

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Minutes

August 20, 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), Clara Diaz (at large), Keith Gerald (at large), Kim Granholm (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Kimber Howard (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Library), Melissa Mercado (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), John Nachtrieb (at large), Helen Nowak (at large), Jorge Pacheco (at large), Megan Paul (at large), Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

Members Absent (Excused): Harish Ananthapadmanabhan (at large), Katie Arko (ACCA), Cort Carlson (AACVB)

Members Absent (Unexcused): John Galles (at large), Fred Harrison (at large)

Others Present: Bill Wiet (COA), Gina Moga (COA), Officer Tracey Archer (APD), Justin Root (COA), Cadence Peterson (Seize the Future), Marissa Amoni Aurora Downtown), Judy Dawson (Scale Up Aurora), Hector Ochoa (Aurora Hispanic Heritage Board), Birnie Harper (Wayside Cross), Michael Cobb (Hesed House)

Call to Order and Introductions – Kim Granholm

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

Approval of Minutes – 7/16/2015

John Nachtrieb made a motion to approve the July 16, 2015, 2015 minutes. Dan Hites seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Doug Cheatham said we have \$136,000 in the bank and another check should be coming in soon so we are in very good shape from a cash standpoint. We are in good shape relative to budget. If you add in that \$67,500 that we'll get very soon, we'll be ahead of budget overall for the year. The checks written during the month are on the last page.

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

Old Business

a. LaSalle Street Grant Update – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said Kim and I want to sit down with Joe Dispensa and Sandy Spang. They seem to be the custodians of the \$75,000 account that Aurora Downtown has advanced to them for the rehabilitation of LaSalle Street, which isn't taking place and so Kim and I need to have a conversation with them. Their car show is this Sunday, so everybody plan to attend that, but I would think next week Kim and I can get over there.

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

Bob Reuland said we are working on this. We have a contract with Rory Bolen from Bad Monkey Circus to do the research and so on. We are going to be tying in with the branding of the city's logo. We haven't seen anything as yet, but it is in the works and is coming along.

New Business

a. Appointment of Vice Chair – Kim Granholm

Kim Granholm said with Benjie being gone, it opens up the Vice Chair position. I have asked Terry Michels to be the Vice Chair for Aurora Downtown and he has accepted.

b. Pop Up Event Wrap Up – Justin Root

Justin Root said with the assistance of Aurora Downtown and Seize the Future we decided to do a pop-up and a pop-up is where you kind of reimagine what a space could be and what it could look like. We have a lot of vacant buildings downtown. We chose one that the city owns because that was the path of least resistance for this first iteration. It was really successful, so we are hoping that the next time we can get more property owners on board so we can do a bigger event. Everybody said this was a great event and we want to do it again in October for that First Friday and possibly for the Winter Lights event as well. We took the space at 59 S. LaSalle and cleaned it up and did a little bit of marketing and collaborated with First Fridays to kind of get that kind of built in audience. We invited 5 vendors who were willing to take a chance on an untested event. They all told us that they had an amazing time, that they had some great sales and met a lot of wonderful people to make those connections that maybe next time they want to do something more substantial downtown. That was really part of the whole point of this event, not only to get residents to say look at this vacant building, this is what this could be, but also to get potential property owners to come down and a buy building or business to rent a space. We really feel that we accomplished that goal. It was very successful. We are hoping that Aurora Downtown continues to be a great partner in this event as we move forward with October's First Friday.

Consultant Report – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said Kaye Mason was in an auto accident. She broke her right arm, so she is at home. I thought a card would be appropriate that we can get over to her, so be sure to sign it.

Bob Reuland said the election is coming. I have to get ahold of Davis Offutt and get a list of all the property owners so that we can get contacting them again. For those of you who have to run this year, I want to know if you are going to run. If your term is up, please let me know if you have interest in the Board and want to continue because I think it is important that your contribution continue with us and we are very appreciative of what you all do. Secondly, we have the budget that is coming into focus. We are going to meet in September and we'll be forming the committee and sitting down and figuring our budget. We have to figure our budget based on what we have. We don't know what the city will be able to give us this year because the city doesn't know how much they are going to be getting, but we are going to move forward with our plans. We've been highly successful this year with our budget and what we've done, especially the BAR Committee and we want to continue to move forward in that direction. Karen Kramford and I are forming the Maintenance Committee again and we want to sit down with Joe and talk about various aspects of the city and what we need to do and plan for a 3 year budget for maintenance. That's my report for the time being.

