

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

Thursday, November 9, 2021, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Via Zoom

**(https://zoom.us/rec/share/scDGjYyik8CSyoQ9rUoPAuhYhU0zO1FC2xJ_DUq9oEPsw6YR_iUexPRYwyj2mXa1.ppq4mfeozOYMhbd-%20,
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Present: Charlie Boeckenheuer, Amy Carlson, James Farstad, Brent Hanson, Tom Jollie, Richard Kiemen, Julia Lauwagie, Rinal Ray, Aimee Robertson, Reid Struck, Carletta Sweet, Kirsten Walstein, Wendy Underwood

Staff: Dan Collison, Christie Rock Hantge

Absent: Jacquie Berglund, Lynn Burn, Cassie Garner, Cyndy Harrison, Brian Maupin, Eric Merriman, Michael Noble

I. Call to Order

President Julia Lauwagie called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

II. Consideration of Agenda

The agenda was approved as amended (JF/CS).

III. Consideration of Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was approved as submitted which included minutes from the October 7, 2021 Board meeting; Treasurer's report for October which included the F2021 Budget vs. Actual as of October 31, 2021 and Wells Fargo bank statement for October; Director of Downtown Partnerships for Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District and Executive Director for East Town Business Partnership and NūLoop Partners' report for October 3-30, 2021; and Executive Coordinator's report for the period 10/1/2021 to 10/31/2021 (RK/CS).

IV. Focused Discussion: ETBP Vision Statement

As a follow on to last month's Board discussion, Executive Director Dan Collison explained they want to use these next couple of meetings to go as deep as possible into the meaning of the words chosen as the focal points of our organization (i.e., Vibrant, Multifaceted, and Connected) so that within the next 6 months we come away with a tightly focused sweep of guiding principles and meaningful purposes that he'll turn into different ways to engage with the neighborhoods that are going through tremendous change. He has reviewed the 44-page transcript of last month's meeting which had a lot of wonderful comments and assembled some conversational points of engagement that'll serve as a great refresher, so don't be shy because now is the time to offer our sentiments.

Then Jim began the discussion by reading ETBP's historical mission taken from the Five-Year Strategic Framework (<https://easttownmpls.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ETBP-StrategicPlan-2018-2022-Approved.pdf>), and Dan asked whether "Downtown East" is sufficient anymore with the DMNA doing new branding and naming.

Executive Coordinator Christie Rock Hantge explained the challenge is that the City Council [which has legislative authority] names the neighborhoods (<http://apps.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cofm/Neighborhood-Organizations/>) which the DMNA has no influence over, and based on the new Neighborhoods 2020 funding (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/ncr/neighborhood-programs/neighborhoods-2020/>) and City staff encouraging neighborhood organizations to consider merging or consolidating, she started to consider whether in the next few years the City will have to take a better look at the current breakdown of neighborhood organizations and boundaries which will complicate things for us. And in response to Jim's inquiry about the DMNA's boundaries, she explained it's comprised of the neighborhoods of Downtown West (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_West,_Minneapolis) and Downtown East (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_East,_Minneapolis), and that the Mill District is *not* a City-designated neighborhood but a subcommunity within the greater Downtown East neighborhood (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mill_District,_Minneapolis).

Furthermore, CPED is aligning the planning and development activities by coordinating and supporting its work geographically across divisions with five sector teams (<https://opendata.minneapolismn.gov/datasets/cityoflakes:planning-sectors/about>) and Aria Fine (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/ncr/what-we-do/staff/>) is the Neighborhood Support Specialist assigned to the five downtown neighborhoods of Downtown East, Down West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, and North Loop. The neighborhoods within the ETBP district that would request funding are Elliot Park (EPNI) and Downtown East (DMNA). And to clarify, although there is a Minneapolis neighborhood named Central (<https://www.facebook.com/centralmpls/>), it lies south of the Central community that includes both Elliot Park and Downtown East (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central,_Minneapolis#Gallery). To add to the name game and the layers of the cake, Dan also pointed out the area that the Minneapolis Downtown Council refers to as the

greater downtown area (i.e., five neighborhoods extending to University and Plymouth Avenues to the North, I-35W to the East, and I-94 to the South and West which includes the Central Business District, East Town, Loring Park, North Loop, and North East).

