

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Minutes

March 19, 2015

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

Members Present: Jane Abe (Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce), Jimi Allen (at large), 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), Fred Harrison (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Benjie Hughes (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Melissa Mercado (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), Ellen Mueller (AACVB), John Nachtrieb (at large), Helen Nowak (at large), Megan Paul (at large), Mike Pfeiffer (AACVB), Bob Reuland (ex-officio),

Members Absent (Excused): Katie Arko (ACCA), Charlie Zine (at large)

Members Absent (Unexcused): Kimber Howard (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Library), Jorge Pacheco (at large)

Others Present: Bill Wiet (COA), Gina Moga (COA), Ed Sieben (COA), Cadence Peterson (Seize the Future), Birnie Harper (Wayside Cross), Judy Dawson (Scale Up Aurora), Hector Ochoa (Old Second), Jason Sunderland (Downtown Tenant), Kaye Mason (Former Board Member), Michael Cobb (Hesed House), Marissa Amoni (Aurora Downtown)

Call to Order and Introductions – Kim Granholm

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

I am going to give you a quick update on Hal Beebee, who was a former Board member. I have been stopping at his house occasionally. I'm taking over the treasurer duties for Kiwanis and he was the former treasurer, so he and I have talked a lot. Last Saturday, he was not doing well. They had put him on Hospice care and he was on morphine. I was actually surprised he lasted the weekend. I saw him on Tuesday and he took a 180 degree turn. He was really good. They were taking him off Hospice care. They took him off of his oxygen and he was doing really well. I think it will still be a matter of a few weeks, but on Saturday he was pretty bad, and I was happy to report on Tuesday that he is doing much better. I'll try to keep you posted. We did make him a book and I put his Aurora Downtown plaque in there and some things that Aurora Downtown was thankful for and he was very appreciative of that. His daughters read it to him because he was not strong enough on the morphine to be able to read. If you know Pat or if you know Hal, send them well wishes.

Approval of Minutes – 2/19/2015

John Nachtrieb made a motion to approve the February 19, 2015 minutes. Doug Cheatham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Doug Cheatham said unfortunately we don't have financial statements still. We had a mix up with our accountant, but Bob and I will be meeting with him hopefully Monday and get on track with that.

Old Business

a. Riverwalk Guidelines – Mike Saville

Kim Granholm said I know I mentioned Mike Saville would be here to discuss the Riverwalk guidelines. We had a mix up in a date and he came on Friday the 13th to our meeting and, obviously, we don't have a Friday the 13th meeting. He is on vacation this week, so we are going to have to reschedule him for the next meeting. I will be in touch with him when he gets back to reschedule it, so it will give us more time to review that.

b. Waubensee/City of Aurora Parking Position – Kim Granholm

Kim Granholm said I'm going to talk about the Waubensee/City of Aurora parking position. At the last Board meeting we had handed out a packet that Dan had put together. We discussed it at the Executive Committee meeting and I'm just going to go ahead and read 2 things that the Executive Committee discussed. One was Waubensee's position from Lulu Blacksmith, who is on our Board, and what the Executive Committee has come up with and then we'll have a short 5 minute discussion if we feel like we need to discuss it further. I don't think any action needs to be taken on it, but I just want everyone to be aware of what's going on and I want to get your feedback on that. I don't know, Dan, if you want to make any comments at all on our packet.

Dan Hites said we had a brief discussion. It is a little bit of my lagging in that I was going to respond to Waubensee's e-mail. I put my response back, but we'll proceed and then we'll discuss a little bit after that.

Kim Granholm said I'm going to read to you Waubensee's position on the parking and if you have any questions, please let me know. "Waubensee Community College was a full participant in the 2008 parking study conducted by the City of Aurora and provided the information requested of it in a full and transparent way for analysis by the City of Aurora's parking consultant. Subsequent to the completion of the parking study, Waubensee entered into an agreement with the City of Aurora to accommodate all of the College's long-term parking demand off the city streets. Waubensee paid the city \$400,000 for 360 spaces in Lot W and for 105 spaces for faculty and staff in the Tivoli parking deck. Additionally, Waubensee strongly supported the city's enforcement of parking restrictions downtown to insure that long-term parkers are directed to appropriate locations away from the core of the business district and that violators are ticketed. As a member of the downtown community, Waubensee Community

College has a direct interest in seeing downtown Aurora thrive with vibrant businesses and strong institutions.” The recommendation from the Executive Committee is what I will read right now. “At this time, my recommendation will be Aurora Downtown not take a position on this and although Dan is a valued Board member, his efforts are independent and not supported or directed by Aurora Downtown. Our Parking Committee will continue working with the city, Waubensee, business and property owners to develop and maintain the best parking environment for all involved.” That’s kind of the position that we had discussed at the Executive Committee. My recommendation also would be that maybe Dan work with the Parking Committee and address some of those concerns and see if we can help solve some of that.

