

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Minutes

July 16, 2015

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

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

Members Absent (Excused): Jane Abe (Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce), Cort Carlson (AACVB), Fred Harrison (at large), John Nachtrieb (at large), Jorge Pacheco (at large)

Members Absent (Unexcused): Harish Ananthapadmanabhan (at large), Katie Arko (ACCA), Kimber Howard (at large), Megan Paul (at large)

Others Present: Bill Wiet (COA), Gina Moga (COA), Joe Hopp (COA), Kaye Mason (Chek-Lab, Inc.), Tom Bartlett (Aurora Fastprint), Nestor Garcia (AHHAB)

Call to Order and Introductions – Kim Granholm

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

Approval of Minutes – 6/18/2015

Doug Cheatham made a motion to approve the June 18, 2015, 2015 minutes. Karen Kramford seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Doug Cheatham said as of month end, we had \$171,000 in the bank. From a budget prospective, most categories are under budget, Administrative, Marketing. Retention Development is slightly over, but that will even out as there was a onetime payment that put that a little over, so not concerned there. Landscaping is well under budget, but we are in the season where a lot of bills are going to be coming in, so that will catch up some. Seasonal Decorations are over budget, but again, that's kind of a onetime payment, so that will catch up on that. The third page shows the checks written during the month. Really that's about it unless there are any questions.

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

Old Business

a. LaSalle Street Grant Update – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said LaSalle Street has \$75,000 that they are planning to work with to develop their street and they worked diligently with the city and I don't think that we are in a position to move forward with that this year again. Our concern for Aurora Downtown is the merging of the Friends of LaSalle Street and Post 84, the Veterans organization. We don't want to see the \$75,000 transferred from the Friends of LaSalle Street to the Post 84 people. Kaye is here, so I'd like to get your input on that as long as you are here.

Kaye Mason said I probably know less than you people do. I don't think there has been any conversation about transferring monies.

Bob Reuland said if it is alright with the Board, I'd like to meet with Joe Dispense again. Joe is kind of the Treasurer of your organization.

Kaye Mason said no, he is the Chairman.

Bob Reuland said who is your Treasurer?

Kaye Mason said Sandy Spang.

Bob Reuland said maybe I could meet with Joe and Sandy and just voice Aurora Downtown's concern for the money that it stay in the Friends of LaSalle Street.

Kaye Mason said that was our intent.

Bob Reuland said okay, good, so that's what we'll do.

John Galles said are they afraid of 84 taking over?

Kim Granholm said no. We are afraid of 84 taking over. The money that we gave them 4 of 5 years ago for beautification of LaSalle, we want to make sure that is used appropriately and our concern is that if Post 84 is taking this over and the money is transferred to their account that they will use it not knowing our expectations and I don't think it is appropriate that they handle the money if we granted it to Friends of LaSalle. I personally would like to have it back until the city is ready to move forward with the plans over on LaSalle Street. I would be most comfortable with that. There is some discrepancy over when Post 84 is going to take it over.

Bob Reuland said do you want to meet with me and Joe Dispense and Sandy Spang?

Kim Granholm said sure.

Bob Reuland said okay then the 4 of us should meet. I'll see that that happens.

b. New Logo/Branding of Aurora Downtown – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said we are working with Rory Bolen of Bad Monkey Circus to get a new logo for Aurora Downtown and branding. We entered into an agreement with him. He is producing work as we speak. We have nothing to show at this moment, but I think probably at our next meeting we'll have some information to share with you. Our logo is old and since the city rebranded and re-logoed, we decided that we needed to do that also and so we are moving forward with that.

Gina Moga said are you tying your new logo in with the city's new logo?

Bob Reuland said no.

Rory Bolen said we are actually taking it into consideration, but it won't be directly tied to it. It will have some kind of maybe feel or element, but I wouldn't say it would be necessarily similar in that regard.

Gina Moga said because I know the intention for the branding was that whenever we final branded that it was able to be manipulated, so to speak, to suit different things such as the Chamber, Aurora Downtown and different entities. I didn't know if there had been a conversation with Clayton Muhammad about this. He would be a natural one to talk to about possibly tying some elements in.

Kim Granholm said when Clayton came in and presented he handed out a form that had colors and things like that and the packet that he had e-mailed originally Rory has so I'm sure that you've probably reviewed some of that information. I think some of the concern was do we like the City of Aurora logo and is that what we want to go with.

Dan Hites said I want to clarify, it is not just the logo, but you are looking at new names also, correct?

