

DNA Meeting Notes

May 4, 2009

Local 121

INTRO

Sue LaPidus (standing in temporarily as president for Josh Cullion, who is still a DNA member but had to step down in this role) calls the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

I (Kim Snow) read the minutes of the last meeting.

Ok, so we forgot to vote on accepting them, but they're from November so just trust that I captured all the festivities accordingly.

I can always email you a copy as well – fun!

WHAT THE DID IS DOING

Frank LaTorre gives us an update on the Downtown Improvement District (<http://www.providencedowntown.com>) aka our friends in the yellow jackets.

Good News: They now have a new Riding Vac (bringing the total up to 2). Bad News: I am still not allowed to drive them.

There are major sidewalk repair programs happening on Westminster, Weybosset, and Washington, from Matthewson to Empire – a \$900,000 project. They've been keeping a tight hold on this money to make sure we could make these improvements. And so far, so good.

There is also a Phase 2 planned for this project – the DID is trying to secure another 900k for that.

Hello Spring – Hello Downtown Flowers. We're up to 248 hanging baskets this year – up from 190! Plus planters and entirely new planting areas. The DID makes this happen, and cares for the plants themselves. Each basket is \$65 – a great savings over last year.

Hospitality Resource Partnership – John Lombardi will give a more complete update, but the specific issues on Richmond (the clubs) and that area need to be addressed. We've got to help alleviate this problem, for residents, guests, visitors – EVERYONE.

There are local ordinance changes coming up on Wednesday (the 6th) – specifically the move to license floor hosts (aka bouncers) with background checks and training. Good for them and for us. Sue is our rep in this group – huge thanks for her efforts and action. [insert wave here].

Huge thanks to Councilman John Lombardi too – his support and communication with all stakeholders helps make things happen.

RESPONSIBLE HOSPITALITY UPDATE

John Lombardi gives us an update on the Providence Nightlife Association (<http://pnari.com/>). They share the same concerns and issues we do as residents and want to work with us -- we're on the same page.

One current issue: Kegs. How many can be purchased per household – there's a request to cut down on multiple purchases at one time for one household. There is some grey area but the intention is to limit "rippahs" (ie raging parties). John sponsored the effort per a request from the RHP. [This is where I hide the extra keg I have strategically placed behind my chair.]

Public drinking is also an issue and the only way to start solving for it is to associate a penalty with it – how can we possibly enforce this without a fine?

The Sportsman's Inn incident. A great example of why it's so important to document complaints and issues. It's the only way to prove that something has gone down and follow up. We are talking to the police about this, good open conversations on how to solve for this and prevent future incidents.

National Grid – we're trying to get control of how, when, and if they can make their improvements -- add their meters at will -- especially at historic locations. We want things to look and feel consistent across the neighborhood.

AN ARTIST AND AN OPPORTUNITY -- ANDREW LOSOWSKY

Andrew has lived in the Peerless Building since September 2008. He's put together guidebooks in Europe about the best things in a city from insiders' points of view. He's done 5 of these so far and wants to do one here in Providence – it would be the first one in America.

The books he's already published were funded by a European company that works directly with advertisers. But in the U.S. it's up to people like us to help and support this book into existence. It's too small for big publishers – but it's perfect for "the creative capital," right?

Let's work together to help Andy make this happen. Contact RISCA, the Tourism Board or the RI Foundation.

Electronic or printed? What makes the most sense? Electronic editions don't get people as excited, you want something you can hold and bring with you. And it means constant updating, a book can be dated and a moment in time. Lends itself to more beautiful storytelling. Great PR for the city -- a coffee table piece.

The book acts as an ambassador to the city – pulls people in to visit.

Can the city help? Maybe, but not so much that it falls under anyone's specific POV. Keep it organic but with a story and flow. John Meada, president of RISD may be able to help or offer guidance.

There's great interest to support this effort. Please email us here or contact Andrew directly if you have any recommendations, ideas or questions.

Visit his site: www.losowsky.com
Email him: Andrew@losowsky.com

AN AWARD FOR AAR-TEESTS

I announce that the DNA is putting together an annual award for an artist who lives or works downtown. We are doing a lot of research to see the best way to do this, as we want to make it annual event that's a positive experience for everyone who enters and everyone in the neighborhood – we are the arts district, you know.

