

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minutes

May 7, 2015 – 8:00 A.M. – 5th Floor Conference Room B – City Hall

Members Present: Jimi Allen (at large), Kim Granholm (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Aurora Public Library), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), John Nachtrieb (at large), and Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

Members Absent (Excused): Doug Cheatham (Old Second National Bank), Benjie Hughes (at large)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Scott Brosi (APD) and Tracey Archer (APD)

Meeting Highlights

Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

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

Kim Granholm said we've decided that we want our Executive Committee meetings to be more of a strategic and kind of a planning session and the Board didn't feel that they could speak freely when we have city staff here and Seize the Future and some of the other people that do attend the meeting, so I've reached out to the city and Seize the Future and some other people that are typically here in attendance and asked them not to attend our Executive Committee meetings. The city was very receptive and actually said that this is how it used to be before Karen Christensen was on staff and that there were a lot questions when she kind of stepped down and retired from that position, so we are just going back to how things were done before. I'm happy to report that maybe in this meeting we can kind of strategize for our future and some other things as well.

Bob Reuland said I talked to Clara Diaz and she is going to take over Charlie Zine's place. She is coming to the next full Board meeting, which is 2 weeks from today, so we'll seat her.

Approval of Minutes

Eva Luckinbill made a motion to approve the April 2, 2015 minutes. This was seconded by Karen Kramford. The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Kim Granholm said I did have under Old Business the accounting transition. You all received my e-mail, so I appreciate your quick response with that. It looks like Doug has the new software and he was able to provide the reports for us, which I e-mailed out yesterday. It looks a little different. I had a chance to look through it. It seems okay, but it is a lot of information. We will table this until Doug is available.

Old Business

a. Accounting Transition

Bob Reuland said I let Joe know that we weren't going to be walking down the aisle together much longer and that we need to make a change. We can't make it too abruptly because he is doing our 990 tax return for the fed and so we need to have that completed and then we can dissolve this relationship. It was a difficult thing. We went 4 months without financials and we kept trying to get them. Doug and I had a personal meeting with Joe, but I don't think that he understood exactly what we wanted so there was a frustration level there that was both on his part and our part and so we've decided to make the change. Doug is purchasing, and that's one thing that we have to get permission from this group is I think it is about \$300 for, new software. Doug has a program for non-profits and I think that we are already using it, so I'd like to see us move forward with that.

John Nachtrieb said so we are going to invest \$300 in this software. Does this mean that it is our intention now to take this accounting process internal again?

Bob Reuland said yes.

John Nachtrieb said is Doug willing to do that?

Bob Reuland said actually Doug is the one that initiated this.

John Nachtrieb made a motion to approve Doug's \$300 purchase. Eva Luckinbill seconded the motion.

Karen Kramford said the question then would be the process we would have with the new software would be that Doug would do the monthly reporting. We will still need an outside firm to perform the tax reporting that we need as a group and we are considering whether we need to audit, to have an independent audit, at the end of the year or at the end of every few years.

Kim Granholm said we do need to look into that.

After discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

b. Memorial Donation in Honor of Hal Beebee

Bob Reuland said some time ago we talked about a communication from the Library asking for a \$2,500 donation. We've mulled that over a number of times and then with Hal Beebee's passing,

it morphed into the idea of a memorial of some sort for Hal through Aurora Downtown. We don't want to start of precedent of sponsoring events. We've talked about it and the library has a nice tree available. Your pricing is high. There is a tree in the garden. It is \$5,000. I think that Aurora Downtown needs to make a donation to the Aurora Public Library in a substantial form and that maybe it would say Aurora Downtown and then in memory of Hal Beebee or something of that sort.

Eva Luckinbill said I think the best thing to do is to talk to Laura Stoney. That's really all the Foundation work. Just to clarify though, the tree is already going to be there. It is outside the garden and the gathering part of it is on the inside of the fence, but using the tree as the canopy for the reading area. I think Laura is the best one and I know she will work with you and what you are suggesting is very doable.

Bob Reuland said how does the Committee feel about this?

Karen Kramford said I think it is a great idea.

