

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Minutes

February 19, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 5th Floor conference Room B – City Hall

Members Present: Jimi Allen (at large), Katie Arko (ACCA), Lulu Blacksmith (WCC), Rory Bolen (at large), Doug Cheatham (Old Second National Bank), John Galles (at large), Keith Gerald (at large), Kim Granholm (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Benjie Hughes (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Library), Melissa Mercado (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), Ellen Mueller (AACVB), John Nachtrieb (at large), Helen Nowak (at large), Jorge Pacheco (at large), Mike Pfeiffer (AACVB), Bob Reuland (ex-officio),

Members Absent (Excused): Jane Abe (Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce), Fred Harrison (at large)

Members Absent (Unexcused): Kimber Howard (at large), Megan Paul (at large), Charlie Zine (at large)

Others Present: Bill Wiet (COA), Joe Hopp (COA), Gina Moga (COA), Brett Michaelson (Seize the Future), Birnie Harper (Wayside Cross), Judy Dawson (Scale Up Aurora), Tom Bartlett (Aurora Fastprint), Hector Ochoa (Old Second), Karina Garcia (Aurora Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce), Vera Lucia Mathias (U Samba), Antonio Jose Vellow (U Samba), Rafael Baglioli (U Samba), Elaine Castillo (U Samba)

Call to Order and Introductions – Kim Granholm

Kim Granholm called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Kim Granholm said there were a lot of flyers that were passed out. I'm going to kind of review. The first thing that I did want to mention is Seize the Future had sent the Save the Date for the Downtown Revitalization Workshop, which is in Sterling, Illinois. There is also one in Mt. Vernon. If anyone is interested in going, there is a RSVP on here. I also passed out, on the top it says Kiwanis Friends, and this is something that I actually did for the Kiwanis Club. I know you all received my e-mail in regard to Hal Beebee. He, unfortunately, is not doing well and he has probably another month to a month and a half with his family. He has resigned from the Board, so we do have an open Board position. Bob and I have discussed a few candidates that we feel would be eligible and if you have anyone that you recommend, please send them our way and we can discuss them and we'll bring something to the Executive Committee and then decide on that at the next regular Board meeting as well. We are putting together a Memory Book for Hal. Hopefully we'll be able to get him something before he gets under the weather and is put on a new sedative once he starts to feel bad. If you have any stories to share or any photos to share, you can send them to me. I'm putting together the Memory Book itself.

Tom Bartlett said for those of you that can, they are trying to get his house ready so they can sell it so his wife isn't stuck with the house then. Last weekend a bunch of us were over there trying to help him get it together. He's got a lot of work that needs to be done on house before he can put it on the market. If anybody can, you might want to consider giving him a call and say I can spare 2 hours here or 4 hours there. If anybody can give him a few hours, that would helpful also.

Approval of Minutes – 1/15/2015

Doug Cheatham made a motion to approve the January 15, 2015 minutes. Karen Kramford seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Doug Cheatham said we just started this month using an external accountant to compile our financial statements, so we'll get a fresh look at it together here. He has not put together a balance sheet yet. I just learned he was wanting some more information from me, which I'll get to him and we'll have a balance sheet next month. The income statement, you'll see, is a different format then we have used in the past. I see that he does not have our budget numbers on here, so I'll have to talk to him a little bit about the format of these statements so it gives us what we need. I will probably also have to review a few of the classifications on the cash disbursements journal to make sure that we've got them in the right spot. Other than that, I would say, even though we don't have a balance sheet here, we have a pretty healthy balance in our checking account. I would estimate that it's in the \$170,000 range or something like that. It was over \$200,000 and we paid a large bill for the seasonal decorations, so it is probably somewhere in that range right now, so we are in good shape from a cash standpoint.

John Nachtrieb made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Karen Kramford seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

a. Riverwalk Commission Letter for Review

Kim Granholm said last year we had Mike Saville come to one of our downtown meetings and discuss the Riverwalk. He was asking at that time just for support from Aurora Downtown. We asked him to go back to the Riverwalk Commission and ask them exactly what they wanted from us. Basically what he did, and I might call on you Joe just to kind of give a brief summary, they walked around downtown and just kind of looked at some of the infrastructure that was missing in accordance to what the Riverwalk Commission put together.

Joe Hopp said Mike had asked me to walk through downtown and to take a look to determine at which places in the central business district where we may not comply with the Riverwalk Commission standards. So we did a walk through downtown and this is an estimate of what is

missing or needed to comply with the guidelines. I don't know how accurate the numbers are. It is based on our previous experience.