Rory Bolen said yes, something to identify the organization and what we do.

Kim Granholm said and Gina maybe before we bring it to the full Board, maybe the Marketing Committee or maybe even just Rory and Clayton can sit and hash out and he can say what if you tried this and what if you tried that to make it cohesive because we definitely want to make it flow from one to the other.

Tom Bartlett said what is the necessity of changing the logo? Why are you doing that?

Kim Granholm said we are trying to rebrand. We feel that the old logo is dated.

Tom Bartlett said I don't think most of the people even understand what the logo is. Do they know what this statue is?

Kim Granholm said if I have to explain it to people, I don't feel that it is appropriate for Aurora Downtown. I know what it is, yes, but I could ask our Board do you understand and do you know what it represents.

Tom Bartlett said it really signifies downtown.

Kim Granholm said I don't think we're trying not to signify downtown.

Karen Kramford said Tom, how does it signify downtown?

Tom Bartlett said this is the statue that was on the New York Street Bridge since 1912. That is a very famous statue that was made and that's why we picked it originally for the logo for Aurora Downtown.

Kaye Mason said the reason for a logo for whatever business it is, once you establish a logo people go by that. I've had a logo since 1947 and they recognize it. You don't change the image of the organization. You just don't change the logo that people have identified with that logo all these years and I believe it was back in John and my day probably 25 or 30 years and a logo that has been established, people identify that. This ampersand is something that is a new creation and everybody's using it. Do you want to be included in everybody?

Bob Reuland said we don't necessarily plan to use the ampersand as a logo.

Doug Cheatham said Kaye the last time we had this conversation I went and just Googled logos of corporations and it is interesting the history of how every logo that you recognize, McDonalds, Disney, IBM, all of them changed over time. They all change and update them. I don't think that this logo is something that people coming into town today recognize. Tom likes the logo, but he didn't even know if the statue was still standing. I think it is time for a new look at it.

John Galles said maybe like Bob says, I'm too damn old or something, but you're in a position where you hate change. You get my age, you don't like change. There is nothing wrong with a new logo, but I'm very interspersed with the old logo with my job at the store because I use that many, many thousands of times over a year. So far Clayton only talked to me once and he said oh I forgot about you guys. I haven't talked to him since that time.

Kim Granholm said well we'll definitely take your concerns into consideration. I don't think our intent was to modernize the logo and forget the history of downtown. Obviously, I have a 38 year history here. I kind of grew up downtown. I think to the up and coming businesses and the artist groups that are here downtown means something a little bit different than just some of the structures that have been here for a while.

Rory Bolen said and through our process, we are taking into consideration all the historic icons and elements around town, so trust me it is nothing that's going to be passed over. It is definitely going to be considered, but also a modern element to it to. We are hoping for a balance and a marriage between the two elements.

Bob Reuland said I think we are moving along and we certainly will take all the comments that were made this morning into consideration.

New Business

a. Appointment of New Marketing and Vice Chair – Bob Reuland

Kim Granholm said Benjie is the Chairman of our Marketing right now and the Executive Board went along with the recommendation that Rory Bolen from Bad Monkey Circus, who has been active on the Marketing Committee since he's been on the Board and before he was on the Board, is going to step in and take over the Chairmanship of the Marketing Committee.

Kim Granholm said I'm going to table the Vice Chair because I didn't get a chance until yesterday to contact anyone about that. I have not heard back from this person yet, so we'll go ahead and talk about that at the Executive Committee meeting and see if there are any other recommendations. If you are interested, certainly let me know and I can throw your name in the hat if this opportunity doesn't work out.

b. Fiestas Patrias – Nestor Garcia, Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board

Nestor Garcia said I'm with the Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board. The reason I'm coming to you is that on September 13th, we are having our Fiestas Patrias. I know I'm a little early, but I would rather get the information out to you knowing that the fact that we are going to be celebrating. The parade is on Sunday. It is scheduled to kick-off at 11:00 o'clock. It is not more than a 45 minute parade. Then after, we of course, have the festivities at RiverEdge Park. Again, I just want to make sure that I bring it to your attention. On Friday I'll start posting the "No Parking" and getting all the information out that needs to be done following the same procedures as other parades do. Of course, we are looking for volunteers for the parade. For the festivities themselves, it is free to the public. We're excited.