Dan Hites said my position is that Aurora Downtown is the oversight committee for downtown and we are to look out for the interest of the buildings and business owners. There has been a major conflict in Waubensee’s position and the city’s enabling of that position, which has directly and inversely impacted the businesses and building owners down here. When you shortchange parking by 600 to 800 parking spots and knowingly accept the analysis that was defective, you are totally undermining downtown. In addition, if you look at the documents for the construction of the new campus, it is designated as being built for Aurorans. Even their mandate from the State mandates that they cater to students within in a particular area. In building the campus here, they shrunk that area further into Aurora, so even Waubensee’s documentation shows that they are here to support Aurora. Besides the false parking study that was knowingly accepted as being false, the negotiators both on Waubensee’s side and the city’s side knew that the report was defective and used it as the base for an agreement, which made the agreement defective. Waubensee has been bringing in students from all over the place, not just Aurora, but taking Aurora College students and sending them out to Sugar Grove undermining the full intent of the campus, which has come back and inversely impacted downtown too. So my position is that the city has already shown themselves not supporting downtown on this. Waubensee has already shown themselves as not supporting downtown and that Aurora Downtown should take the position that we support downtown, participate in the negotiations of the new contract, which is coming up in 2 or 3 months, so that the same undermining doesn’t occur.

John Galles said is there still a suit involved?

Dan Hites said the suit is not on the parking. The suit is because Waubensee has refused to give information under the Freedom of Information Act. The information I’m going for is further details on how Waubensee designated their community not as Aurora, but as subsets of Aurora that do not support retail downtown.

Lulu Blacksmith said Waubensee’s district is College District 516 and Dan to your reference about that we draw students from all over, that would be we draw students from the district and that would be Oswego, Montgomery, so we serve Kane and Kendall counties. I have a concern about what you’re saying because Aurora is a very diverse population. Where do you suggest the students go?

Dan Hites said I would suggest that Waubensee cater to Aurora as they have said so in agreements. Now Waubensee, about 95% of their student population, is remedial education over there, meaning that they’ve taken all the college students and sent them out to Sugar Grove.

Waubonsee's adult education that ESL GED is paid by the state. It is not by the people. It is not paid by us. Waubonsee is following the State guidelines as far as bringing in students, which means they are not territorial guidelines, so they are bringing in ESL GED and remedial education from COD's area and all the other areas and centralizing them in downtown here.

Kim Granholm said I kind of want to stop just for a minute. I think from Aurora Downtown's perspective we were really focusing on the parking issue versus the student issue here.

Dan Hites said Aurora Downtown needs to get into these negotiations because the city hasn't supported the needs of downtown Aurora and Waubonsee has been undermining them.

Kim Granholm said my recommendation in that situation, maybe the Parking Committee can step in here and diffuse some of the situation or just make some priorities based on what he has in here on one of the pages.

Fred Harrison said right now my position is I haven't been in the loop with a lot of stuff. I've been out for a while. I'm coming into the loop now. A lot of this stuff is catching me off guard, so what I would prefer to do is to take some of this stuff off-line and kind of discuss some of this stuff with some of the players and we can come back to you and see where we may want to move forward.

Bill Wiet said I don't look back as far as 2008 because studies are pretty much useless after a couple of years, but when we did the most current study and review of downtown per the removal of the meters, although it was mentioned in the report that there might be some usefulness to the 2008 study, we kind of abandoned that because we knew what direction downtown was going in terms of the built environment and a lot has occurred since 2008 that are now present that were not present then, i.e. the availability of more parking to be constructed when the city bought the YWCA, which opened up a large amount of parking. In our effort to do long-term parking in each quadrant of the downtown, again, going back to parking overall, and that's, I think, what the city's all about in making sure parking overall works, not that maybe 1 entity might be taking more on the street in the morning, maybe others in the afternoon, maybe in the evening, and maybe others on Saturday. The goal is how do we make it all work together and as I've stated before, the downtown is not under parked. We have certain circumstances with certain parking that's not being fully utilized by the general public. We do have parking spaces, albeit remote, we do have parking spaces that could handle not only Waubonsee students, but it could handle employees, it can handle patrons if they wanted to walk a few blocks to go to their destination, so it is not for a lack of parking. What it could be is utilizing those mechanisms or thinking of those mechanisms we have not thought of yet that actually get people and maybe change behavior like we talked about 2 years ago about changing behavior to get people to park in certain locations. I think that's where our next step was going to be because this wasn't all about a community college and students parking in the few blocks around it, but it is also about the overnight parkers that seem to remain in the morning when people want to come in the morning. It is more about a lot of things that occur on weekends with a lot of the things that they do that really take up a lot of parking as well. I'm trying to look at it as globally how we can make all of these interchangeable parts actually work. But as far as numbers, as far as the availability of parking, yes it is not in front of your store and plentiful, but it is available and that's kind of our goal is to just look at it more universally. Again, it is a science. It was a