Kim Granholm said Alderman Saville has asked for our support when he goes to City Council and puts this number into their budget from what I understand. So he would like to put it on our next monthly Board meeting. I thought it would be helpful to have some of this information beforehand so that we can review it and ask him any questions while he is here. He will be presenting next month. I don't believe he is coming to us to ask us for money. We don't have any money to give at this point for something like this. Based on what we see here, I don't see why we wouldn't want to support something like that since it will improve our downtown, especially the infrastructure.

Bill Wiet said Mike mentioned about not asking for any money. Most likely, the request is going to be from TIF funds, which the majority of your budget comes from and a lot of other projects like LaSalle Street come from the same pool.

Further discussion followed on what a TIF district is.

New Business

a. Scale Up Aurora – Judy Dawson

Kim Granholm said we have Judy Dawson here from Scale Up Aurora. I am in the Scale Up Aurora class, which I'm sure she will tell you a little bit more about, but before we do that, I just want to go through and introduce ourselves as I see some new people. Introductions were then made.

Kim Granholm said I was also told that U Samba also brought some food for us this morning.

Judy Dawson said good morning. Thank you very much for having me. For those of you who don't know me, I have been on the Board of the Aurora Public Library Foundation since 2008. I've been on the Board of the Quad County African American Chamber, Past Secretary and Past President since 2007. I am the Project Coordinator for Scale Up Aurora. The Small Business Association launched Scale Up in order to increase jobs. I work with Harriet Parker at Waubensee, the Small Business Development Center, and their focus, I would say, is 80% on startups. Once you get the business up and running over 2 years and you're between \$150,000 and \$750,000 in revenue, if we can move that business over \$1,000,000, it directly correlates into job creation. One important thing about the Women's Business Development Center, 27% of the business owners served by the Women's Business Development Center are men. There were 60 applications submitted for Scale Up. Aurora was awarded one of the 8, and thanks to Karina Garcia, who wrote a letter on behalf of the Women's Business Development Center stating that she and her organization believed that they should come here. That's one of the reasons we won. I thank her all the time. This was a community effort. We are the second largest city. The Women's Business Development Center is over 25 year old and they wanted to have it in downtown Chicago. We're the second largest city. We should not have to drive downtown to provide all of these services. Scale Up is a term that is used for what I think is going to be the

latest buzz word. They are companies that are run by growth driven entrepreneurs. Scale Up Aurora is an entrepreneurship education curriculum. It is a 12 week program. It is something that the Women's Business Development Center uses as a plan for profit. At the end, every business owner who participates will have a revised business plan and strategic growth plan. There are workshops and we give you counseling, mentoring, and access to capital and connections. Job creation is the first thing we are going to be measured on as an organization. The second thing is how much capital do we want? How much access to capital do you give businesses? I don't know any business owner that couldn't use more access to capital. The criteria is 2 years in business, between \$150,000 and \$750,000 in last's years revenue, you must be the owner or co-owner of your company, 2 employees not including yourself, and 1099 employees qualify, and the ability to commit to attend a 3 hour class 1 day a week for 12 weeks. The next session starts on March 11. It is at 43 W. Galena in downtown Aurora from 9:00 o'clock to 12:00 o'clock. In addition to that, there is a tight curriculum. Men and women are eligible to participate. It is not just Aurora businesses. Any business that wants to participate in the geographic area that's willing to come out here is fine. The 2 closest Scale Up winners are in Kansas City, Missouri and Ohio, so we really won't be stepping on anyone's toes if someone comes from Joliet. Our first session started January 13th.

Kim Granholm said probably one of the best things about Scale Up is that you're sitting with other entrepreneurs and even if it is a general conversation between all of us, it is nice to know that we might have different industries and we might have completely different goals in our own businesses, but we all have the same struggles and we all have the same problems. You find that commonality and just to be able to express that freely with someone is invaluable, I think. It also helps you just focus on your business. It focuses on how to grow your business and not just work in your business. I would say it is probably even just more of a personal development type of class for me as an owner and teaches you how to be a good leader and how to be a good owner and not just a manager in your own business.

Judy Dawson said in addition to that, all of the resources of the Women's Business Development Center are behind the program. Anything you ever wanted for your business, this is the way to access it and it is free. The application deadline is next Friday. This program is a 5 year program if we are successful. We will be audited in June. With that successful audit, we will continue for another 5 years. Please feel free to give me a call if you have any questions about the program and let everyone you know about the program.

U Samba Restaurant indicated that in 2 weeks they will open a new restaurant in Aurora. The idea is to bring their culture here, a Brazilian culture, and Brazilian food too. There are more than 50 options to choose from.

Consultant Report – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said all of our committees are meeting. They are all tackling interesting subjects and being very responsible for their budget information, which is new this year. I'm very, very pleased.