Consultant Report – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said we are experiencing a renaissance on Aurora Downtown. The interest in our committees is fantastic this summer. People want to join various committees. We have a number of people interested in the Marketing Committee. I just sat with a gentleman yesterday who had a very big interest in CMAP, which is the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and was thinking that Aurora Downtown needs to be involved with that group in some way, maybe having a Board position or what have you. We are getting a lot of feedback from various people.

Bill Wiet said the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, we applied for a local technical grant because we are updating the Seize the Future Master Plan. We are looking at an art and cultural component to the downtown and we are doing a walkability study. When we were awarded the grant, the first order of business was to have them come out and do a walkthrough of the downtown and so we spent about 5 hours doing that, going around downtown. The next

step that they are doing is producing a survey that will be going out to a larger body that will break down like the components of listing out 3 of 7 items in terms of what you'd like to see and the like. So that is being done in conjunction with our Planning staff and more to update the Seize the Future Master Plan, but CMAP is the Chicago Regional Agency for Planning. They do a lot of ranking of federal funded projects and I can get into that later about our bridge project and ATC project.

Bob Reuland said is there a place for Aurora Downtown in this organization?

Bill Wiet said well there is a place for Aurora Downtown in what we are looking to do with the updating of the downtown plans. We are just in the initial stages of that.

Lulu Blacksmith said I am part of CMAP so I can represent the Board.

Bob Reuland said next Thursday at 4:00 p.m. at the Chamber offices is the meeting of the Marketing Committee and the logo will be discussed in detail there. You are more than welcome to come and give your input into the information we are processing.

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

Bob Reuland said the BAR Committee is meeting today at 3:00 o'clock. We have one additional grant to give out and that is for Business Attraction and Retention. I had an e-mail from Harriet Parker yesterday that she has a new pair of gentlemen who are going to be opening a restaurant in Chef Amoury's old space and is very interested in getting a Business Attraction Grant of \$10,000. She is moved with their business plan, she is moved with their financials. I don't know where she is on the rest of it, but I know that's going to be coming up at our meeting this afternoon. That would then take care of all our allotted money that was given to the BAR Committee for the year. I think it is a very exciting time. By the way, I'm giving out the rent checks each month for the Rest Subsidy Program. The people are very appreciative. I go around and meet each person and talk to them.

Karen Kramford said the Float Committee is a joy to be on. It went really well this year. We completely redecorated the float and we had characters this year. There were a lot of people. There was standing room only on the float. It went really, really well. Again, we had a case of characters who helped support. We are well within budget. We are in early negotiations with perhaps participating with Winter Lights. We are going to hold onto the budget we have remaining to look into Winter Lights. What we came out with from this year was a sponsorship. We usually provide sponsorship money for the American Legion Post 84. We did not receive their letter until the middle of June, which meant we missed most of the activities that were available as part of the sponsorship level, so we are going to alter our sponsorship level for this year with a letter to them explaining what our expectations are and the goal for next year will be to have more characters. Our goal is to double the budget for next year for characters since we won't have the material cost to be so high. The one thing I did come away with on this committee was the fact that not being one for colors, not being one to understand decorations, is that the guidance of this committee is phenomenal with Kaye, and Gina and Bob giving their input. The knowledge that they have was very tremendous.

Kim Granholm said John's donated the shirts for us.

Melissa Mercado said there were no updates for Holiday.

Joe Hopp said there is not too much to report for Landscaping. Riley is having a hard time keeping up with everything with all the rain. We had to bring in Debbie to do some trimming of the sidewalk pots because they are getting a little grown. We could be a little bit over budget, but not too much. With all the rain it has been hard to keep up with everything.

Karen Kramford said Legislative met last Friday. We came out with two things that we are going to do. One is we are inviting Mike Saville, the Alderman who has most of the downtown, to our meeting for next month. I don't know the date and time at this point. The other is that I've been talking with several people in the downtown. We have a tentative date for a workshop and the Legislative Committee decided on a workshop and it is going to be October 15th. Tentatively the times are from 11:00 and 2:00. From a legislative point of view, part of advocating is also educating. What we'd like to do is invite the entities, the city, Planning and Building, for them to present and to have people to talk with them, as well as Seize the Future, the Small Business Development Center and so forth.