science to get where we were 2 years ago in terms of trying to make the time limits appropriate so we do have turnover, so we do have the ability for someone to leave in the afternoon and come in the evenings, so we're just going to have to take a re-look at that. I think it is about changing those types of simple things like enforcement and hours of time limits.

Dan Hites said one more point on that though is that by underestimating by 600 to 800 cars how much Waubensee needs, the city also lost out on over a million dollars in revenue that they would have charged Waubensee for the parking for that additional amount. So it is not just parking, but also a financial in here.

Kim Granholm said we'll go ahead and stop the conversation there. We will continue to discuss this on the parking level.

New Business

a. Filling of Vacant Board Seat

Kim Granholm said as you know, Hal had stepped down from his Board seat. At the Executive Committee we discussed appointing Harish Ananthapadmanabhan. He is the building owner of the building that houses Usamba Restaurant, which is the new Brazilian Restaurant over on New York Street.

Karen Kramford said call him Harish. He and his partner own 2 buildings in downtown Aurora and another building further out on Galena, so they are investors in downtown. They have worked with the city with their buildings. They have been very respectful. Harish is an IT Director for the Discovery Channel, their Education Division, in downtown Chicago, so he is a tremendous resource for us on the Board and he said yes.

Bob Reuland said I also spoke with him and he does have the time to come to our meetings once a month. There is available time, so he can serve and fulfill his duties.

Karen Kramford said he is married and lives in Aurora and wants to see downtown Aurora thrive. He has 2 little girls.

Kim Granholm said I think it important to have a restaurant owner also on the Board. I think that that is something that we are kind of lacking and one of the focuses is to bring more restaurants downtown, diverse restaurants, and he, I think, will have some great insight into some of maybe the marketing that we're focusing on in the next couple of years. The Chairman appoints it, so we don't really need to vote on that, but I just wanted to discuss it and give you a little bit of his history. I stopped in right before Hump Day last Wednesday and he had said that they had such a successful first week that he had to close on Monday because they didn't have any food left and they couldn't get more. That was really great news.

Kim Granholm said I asked Cadence from Seize the Future, we had a conversation that actually started with Jeff McLaughlin in the City of Aurora Neighborhood Redevelopment, and we were

talking about a façade program and somehow we started talking about pop-up businesses in some of the vacant buildings downtown and I've asked Cadence to come this morning and kind of give us a brief overview of where we're at and what the program would entail. It is kind of a collaboration between Seize the Future, Aurora Downtown and the City of Aurora and we're going to try to figure out how to make this idea work and I'm pretty excited about it.

Cadence Peterson said we met earlier this week to talk about the pop-up restaurant, or retail idea. The idea is basically it would be a space that is dedicated to short-term retail leases and that would give people an opportunity to test out a concept without devoting a lot of money up front before finding out if it works. It has been tested in Detroit and it is very popular on the west coast as well. Some issues that we discussed at the meeting were the idea of figuring out what types of businesses we would want to target, focusing on retail or maybe pop-up restaurants, finding buildings we could get a Certificate of Occupancy for and figuring out what the liability issues are, what kinds of insurance we might need. Seize the Future made a list of 15 properties that could potentially work for pop-up retail. I think the next step is just kind of sorting those properties, touring them, and figuring out what spaces might work. At this point, we just want to figure out if there is anyone else who is interested in participating.

John Nachtrieb said should we form another sub-committee for this?

Kim Granholm said yes. I kind of see this morphing into kind of like what First Fridays has morphed into. We have a separate budget or line item for this going forward, but at this point we don't even have any numbers, so it would be a very ad hoc committee at this point.