Committee Updates – Budget/Bar/Holiday/Landscaping/Legislative/Marketing/Nominating/Parking/First Fridays

John Nachtrieb said the BAR Committee is meeting next Thursday. We are working on a rubric. Thank you to Lulu for helping out with a rubric that she suggested. It has really been helpful for us to come up with a way of making an independent, non-personal evaluation of applicants for our Rent Subsidy Program this year as well as our Business Retention Program that we are launching this year. That will be really helpful to make decisions about applicants without weighting them in anyway, without polluting them with personal opinions. The other thing that we are doing is a sub-committee of the BAR Committee will be visiting the rent subsidy awardings of last year. We're looking at the end of the first quarter, so our commitment is to meet with those people and see how things are going and get to know those businesses better.

Melissa Mercado said all of the holiday decorations are down. We do need to schedule a meeting before the end of the month and get some discussion about what we are going to do moving forward.

Kim Granholm said I don't know if there is any update for the Landscaping Committee. Joe said we have picked out the flowers for the pots.

Joe Hopp said that is correct. I really have no updates then from what I spoke about last meeting.

Karen Kramford said the Legislative Committee met this month. Right now we are focusing on developing relationships, and the economic benefit study for Aurora Downtown Arts and Entertainment District of extended liquor licenses until 4:00 a.m. That's a document we are working on. Next month David Hulseberg from Seize the Future has agreed to come talk to us for a half an hour to give us an overview of who Seize the Future is and how we can work more closely with them. That's our main focus for the next few months. We are looking into what we are going to do further on into the year as well. Our next meeting is March 13th.

Benjie Hughes said I notice Kim listed First Fridays on here as well. To my knowledge, those are both the same committee. The Marketing Committee is First Fridays. We sort of made it official this year that yes Aurora Downtown is in charge of First Fridays. We are going to take ownership. We've made it part of Marissa Amoni's job description in addition to maintaining our website to sort of handle the organization and coordination of that. We are providing things that individual venues can't, like a trolley that connects them altogether. I'm told that went really well. We'll probably continue that, but we will discuss that at our next meeting, which will be a week from today at 4:00 o'clock at my place, Back Third Audio.

Kim Granholm said I did list it separately, only because I think since we are now taking ownership, I definitely want to be talking about that, or if anyone has any comments on things that are going on on a monthly basis then maybe Marissa can give us a short update when she is able to attend.

Benjie Hughes said I'm meeting with her once a month now to kind of make sure the communication stays open so that if she can't make these meetings we know what she is up to and she knows what our vision is.

Kim Granholm said Fred is not here this morning. We did have a parking meeting yesterday. We met at Bill's office. We've decided to kind of wait on any parking updates or anything like that until some data is collected. Bill is working hard on putting together a survey and putting together a real analysis of the downtown. There's not really much we can do on our end. It is silly to do any work on our end until this data is compiled and we have some real knowledge of the people that are coming downtown, how long they are parking, where they are parking and that sort of stuff.

City Department Updates

Gina Moga said there are no distinct events going on right now, although I am knee deep already in Memorial Day and 4th of July. I'm sure you all know that the fireworks are on the 3rd of July this year. They are on Friday night and not Saturday. I did meet with a group yesterday. It seems like whenever an event goes away, there is somebody right behind it to pick it up and make it even better. There are a couple of things that may go away this year, but like I said, I get calls and people say well if they are not going to do this, we have a group that wants to do something like it. The master list of events is at about 189. That's everything that is going on. If you have an event, send it to me and it will be on there.

Bill Wiet said we have been going through some acquisitions downtown for the purpose of demolition, for example across from the library where the old ice cream vendor was and a couple of those houses the city acquired and will be tearing down as part of the parking layout for the library. We also bought Randy's Auto, which is across from the train station along RiverEdge Park. Tuesday we are going to be approving the acquisition of the law offices to the north. The goal would be, even though it is out of the downtown, it is in essence an acquisition that will enlarge RiverEdge Park. Those are the only 2 properties that were not included in the first phase. The goal would be taking the buildings down prior to the season, probably fencing across Broadway right now because we are going to have to leave the slabs and some of the asphalt there because ComEd's got to come in and clean up the site. That probably won't happen until after the season. This is kind of a transition for those 2 properties, but it is really going to look really nice. ACCA is going to decide how they want to lay it out to make sure it fits with the existing park amenities.

Karen Kramford said Bill, can you speak to Comfort Inn?

Bill Wiet said Comfort Inn is going to be rebranded as a Holiday Inn Express and Suites, so that will be moving forward.

