

Downtown Neighborhood Alliance

Meeting Notes

March 2008

Intro

Josh Cullion calls the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

I (Kim Snow) read the minutes of the last meeting. Minutes are voted on and accepted.

DID Update

Lots to cover here – I'll make it a bunch of quick hits:

Frank reports that the DID was renewed after three years – 'ray. 89% of businesses were totally for bringing it back again.

The traffic circulator issue is back on the table thanks to Dan Boudouin speaking at a meeting last night. There will be a public hearing in May to learn more. More on this later.

National Grid is trying to replace some of the broken lights downtown. They've done about 40 so far, specifically near the convention center part of town.

The Community Development Project Budget is \$90k and a percentage of that is for new signage downtown, you know, the nice purple street signs labeling us as an arts district.

May 23rd is the tentative live date of the DID kiosks going up downtown.

The number of flowers downtown has doubled since last year – they are going on decorative poles and near the greenhouse over Memorial Drive. The planters have a little trouble with vandals but the DID is tenacious with their upkeep and after a while people get bored with messing with them. Seriously people, we're attacking FLOWERS now? Some folks really need a hobby.

The parking lot that Dave Segal was championing across from Garrity Courthouse is being shut down. Why? The Providence Foundation will try to support. Senator Jabour will meet with DOT to look into where these funds are and why they've been moved.

The TIF package is pending – who will get a sprinkle of these funds first?

Keep an eye on the upcoming city budget, it's having a bit of trouble – it will affect us as things are being cut and they are talking about bringing back certain taxes.

Question about RIPTA. Are there late night buses for students and employees? How can we help with some of this congestion?

Maria Ruggieri updates us on the sidewalk repair: the bidding process is in the works. Should be starting by late spring!.

Traffic Circulator

Ken Burke of Proccacianti Group (TPG) and Sharon Foster, director of pre-construction sales at the Westin, talk about the traffic circulator project. There are three phases: Weybosset to Washington, Empire to LaSalle and then the unfunded part, (of which there are only 30% of the funds now) Sabin and Fountain and LaSalle to Emmet Square.

TPG has some buildings around here -- who else with buildings here can help champion this – private development could help.

We have to help keep this going – can we apply for federal funds? Can the TIF help?

Dave Brussat asked for an update on the Fogarty Building. No plans to demolish it now, esp with lack of budget funds.

Ashley asks about the chicken wiring that's around the Fogarty building which makes it very pedestrian unfriendly. Ken says he'll look into it and clear it up. Take THAT chicken wire.

Responsible Hospitality Update

Josh talks about the meeting last week with the merchants regarding the current ordinance. Everyone is concerned about these additional taxes proposed for all BX, EDX and N license holders. Good news is we're working with the right groups on this and will have an update soon about next steps.

Sue LaPidus reads a letter from the mayor thanking us for our help in his winning of the RHC award.

Safety

John Lombardi revisits the issue of the roving police and Responsible Hospitality tax. We need to think outside of the box on a solution for this. A better, safer downtown isn't always because of more cops. For us, it can be the staggered closing of bars, enforcing licenses, smarter use of the police we have. If we take away from one area for another, then we just create a new problem somewhere else. Let's try to be aware and smart and fair and look at other ways to keep this neighborhood safe on weekends and late night.

We're on it.

Shooters

Sue talks about Shooters on India Point. It's empty now and owned by the state. They are thinking of selling it for condos – which is great because Providence is running low on condos. (sarcasm).

It's the only open space into the bay – we want to support using this land in a way we can all enjoy as a city. The DNA gave \$100 to this cause to protect this land and use it wisely.

Josh thanks everyone for coming and adjourns the meeting at 800pm.

Stay tuned for news on our upcoming Spring/Summer event.