Consultant Report – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said things are bubbling along. I'd like to recommend Usamba. I ate there last Friday with Karen Kramford and it was delicious. It was very, very good. We all need to support them. They are very enthusiastic. Their food is good. Please take some time and go over there and have lunch or have dinner. I'm also getting more recommendations for rent subsidies. Tony Hunsberger has a person, but I just want to clarify. She is on the second floor. Don't we want our businesses to be on the first floor for rent subsidies?

John Nachtrieb said I believe we do.

Bob Reuland said I would have to clarify with her if she is going to be moving downstairs or not. She is a tax accountant. We have others that are being looked at this time too, so things are moving right along.

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

John Nachtrieb said the BAR Committee met last week. We are tracking now on the 3 rent subsidy awardees that were made last year. We are 3 for 3. Everybody is going great. The most recent on board is Rory's new store. It is fantastic. We've had a lot of interest in business retention. We've made an award to a business in downtown Aurora now for helping that

business to thrive and do well this year, so our first retention award has been made. We are ready to receive other applicants. We have a good application document. We are going to be promoting our program to downtown businesses by partnering with Seize the Future, who is doing a walk around face to face with all of the downtown businesses so that we make sure that we cast as wide a net as we possibly can. Other than that, we are not really doing much of anything.

Melissa Mercado said Holiday Decorations is meeting. We are meeting with city electricians on Friday to try to solve some problems and we'll keep you posted.

Bob Reuland said I haven't seen Joe, but I'm sure we'll get a full report next time for the Landscaping Committee.

Karen Kramford said the Legislative Committee did meet and part of our meeting was meeting with Seize the Future with Dave Hulseberg focusing on 3 specific areas; better understanding what the public/private partnership means and how the structure works and how we can work more closely with him. We came away with 3 basic areas; looking at the long-term strategies for the new master plan that they are looking work toward, dealing with entrepreneurs, how to attract more entrepreneurs to the downtown area, and work more closely with them also by participating with them. They have committee positions that downtown members could ask to participate in and there is the potential for, based on the recommendation of their Board members, to have an ad hoc member on their Board from Aurora Downtown. I thought that was pretty exciting. We're looking into who to invite for our next round of discussions and developing a relationship and we did not have an opportunity to work on the economic benefit study of Aurora Downtown Arts and Entertainment District of extended liquor licenses of 4:00 a.m. That document has kind of stalled at this point. Our goal is to complete that by our next meeting on April 10.

Benjie Hughes said lots of Frist Friday action on the Marketing Committee. We did meet last month and we decided to go ahead and extend the trolleys on First Fridays at least up through the end of the summer and then we'll evaluate again if that's still going well, but it seems to be going like gangbusters. We are also working on finding someone to be sort of a host on the trolley on the summer, so the concept is to find like an actor or a comedian or somebody and Marissa is going to give this person some bullet points to sort of point out the key architecture and maybe key events and announcements that we want made and have someone hosting while you ride on the trolley. We are looking at probably starting that in May. We are also looking at maybe doing some events over the summer, which we are going to talk a little bit about at this coming meeting of the Marketing Committee, but doing some musicians or doing some other kind of cool outdoorsy things probably in June, July and August during First Fridays. Our other ongoing conversation when we meet next Thursday is we are all going to brainstorm and bring to our meeting possible names for this organization. We've had a little bit of an ongoing conversation about is Aurora Downtown even the right name for this group because outside of the privileged people in this room, a lot of people aren't sure who we are and what we do and so we are kind starting the conversation there. Our next meeting is next Thursday at 4:00 p.m. at Back Third Audio.

Fred Harrison said within the next 2 weeks I want to come up to speed with the Parking Committee. I will be pulling together a meeting with a few people.

Kim Granholm said maybe we can meet with Bill too. I know we talked about doing the survey. Maybe we can help at some point to get the survey done for the spring before summer hits because I think that is beneficial for us as well.