Joe Hopp said we were talking about parking. Last year we evaluated all the downtown parking lots and so we came up with a 5 year plan. This year we are going to initiate Phase 1. We are going to look at the C lot, which is on River. It is going to be a total grind and repaving. We're going to do the M lot, which is behind the Fire Museum. The N lot kind of across the street from the Fire Museum on Route 25 will be just mainly a sealcoat and restriping, as well as the F lot across the street from La Quinta and then the S lot. That will be Phase 1. Again, all the lots are

going to be upgraded. We would like to get that job completed before RiverEdge Park events get started this year.

Announcements – Everyone

Dan Hites said part of the discussion has been parking. A week ago Tuesday, I addressed the City Council. Basically, this is the address. What I'd like is that it be reviewed and then at the next meeting the recommendation be discussed and voted on. So this is just preliminary information.

Kim Granholm said I guess I should start by saying this is not something right now that Aurora Downtown supports. This is Dan's independent presentation to City Council and he is coming to Aurora Downtown and asking us to look at this and asking if we want to take a point of view on it essentially. I want you to review it. Probably the first step I might like to do, and we can talk about this, is maybe Bob and I and Dan can sit down and talk about it amongst ourselves and see if this something that we feel is in the interest and in our vision of what we feel Aurora Downtown should do. So we'll probably start there, but I do think it is important that you read it. If you have any feedback that you can provide to me before we sit down, that would be really helpful and it would make me feel a lot better that I'm representing everyone and not just my own personal point of view.

Keith Gerald said Hump Day Wednesday is coming Wednesday, March 11th, at Chef Amouri's from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Hector Ochoa said I just want to thank the Downtown Aurora Board for being behind and supporting First Fridays. I've walked into all of the establishments, and there are quite a few businesses I would have never stepped foot in if it wasn't for First Fridays and displaying art. If you own a business in downtown Aurora, I really recommend that you participate because the crowds are just getting bigger and bigger every Friday. I just want to announce that El Dia De Los Ninos will be coming to the Aurora Transportation Center on Spring and Lincoln on Saturday, April 25th. It will be from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. It is an outdoor festival, free festival, for all the kids to participate in. We will be giving away thousands of books. There will be food vendors, merchants and about 25-30 non-profit organizations setting up booths and having children's activities. Please consider this. Non-profit organizations get to set up a free booth.

Mike Pfeiffer said the CVA has a monthly culinary competition and February 25th, next Wednesday, it will be in North Aurora for the area's best soup. On March 5th, it will be in Sandwich for the area's best dessert. We are going to have Chicago Hall of Fame pastry Chef Gail Gand as one of our celebrity judges. They are open to the public and they are free.

Ellen Mueller said I work for the Visitors Bureau and we have an annual publication that is just hitting the streets this week. There will be 75,000 copies distributed throughout the Midwest and as you see, Aurora is very prominent and on page 6 is the feature page for Aurora and as you see, everything is from downtown. We also have access to other cooperative sites online. The State of Illinois Enjoy Illinois site does marketing campaigns and when we feed them our events and our attractions, sometimes they feature us on their sites and their campaigns. If you have

something going on, let us know. We are worlds away from ordinary. The Aurora area is unique. We have things that aren't available anywhere else in the world and we want the world to know it.

Birnie Harper said it is getting very exciting. A lot of the walls are painted. The most important thing and always is that those poor men in that building right now with our wonderful cooling system that we have that works in the winter will have a much nicer place to stay. We should move in in April. The brick on the front is about halfway finished and they figured out how to do it if it is about 30. It is going to be a handsome building and a nice addition to downtown.

Katie Arko said the Meyer Ballrooms are open and running. We renovated the entire ballroom. We've done a lot of work in the atrium. It looks gorgeous. To me they are absolutely beautiful. The bathrooms look really great. We can do an event for up to 350 people. The view is phenomenal, right on the river. They are really, really beautiful. It is up and running. We are booking like crazy, lots of wedding receptions and some fundraisers and all sorts of events. They look really, really nice. We are excited to have them open.

Katie Arko said Blues on the Fox is going to be so great. We've got a couple of shows that are going to be really, really exciting at the park. Stuff is coming together for the Paramount next year, some big names, just lots going on. We will be printing a schedule. The website will go live. I think right now the plan is 3 to 4 weeks.

Eva Luckinbill said our tentative Grand Opening now will be in the middle of June. Right now we are focusing a lot on art and sculpture. March 6th, the First Friday, the winners of the art contest will be announced and the winners work will be featured in the library, so a lot of exciting things happening. The special gardens on the outside of the library may not be ready in June, but throughout the summer we will have other special events to highlight those features.

Lulu Blacksmith said I would like to invite you to join us on March 10th. Waubonsee is celebrating the completion of their 2020 Master Plan. We are also opening the Field House, so please join us on March 10th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Sugar Grove campus.

Adjourn

Benjie Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Doug Cheatham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.