John Nachtrieb said I agree.

Kim Granholm said we have funds available, just so everyone is aware.

Dan Hites said I think it should be an expandable plaque to cover more and more people as they pass.

New Business

a. Aurora Police Department – Lieutenant Scott Brosi and Officer Archer

Kim Granholm said we have Lieutenant Brosi and Officer Archer. I reached out to them. At the last couple of meetings, there was some concern over the police presence downtown. It didn't seem like it was quite as frequent as it has been in years past. I thought rather than bring them to a regular Board meeting where they might be a little bit bombarded by the rest of the audience that we could address some specific things at the Executive Committee.

Officer Archer said in front of you, I ran calls for service for District 1, which is the downtown loop area. I don't know what your concerns are, but I just want to go over some percentages of calls from last January through April of 2014 to 2015. Vagrancy calls, homeless calls, and any type of calls with when we deal with the homeless, we are down 63% as of last year. Property crimes, residential burglaries, burglaries, and thefts, we are down 86%. Drug calls and anything to do with drug paraphernalia and controlled substances, we are down 64%. We've had an up-rise in accidents, especially on Broadway. We are getting a lot of sideswipes on vehicles. Excessive noise calls, we had 1 caller that kept calling, and if you take her calls away, we are actually down 80%, but if you add her calls in then we are up 146%. If you have any questions, or have anything that you want to know, I'd be happy to present that at the next meeting.

John Nachtrieb said do you have any way of explaining why these numbers are so dramatically improved?

Officer Archer said believe it or not, there is a lot of police presence downtown. You may not see it, but a lot of the calls happen in the evenings.

Kim Granholm said who would we still call if there is a homeless person that is not really bothering anyone, but they might be distracting from the business? The non-emergency number?

Officer Archer said just the call the non-emergency number. They'll send us still.

Terry Michels said is there a foot patrol downtown?

Officer Archer said there used to be, but now the Prank unit is actually in a patrol car, so if something is hot going across town he can get across town to help out with that.

Terry Michels said what about a bike patrol?

Officer Archer said we do bike patrols every now and then, especially at like city events, at least 4 or 5 of us are on bikes doing some type of patrol on bikes. We are going to step up bike patrols this summer just in the downtown area, just for the homeless issue.

Lieutenant Brosi said downtown complaints, like Tracey mentioned, the city garage at 5 E. Downer is a hot spot right now. But I encourage everybody to call when there is a problem and we can send a car over and we'll have some discussion with whoever they may be. At least we'll have a ticket for a record of that. We do meet with Hesed House on a regular basis about issues there. We are working with them trying to come up with some new ideas and how to address some of the issues there. We are aware of the problem. It is not just a police problem. It is going to take a whole community to address it and make a difference.

Further discussion followed on the homeless issues and alcohol issues with the homeless and the liquor stores in the downtown area.

Kim Granholm said you mentioned shuttling people back to Hesed House. Was that brought up?

Officer Archer said just last week we were down there. We were just brainstorming with the staff. We talked about the shuttle. What it comes down to is funding to have availability of a vehicle.

Dan Hites said what do you see as the trend? Are we pretty much the same level we were 5 years ago as far as the homeless and the vagrancy and everything else? Are we dropping or are we increasing?

Officer Archer said I don't know if we are decreasing because it seems like if you get rid of one, another one just pops up. With Hesed House being where it is at, we are always going to have that issue.

Terry Michels brought up the issues that they are having at the Casino and where the areas are that they are seeing most of the issues.

Officer Archer said there is going to be a spike because of the weather getting nice, so if you see something, call.

Jimi Allen said it is not a homelessness issue. It is a drug addiction issue. It is an issue of getting a resource and using it.

John Nachtrieb said it is an affect, not a cause.

Kim Granholm said is there a way to either provide a report or have someone start coming to our regular Board meetings on a consistent basis also?

Officer Archer said yes. If I can't make it, I will definitely get you some stats.

Consultant Report

Bob Reuland said there is nothing more to report at this point.