Responding to Julia's inquiry about what purposes are boundaries related to, Dan stated it's about zoning and its changing according to Minneapolis 2040 which went into effect on January 1, 2020 (<https://minneapolis2040.com/implementation/built-form-regulations/>), e.g., he works with NūLoop Partners and they're asking for 20- and 30-story buildings near the Minneapolis Farmers Market following transit (<https://www.nulooppartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Root-District-2020-Summary.pdf>).

Responding to Richard's inquiry about which neighborhoods are within the ETBP boundaries and would request funding, Christie stated Downtown East (DMNA) and Elliot Park (EPNI). Dan added historically the neighborhoods have been funded through the unique programs of the City – initially the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (<http://www.nrp.org/>), then the Community Participation Program (<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/ncr/neighborhood-programs/community-participation-program/>) – and now beginning in 2022 funding will come strictly through Neighborhoods 2020 [specifically the Citywide Neighborhood Network Fund and Equitable Engagement Fund] which will drastically reduce the amount of funding available to neighborhoods for projects and programs. As a result, EPNI is not seeking to replace Vanessa Haight's position; they'll likely become a volunteer organization. Also, 2022 is also the year the ETBP is due to update its Five-Year Strategic Framework, so we'll need to take the dwindling amount of neighborhood funding into consideration.

In response to Jim's inquiry about who are we advocating to, Dan explained this 42-year organization began in Elliot Park and the mission was updated in 1999 when Downtown East was added and he doesn't know if there are any Board members who were around when that happened. Beyond the current mission, there are the pillars that Padilla helped us with and he's updating the phraseology around the pillar "vibrancy" based on their conversations. The anatomy of what they're working on includes (1) the mission statement; (2) tag line; (3) what Padilla helped to create, the outward facing commitments to be vibrant, multifaceted, and connected; and (4) what became our new brand essence and messaging that we're trying to renew. The mission statement has been around for at least since 1979 and it doesn't fit, thanks to Sherman Associates, the narrative of what's happened in the last decade. He doesn't think the residential component was even a consideration when it was developed.

What strike's Jim is that you can't have a successful business and civic environment without including in your closest thoughts, i.e., your customers, employees, and neighbors. As a business we depend upon our customers and employees, and near neighbors are obvious prospects for tighter relationships.

Aimee: Given the recent changes in EPNI, both with their lack of funding and change in leadership, it's evitable that ETBP will somehow, whether intentional or de facto, end up representing those that EPNI currently represents, i.e., residents and small businesses in this area.

Dan: He knows that North Central has always invested leadership on the EPNI Board, one of the core institutions along with Hennepin Healthcare, Kraus-Anderson, and they're probably one of the biggest landowners connected to EPNI, so he knows they have a close eye of concern about what's next and how they move forward with programming.

Aimee: Agreeing, she stated that Trent Redmond, Director of Development (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/trentredmann/>) who is on the EPNI Board advised they just agreed that for at least the next 3 months an EPNI Board member who is an NCU alum will help administratively on a volunteer basis (<https://www.elliottpark.org/about>). For lots of different reasons, they've had a very strong concern about supporting EPNI and the neighbors lately because of safety and security, and they've had a lot of listening to the residents, neighbors, and small business owners who felt extremely helpless, so NCU has taken the lead under EPNI's umbrella to both help and in some case fund additional support for the neighbors and that's what the neighbors are calling for.

