no objections, Dan will proceed with arranging it.

Julia announced in lieu of our May 20th business forum at 11 a.m., there's the tour of The Dayton's Project at 3 p.m., in partnership with the Minneapolis Downtown Council (<https://easttownmpls.org/the-next-etbp-business-forum-will-be-a-shared-event-with-the-mdc-on-may-20/>).

- C. **Conflict of Interest Agreement.** Included in the Board package for all members to review, execute, scan, and email to Christie's attention.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. (JB/BM).