We're meeting with RISCA this week for more details. But we need your help to make it happen. It won't be a lot of work if we all do a little and it should be very fun and cool. Email me at dna_providence@hotmail.com to step up!

LOCAL 121

Ashley gives the 411 on Local 121 and we thank them so much for letting us use their space. Learn more about them here – and stop by for amazing food and drink!: <http://www.local121.com/home>

OPEN FLOOR

Lucie Searle, from AS220 (<http://www.AS220.org>) has an announcement and also wants to thank us (from AS220) for meeting here and supporting Local 121 and the Dreyfus. Our pleasure!

She is co-chairing the Providence Preservation Society's (<http://www.ppsri.org>) Xmas fest and stroll downtown (I know, winter planning already!). They had 11 downtown properties open for the walking tour in 2008 and 600 people actually walked through the spaces. They want to have even more fun and sites to see at the event this year on December 5th – so start cleaning your apartment! (kidding).

The committee is just getting started so if anyone from the DNA wants to help out – speak up now. How we can refresh the walk and open up different spaces – the variety of downtown makes this possible and it's great PR for the hood. People from last year are already volunteering – let's come up with a different twist so it feels fresh and modern.

Joelle with The Providence Foundation (http://www.providencedowntown.com/providence_foundation.php) has a few

announcements. She hands out DID newsletters (I also email them out when they're available).

Joelle says to check out the dining guide and biz directory for downtown. It's on their site.

The Providence Foundation is sponsoring walking tours downtown with PPS. They'll be held on the 2nd Wed each month in May, June and July. For May, meet in the lobby of the new Hampton Inn starting at noon and see the city during your lunch break. They each have a theme and are free, rain or shine.

There's also a downtown promotion campaign coming up. An open house tour for all residential properties. Stay tuned for more info.

The Library (<http://www.provlib.org/>) is having issues – we are getting word that they're thinking of closing the downtown branch! As of June 30th this branch will be closed and will have dismissed all workers. It will reopen but not as a branch library. Workers will have to reapply for their jobs. The downtown branch is a huge repository of knowledge that the colleges use exclusively, not to mention the building is very historic as are the resources in it. This is a cause the DNA will rally around – let's keep in touch on its progress.

Michael Liberatore, announces the opening of CrossFit Providence (<http://www.crossfitprovidence.com/>) an alternative gym in downtown that combines sports team/military approaches with group activity and inspiration. Actually, it's much more than that so visit the site to see if it could work for you. They are located on Broad Street in the former Boys and Girls Club building near Classical High School.

Is there a way we can stay in touch better? Yes:

DNA: www.providencedna.com

DNA Email: dna_providence@hotmail.com

DID: <http://www.providencedowntown.com>

Greater City: Providence: <http://www.gcpvd.org>

Find us on Facebook under Downtown Neighborhood Alliance

Also, check out this awesome blog about downtown events, LiveDowncity: <http://livedowncity.com/>

A member of the Downcity Church stops by to introduce his Church. It's non-denominational, new to Kennedy Plaza and has flexible schedules so you can stop by, chat and hang out. There's wi-fi and is a great place to meet and lunch. Learn more here: <http://www.downcitychurch.com/>

Indian Point Park. As you know, the former Shooters building is closed and the land belongs to the state. This area represents the only open part of Providence

with ocean access. And yes, you guessed it, the state wants to build MORE CONDOS (phew!, we have SUCH a shortage.) But most other groups want to keep it open for the city because it's a great place for events and can easily connect with the riverwalk when the bridge gets pulled down. We support keeping it open public space – we'll keep you posted on how this goes.

A good contacts for this issue:

State Rep Dave Segal: <http://www.voteseagal.com/index2.php>

Other questions – contact your City Council representatives:

General news: <http://www.providenceri.com/CityCouncil/>

John J. Lombardi: <http://www.providenceri.com/CityCouncil/ward13/ward13.php>

Balbina A. Young: <http://www.providenceri.com/CityCouncil/ward11/ward11.php>

Sue adjourns the meeting at 810pm.

Thanks – stay tuned for our next meeting but reach out if you want to get involved before then!