Terry Michels said the last time we did this was about 7 years ago. We've made a commitment to the state and to the Illinois Gaming Board that we would reach out and try to attract new vendors to work with and with a target on local, minority and women vendors that we are looking at doing business with. In partnership with our sister property in Joliet, we are going to do it here at North Island Center on the date that Karen had mentioned. We invite all of the casinos in Illinois. They all turn out and then we reach out to Northern Indiana as well if they want to attend. The Chicago Minority Business Development Council is a big play into that as well. It is really coming out and trying to find new avenues of casinos or businesses reaching out to the casinos and casinos reaching out to the businesses to bring them into the fold for either businesses that they are currently working with that they have an opportunity to expand in different commodities or businesses that are brand new that are startup that have an opportunity with volume for the casinos and do a relationship with them. Our goal is and our commitment to the state has been that we want to work with local businesses and as the state begins to look at diversification in minority and women businesses as well that we are demonstrating a commitment to that as well and try to bring them in and be an inclusive part of that. We were trying to put an educational aspect on it as well and hold some little seminars in the Copley Theater. Between ourselves, we felt that there was really an overlay and a great opportunity for existing businesses in downtown, for businesses that want to come, as well as businesses that the casinos are currently working with that would be kind of exhibiting at this event. I think it's got a lot of great potential for existing downtown businesses, businesses within the city and other folks that are coming in that may have an opportunity to work with other businesses that are here.

Karen Kramford said part of this vision is for the business, and specifically our downtown businesses, to be able to have access to other vendors and potentially be able to have their own tables and be part of it. So there is the educational aspect and the relationship building aspect.

There is a good solid interest. We need to have a meeting of the interested entities to get that out and to start formalizing it.

Rory Bolen said for Marketing we created 3 templates for the e-mail marketing campaign that we are working on. Right now we are just trying to schedule to meet with the appropriate vendors we talked about. We are well into the progress of the logo development and naming project.

Kim Granholm said the e-mail templates are for First Friday vendors correct? Marketing is trying to help First Friday venues market their events better, so we've created some templates for them to use so that they can just put their information in and send it out.

Bob Reuland said the Parking Committee met for the first time last month. The meeting was successful and everyone got along. Kim and I went to the Finance Committee meeting where there was discussion of extending the Waubensee Agreement with the City of Aurora for an additional year and Kim was able to speak at that meeting. The information given was that there will be a timetable developed for the implementation of the new Parking Agreement.

Bill Wiet said in direction of the Finance Committee, I produced a timetable by which we will stick to over the next 12 months that actually will give us some milestones we will at least need to achieve when we can come back and bring forward several recommendations. Some might be recommendations that narrow the focus. Some may be actual recommendations that we have found solutions. As was discussed at the Finance Committee on Tuesday, I think we all have a general understanding that there is a surplus of parking in the downtown. However, when you look at it, there are hot spots in the downtown where the frequency of obtaining an on street parking or a parking lot near a business or a facility can be more difficult. With that and the fact that Waubensee Community College say with the Casino and the Paramount Theater and others happens to be in this northwest quadrant. That's where a lot of our focus is going to be over the next year. However, we've decided to look not only at the northwest, but also the southwest quadrant. We are going to be taking more of a comprehensive look at all of these patterns. We are going to be making some changes to our current parking management plan to try to alleviate some of the concerns and comments that more time should be allowed on certain streets for vehicular turnover, i.e. is 90 minute or 2 hour parking on the street to cause that turnover. What we are looking to do is provide in the next 30 days some areas of the west part of downtown be changing from 90 minutes to 60 minutes parking duration. We will be reporting mid-year on what we've been doing. We want to do that with this group as well to keep you in the loop.

City Department Updates

Gina Moga said the fireworks and the parade went very well. Next year is leap year, so the fireworks will not be on Sunday. It will be on Monday, so everything will be on the same day again next year. This Saturday is the Bazaar on Water Street. Next Saturday Riverfront Playhouse is doing Shakespeare on the Mall. They are doing Twelfth Night out here on Water Street Mall, so keep those on your calendar. RiverEdge Park has two shows this weekend. The REO Speedwagon show is expecting about 5,500 to 6,000 people downtown this Saturday night so be prepared for that. Other than that, it is just already working on some things for Winter

Lights on November 20th. I believe the Pop-up Shop is August 8. The Emergency Vehicle Show is that weekend as well as First Friday.

Joe Hopp said you may have noticed the Stolp Island Parking elevator is out of service. The northwest elevator has given us some issues in the last couple of years, so we are doing some major upgrades. That should be done this week. We are going to do the same upgrades to the other elevator. It should be up and running Friday of this week. We are doing some concrete replacement downtown. We are going to have about \$25,000 in concrete replacement. You also may see some boring being done downtown.