City Department Updates

Gina Moga said it is nice to know that Cadence is going to do a walk around. I'm going to give her that letter to the downtown business and property owners that I'm doing for the street closures. I now think I have the full list of street closures, so I can finalize that letter and rather than try to mail it out, as long as somebody else is already walking around downtown, I'll give her copies for everyone. The next Broadway season will be Oklahoma, A Christmas Story, Hairspray and Westside Story. Les Mis just opened yesterday. I talked to Tim last night. He said it was probably the best first day show that they've ever had. As far as events go, I know the trolley is successful, so my plan is for July 3, which the fireworks are on July 3 this year, there is going to be so much going on that night in downtown that I am going to probably hire an additional trolley for that evening through my budget. Not only do we have First Friday, we have everything going on at RiverEdge Park, everything at McCullough Park, and the Veterans Advisory Council is doing a car show in Lot W. We also have 10 shuttle bus routes that come from all parts of the city and converge on the downtown that night for the fireworks. There are some events last summer that didn't happen and other things that are happening now that are picking up the slack for that. We have Shakespeare on the mall being done by Riverfront Playhouse this summer in July. We also have the artists that coordinate Art Bar at the Roundhouse, which are doing the bazaar on Water Street. Those are 2 consecutive Saturdays in July downtown. Louche Puce is only happening once this summer. It is only August 15, but there is still a lot going on downtown. We came up with an idea called A Celebration of Poetry in Public Spaces. We have chosen our nine poetry submissions. We have our 5 windows and 4 kiosks. We are going to install them on March 30 and 31 to premier it on April 1.

Karen Kramford said we need to add the Float Committee to the Committee Updates. We did meet last week for the 4th of July float. We have lots of great ideas of what we are going to do with the float and looking to expand it. We are still in the very early phases of it determining whether we are going to go with a theme and so forth. This year we are doing the 4th of July only. We did talk about next year perhaps doing 2 or maybe 3 parades depending upon resources.

Announcements – Everyone

Kim Granholm said that I heard that the rebranding would be announced at the State of the City on April 16.

Jane Abe said let me update you on the State of the City. It is sold out. We've got a waiting list going. If you want to get on the waiting list, contact me. It sold out very, very quickly this year. Since we are limited to a large enough space in Aurora, we have to cut it off at 415 people.

Mike Pfeiffer said our next culinary competition is April 16 out in Big Rock and it is for the best earth to table meal. Aurora will host the competition in July.

Michael Cobb said every 2 years all homeless providers nationwide are required to be part of what we call the point in time count. I went out with APD in January and we hung out for about 3 hours and they took me to places where they saw some of our homeless friends that I didn't even know existed. We only found 2 individuals, which means on that coldest night, the rest of them, to the best of our knowledge, were at Hesed House. The 2 that we found were up under the Indian Trail Bridge. In terms of our HEAT, Hesed Employment and Training, right now as the weather has broken, they will begin to do some cleanup from our place up to about North Avenue and get all that area real clean. They are doing some other things on site, but our commitment is also to get out into the area. On April 9 we have our Champions of Hope breakfast. It is a great fundraiser. It is at 7:30 in the morning at Stonebridge Country Club. We'd love to see you there.

Birnie Harper said the exterior brick work was finished yesterday. All the scaffolds are gone. Sometime in the next few days they will acid wash those bricks. They've done 2 sides. It is really a dramatic improvement. They will start putting the windows in. They have a green molding and it really is going to be nice. It looks like now we probably won't move in until June. It is going to be a beautiful building. As soon as everyone gets moved in, the adjacent building will be torn down. They have to tear that down to put the brick on the other side. Then that will be landscaped and it will be a really nice addition.

Jane Abe said we have a couple of upcoming events. The Aurora City Council Candidate Forum is this Tuesday, March 24th, over here at Copley Theater from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. Last, but not least, we are going to be doing a Business After Hours with Hesed House in July on the 23rd, so you'll get more information on that.

Hector Ochoa said the deadline is approaching for the non-profit organizations to be at El Dia De Los Ninos. Again, that is April 25th from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., so please see me about that. It doesn't cost anything to have a booth there.

Lulu Blacksmith said I just have information about upcoming Job Fairs and Internships.

Kim Granholm said I want to say a quick plug for the Kiwanis Pancake Day, which is Saturday at Aurora Central. It is from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. It is \$7.00. You get great pancakes and sausage and it supports Kiwanis, which our goal is to support all of the children here in Aurora and the surrounding communities. The Taste of Aurora, which is the Exchange Club, is the second Tuesday in May.

Dan Hites said I had spoken to a patrol officer and he was saying that the police have pulled the 1 patrol for downtown and expanded the territory. The police officers aren't here on a regular

basis anymore. Maybe we should reach out to them again now that the season is starting to pick up.

Gina Moga said I had a conversation with Tom McNamara the other day and he did say that if we wanted more of a presence at Aurora Downtown, all we needed to do was ask.

Adjourn

Doug Cheatham made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Hites seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 a.m.