Committee Updates

John Nachtrieb said for the BAR Committee there is nothing really new to report. We are still moving people through the application process. I think we still have 4 in process. We have a couple of verbal expressions of interest. Full disclosure last year our program managed to find enough applicants and spend our budget down and they all have worked out well. We have been lucky. Frankly I think my learning from that was we should be more careful. We certainly should not be scrambling to spend our budget at the eleventh hour and then possibly running the risk of making bad decisions. However, it also makes a lot of sense for us to not just look at the most highly qualified candidates. We've got a couple, one in particular, that's really weak. This is a person who has really struggled, who's got terrible credit, who is trying to be an entrepreneur, has a neat idea for a little business and really needs some help. Quite honestly, I'm inclined to help her because I think that sometimes angles have to show up and help folks like that. I'm saying that to you first of all not to ask you to rubber stamp it, but for you to be aware and comment if you really disagree. As the Chair of that committee, my inclination is to look for and approve as many qualified applicants as we can and then maybe on 1 or 2 hang it out there and take a risk.

Jimi Allen said we just need to set up some parameters to help people.

Further discussion followed on the different resources that are available.

Karen Kramford said my leaning, as an individual of this committee, would say I think that I would question that helping hand, obviously, but I would be open to hearing that the BAR committee is doing something along that line.

John Nachtrieb said and that's the reason I brought it up. I just don't want you to be blindsided by it.

Kim Granholm said for Landscaping, Joe has copied me on a lot his e-mails. The Aurora Downtown planters are scheduled for Monday, May 11. The Aurora Downtown flowerbeds are scheduled for Monday, May 18. The City of Aurora parking lot planters should come May 18 with the other order May 20. Hopefully we will start seeing some color downtown soon.

Karen Kramford said the Legislative Committee was scheduled to meet tomorrow. However, I had a conflict and we are moving it to next Friday. We will get Dan's document finished, as everyone refers to it, the 4:00 a.m. liquor license. We're moving that to next week. I have been talking with John Curley and with Seize the Future. One of the issues we have with people who are downtown or wanting to come downtown is the lack of understanding of how to go through the building permit process, etc. The other issue that I see is when they go to talk to Seize the Future about all of these, whether it is TIF funding or whether it is other programs, that business owners don't comprehend. I've been speaking with Seize the Future and with the building people to put together a workshop that would have both groups and invite business owners and building owners to come in so that they can understand what that tax credit would mean for them in dollars and what the new codes would mean so that it is process. That is something that we will see toward the fall.

Dan Hites said for Marketing, how is the transition being held?

Kim Granholm said right now we are unsure of the transition right now. Bob and I are going to work together to discuss this. We have met with Benjie and have talked to other Board members as well. We are not exactly sure what we are going to do. We've thought a likely candidate would be Rory because he owns a marketing company. We are completely open to suggestions at this point because we don't want to step in. If you have any suggestions, I would be more than happy to entertain those. We do have two more months right now to make that decision.

Karen Kramford said we are moving forward with the float. It is coming along nicely. Hessed House is participating in decorating the float for us, so we are getting great community support. The only question at this point is material procurement.

Bob Reuland said Doug is not interested in Aurora Downtown having a credit card, but he would be interested in having a debit card. For example, if Karen has to order the supplies for the float she can use the Aurora Downtown debit card to do it and not have to put it on her personal account. We see the wisdom of having a single debit card that would be tightly controlled. We wouldn't be giving the number out to people to use on the Internet, but at some point there is a convenience issue that is going to come up with it.

City of Aurora Updates

None.

Announcements

Karen Kramford said apparently Governor Rauner's administration has a resourcing and networking event in Aurora on June 5th that focuses on educating small businesses and vendors about the state's procurement and contracting processes. I thought this would be something great for Business Attraction and Retention to look at.

John Nachtrieb said I'm going to move the BAR Committee meeting, which would normally occur next Thursday, to the following Thursday because this Thursday is going to be a Seize the Future meeting on the pop-up shop issue and some of you may want to be there. It will be at the large conference room over at 43 W. Galena.

Adjourn

John Nachtrieb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Dan Hites. The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 a.m.