Bill Wiet said construction updates. Downer Place will be closed at Lake Street starting today and that should be open by tomorrow afternoon for sewer work. The Lake Street sewer project should be complete in August. The traffic signal equipment for the River Street and Lake Street two-way conversion has been ordered and we are working with IDOT to get the permit issued. That project is scheduled to begin in September. The Indian Trail Bridges should be open by October or November of this year. The city received a permit from IDOT for the Galena and New York Street two-way conversion project. Sewer work on Galena is on schedule and they will be working primarily on the New York Street sewer for the next month. Then traffic control equipment can begin to be installed in the fall. That's the construction update. I just want to let everyone know that we are still keeping a LaSalle Street budget in our TIF 1 account. We would not be doing any installation of the historic lighting at this period of time, but we do have funding in there should any other projects come to fruition in the next year. Those are actually called the Memory Sculptures that are New York Street as part of the dedication of Aurora. About 12 years ago the city received a grant to actually have them repaired. That was about \$400,000 just to repair them. In the last few months, we had an engineering study done that did conclude that they are corroding from within. Eventually you might see more cracks and the like. Given the fact that this entire bridge is very historic in nature with the sculptures and the lady in the middle, we brought this forward to our Historic Preservation Commission and there have been some suggestions with the engineering reports that they actually be removed and recast and put back on. We do have castings at the Illinois Math and Science Academy that were done 12 years ago. The overwhelming consensus was to just let them age gracefully because they are original to the bridge. We are working on a plan. We need to caulk cracks and get a concrete expert and probably an artist to make sure we can keep these looking this way for many years to come. Also an exciting project that we feel will be happening as soon as we get approval this fall is we did apply for a CMAQ grant (Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality) grant to remove the pulse point in front of the Roundhouse to move the bus pulse point along where the tracks are in the parking lot themselves. As part of that, we also submitted a request for a bridge that goes across the river, basically on the south end of RiverEdge Park and goes across the river to the former Police Station area. We are looking at this as a way to increase the amount of commuters that take the train by having the commuters park on the west side of the river.

Dan Hites said in summary, all the construction will be done by the end of the year then, all the road construction?

Bill Wiet said it should all be completed at that time.

Dan Hites said and from Eola eastward on New York?

Bill Wiet said on New York Street that I'm not 100% sure on. We are behind on that project. It was due to several factors, including the timing of ComEd moving their power poles, which they needed to do. That's all been cleared away.

Dan Hites said any major construction of similar sorts starting next year?

Bill Wiet said we are working hard on more like bike paths and the like this summer and fall, but I'll find out if there is anything. We don't get final approval until our budget gets passed in like October or November on what we actually are going to be doing next year. The Farnsworth Bridge at the Tollway is going to be shut down next year for complete reconstruction. Route 59 is supposed to be done around Thanksgiving.

Announcements – Everyone

Ellen Mueller said I have a press release on the Culinary Championship. The next Culinary Championship will be tonight in Aurora. Mayor Weisner is the host judge. We also have a celebrity judge, Chef Scott Fischer. The tasting will be of the veggie/vegan, the best veggie/vegan restaurant. This is the 9th out of 10 culinary championships and we have tasted some of the best foods in the area and we are excited about it. It is a free and open to the public event. There will be prizes awarded, so please come out and enjoy the event tonight at the Hampton Inn and Suites on Orchard at 6:00 p.m. tonight.

Tom Bartlett said is there any word on any of the buildings downtown like the Cobb Building, Waubensee, the Silverplate or Terminal or the PNC Bank which just closed down?

Bill Wiet said we've done a couple of walk-thrus of the PNC Bank to see what it would be like for possible adaptive reuses. It is a very large building. There are problems with the parking deck that needs a large reconstruct. It is going to need a lot of work. There are millions of dollar's worth of work that needs to be done to that building. There is a lot of interest in some of the buildings, the Terminal Building being one of them, but people are just clambering to the state to approve this 5 year extension on our historic tax credits. They really feel that with additional state historic tax credits they could get the rehab. We've got a project that's already signed on the dotted line for the old St. Charles Hospital, but a lot of it has contingent on getting these historic tax credits. They are very valuable to the developers. The VNA, we are actually going to be looking to bring forward a development agreement with the owner of the building that would actually cause its demolition, but at the same time that opens up an opportunity for us to look at opening up the entire block between Downer and Benton.

Adjourn

Eva Luckinbill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Doug Cheatham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.