Richard: It's interesting that 41 years ago the two words Aimee brought up are both in the mission statement, safe and productive, and here we are 40 years later talking about the same, so as we're looking at the historic mission statement there are components of it that are as relevant 40 years ago as they are today. So how do we focus our actions to provide that safe and productive business environment? Property owners, residents, hotels, we're all managing those same topics.

Dan: What we may need to do heading into 2022 is have a consultant help us with our most robust cross-organizational strategy planning session to look at this from a structural standpoint, e.g., pooling resources to accomplish the same things that were overlapping, staffing models, programming to ensure there's equanimity.

Christie: There are some conversations going on behind the scene she's having with Vanessa that they'll potentially bring before the Board. They're just brainstorming right now but they think there are opportunities for the ETBP to be a bridge between the two. Looking to the future, it could become something pretty cool!

Wendy thanked the team for bringing this forward and stated this is a really big deal and Catholic Charities is active with EPNI and they're following this closely. She'll volunteer ahead of time if we need a small group of folks work on this.

Dan: CC's new Exodus 2.0 project (<https://www.cctwincities.org/a-new-home-for-exodus/>) is putting their entire administrative staff in Elliot Park along with multitiered services and residents, so this is a big shift for their organization. Wendy added if they included every social worker whose address would also be at that location, if they were all there in one day it would be about 250 people, plus 200 residents, and the community clinic and more. They don't have that kind of space, especially pandemic style, but they could and it's a long line at the diner.

Looking at the historic mission statement and thinking about who are our customers and who populates East Town, Amy suggested inserting "residential and residents" so that it reads "as an advocate for the Downtown East and Elliot Park business and residential community, promoting a safe, productive business environment and communication between residents, business and civic leaders." She noted they are undergoing a massive campus plan (<https://www.hennepinhealthcare.org/ourfuture/>) and having listening sessions involving thousands of voices to reimagine what HH can be as they service this community.

Referencing back to Jim's inquiry about who are we advocating to, Dan explained it has always been to Minneapolis civic leaders, and over the years we've had County and State guest speakers but generally speaking it's been Minneapolis elected officials and professional staff.

Jim: When we figure out what are goals are in terms of advocating, then we can figure out the stakeholders; it's an awareness of who we are and who's in our neighborhoods, it's about safety and security, transit, health, signage or wayfinding, collaboration, all those things. One of his frustrations today is that Metro Transit will not be able to provide us any coverage after 11:30 on Saturdays. We've got 50,000 people coming out at 11:45 with zero mass transit options and that is a problem for the neighborhood if we don't have transit that is meaningful. We've got to advocate at that level also at the least which is Met Council. That's an example where we need to understand our goals and who are the stakeholders that we need to encounter and cajole to try and strengthen our living areas. If we can leverage the capacity and competence of other groups, it's going to be essential especially with what's coming down the pike, i.e., less funding and depth of staff. The MSFA, for one, would consider providing some funding for this whole operation as part of the neighborhood. If there is a way that they can help here, maybe a couple of the larger employers, they can take a little bit of the burden off.

Dan: Christie sent him a draft budget they'll work on for next month's Board meeting. We're all going to need to pitch in / pass the hat to hire a consultant.

Additional comments about the historic mission included build on "communication" because we're more than; health and safety can live in the same space but I don't know if we want to call out another definition, e.g, safe, productive, and healthy environment.

Dan recapitulated what he heard for the community pillar: A vibrant metropolitan community. East Town is an area of downtown where the streets are full of life and there are activities for everyone. From the area's history of a bustling center for milling, commerce, and medical care to its future as a hub of activity for sports, performing arts, healthy living, shopping and more. East Town is thriving and growing as a dynamic place in downtown Minneapolis. Thereafter, he received suggestions on how to tweak the community pillar.

Tom: We talked about the mission, which is different from the words vibrant, multifaceted, and connected whose original intention were branding pillars. Much has changed since this was first pinned, e.g., HH's footprint has expanded dramatically, housing has exploded, so as the community evolves, we're adding more descriptors. This is what we need to do periodically and everybody's thoughts are right on it. We need to gather all this input and then examine it closely. Are we still all these things or evolving into something different, bigger, better? At some point we have to carefully go through this with a fine tooth comb and make sure we're not overstepping, overpromising, being too grandiose but at the same time being aspirational.

In response to Julia's query about whether this is meant to be directional, Tom said he thinks it is, and a baseline for how we think about communicating ourselves to the outside world; that's what it was intended to be in the beginning.

Next, the remainder of the time was spent on the multifaceted pillar which was read by Aimee.

Jim: It made sense to him but he doesn't know if it's true because we're in an environment where we're called on to be a little defensive of these things and they're working like the Dickens with every public safety body to make it safe. He loves this idea of being welcoming but we need to make it true. We have work to do and at some point, we need to recognize all is not perfect.

Aimee: Agreeing, she noted it's been a struggle having 1,000 college kids living here and trying to get parents to drop off their 17-year-olds to live here without them; it impacts their enrollment. Her own daughter is a student at NCU and she had to tell her when she's going to move in as a freshman this Fall that it's not the same Minneapolis she's used to, it will be but it's not yet.

Jim: He knows busy streets are safer streets.

Christie: We should remove Mill District.

Jim: If you look at what's in our neighborhoods in terms of what we create to try and make peoples' lives better, it's an awesome collection of organizations and places within Downtown East and Elliot Park.

Aimee: We're not acknowledging the lives of those who are in transition, the support that's offered in our neighborhoods to those who are unhoused because it's a big part of this area.

Tom: I remember it was part of the original conversation. He likes the support, the word caring, there's some aspect to it that there is a support system built into the neighborhood that's significant.

Rinal: I'm looking at this and do I see the families who are staying with us? Our families haven't been here for generations, but we have as an organization. I also see the words posh, empty nesters, so that's okay because there's a diversity of people's experiences in this part of town but I need to see more of our families reflected because they don't always feel welcome in this part of town. What will it take for that inclusivity they're striving for?

Julia: What I think the community does is recognize the needs of the multifaceted community members and are open to addressing that. I don't know if this is the place to say that but I feel like that's part of what this becomes, we're ignoring all these various needs.

Dan: For Rinal and Wendy, because of the breadth of your experience, I'll send this paragraph to the two of you and have you digest it and interact with some of your teams and staff. And because St. Stephen's is in a search process, I'll also send it to Cheryl Jensen, the Interim Executive Director.

Then in response to questions, he advised there is a third pillar, i.e., connected. Also, the ETBP has done an anecdotal asset map of its geography and what they're trying to do within the next year is build an outline for the next Five-Year Strategic Framework.

The next Board meeting is on Thursday, December 2nd.

V. Action Items

None

VI. Updates

A. Executive Director's Monthly Overview. Dan announced Uniquely Global's ribbon cutting event tomorrow, November 10th, 11:00 a.m. at Gaviidae Common (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXZ8Yg_ZsCE and <https://uniquelyglobal.net/>) by Chameleon Shoppes.

- B. Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association.** See Carletta's report on the Board Members Only page to learn about the projects the Land Use Committee has been reviewing since the last ETBP Board meeting.
- C. Elliot Park Neighborhood Association.** No report was given because Vanessa Haight has taken a new position and has resigned from the ETBP Board.
- D. Membership and Communication.** No report was given.

VII. Committee and Task Force Reports

- A. Executive.** No report was given.
- B. Board Development.** No report was given.
- C. Business Forum Development.** Julia reminded everyone to register for the November 18th hybrid Business Forum at Finnegans (<https://easttownmpls.org/etbp-hybrid-business-forum-on-november-18-offered-in-person-at-finnegans-and-online-via-zoom/>).
- D. Restaurant, Bar & Hotel Engagement and Advocacy.** No report was given.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m. (JF/AC).