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

John Nachtrieb said for the BAR Committee, the August meeting was rescheduled for this afternoon, so we will meet in a couple of hours. The agenda will be to update everybody on the visits we make quarterly to past grantee award winners. There will be an update on the pop-up shops. An update on the grant applications, we are looking to award one more grant this year. We are having a hard time finding a candidate that seems to meet all the criteria, which I think is a good sign in terms of the criteria. There will also be an update on an initiative that has been undertaken by the Marketing Committee. I want to ask the BAR Committee if we want to collaborate with them on the Arts and Entertainment District initiative that is circulating.

Bob Reuland said there is a Parking Committee meeting over at 43 W. Galena at 2:00 o'clock this afternoon, so if you are on the Parking Committee, but sure to show up for that.

Melissa Mercado said for Holiday it is pretty much what I reported early on. We've contracted with Temple for some new displays on New York Street and Benton will have a little bit of a different look with wrapping on the poles. Everything is in place, it is just a matter of executing it. We need to find a place for the big Santa that was on the old library. I am trying to get the lights on the gazebo looked at so that we could have some light there for these Wednesdays in the park. As a side note, I understand that the Float Committee is going to merge with Holiday, and for Winter Lights we will want to start talking probably about a float for Winter Lights.

Keith Gerald said the end of the summer Hump Day next Wednesday, the 26th will be on the patio of La Quinta De Los Reyes. Margaritas will be the specialty. It is from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Rory Bolen said for Marketing, the branding/logo naming project is going forward. We are quite a ways in and definitely getting some good results, but I think we need just a little bit more time on that, but we are getting there. For naming, we are working on a new name for the

organization, so I'm open to suggestions too, so you are more than welcome to join us at our meeting, which will be next Thursday at 4:00 p.m. at the Chamber office. We have some advertising that is coming up. They are going to do some radio, cable and money mailers to get the word out of how great downtown Aurora is. Then we have First Friday, which Marissa can kind of talk about.

Marissa Amoni said First Fridays has been going really well. We took out a couple of ads in the Beacon for First Fridays just highlighting the summer month days and then we had the trolley through August, but we extended it to go September 4th. First Fridays has really been a success. The passports were popular. We handed out a raffle prize last night at Wednesday's at the Plaza. We are also trying to get food trucks. It is a bit of a hard sell now because we don't have the numbers and everybody is asking how many people come. So as soon as maybe Kimber has a list for us then we'll be able to provide those answers. But overall, it has been amazing. As far as Wednesday's at the Plaza, thanks to Aurora Downtown for being a sponsor. That's also been really great. It's been so successful we'd like to continue it next summer.

City Department Updates

Officer Tracey Archer handed out statistics for downtown. Downtown calls for service this year are down 16%. Calls for the last 5 years are down 20%. Calls for service at the parking deck, which is basically 5 E. Downer are up 24%. Proactive calls at the parking deck are up 210%. That means we've been doing a lot of director patrols, especially at that parking deck. Violent crime is down 83% and property crime is down 19%. Total crime, part one and all other offenses, are down 29%. Downtown in general, citizen generated calls for police service have dropped 15.7% for the first 6 months of 2014-2015. Citizen generated calls for police service have dropped 20% over 5 years, again comparing the first 6 months of 2010 to 2015. For a 5 year trend, the most frequent calls are trespass, drunkenness, disturbances, person down, disorderly conduct, vagrancy and liquor law violations. This year both disturbances and drunkenness have surpassed trespass. We've been doing a lot more foot patrol in the afternoons. We've been doing a lot of extra patrols.

Bill Wiet said a few things of note. We just received our IDOT permit for the Lake Street two-way conversion, so we are probably going to be starting that next week. We believe we are just going to get our jurisdictional transfer agreement for River Street in a matter of days, but that needs City Council approval and then it has to go back to IDOT. That's going to take a little bit longer. We don't know how both River and Lake will synchronize, but we know that Lake will be complete possibly before River is because there is a little more work to be done on River Street with the bike lanes. Construction is starting to wind up on New York and Galena so we can finish converting the rest of those streets to two-way. On a side note, we did propose to City Council for their consideration next Tuesday, we are going to be placing some regulations on Pay Day Loan Stores and Cash for Gold Stores and currency exchanges and the like. We've been kind of noting that some of the gateways coming into Aurora have begun to see a predominance of these types of title loan stores. We are going to be putting some signs on Downer from Stolp from probably to Middle Avenue implementing a 60 minute parking. It is only going to be from 8:00 until 10:00 in the morning. We are going to be looking at overnight enforcement on the streets. The southern parking lot at the library is now open.

Gina Moga said subscriptions for the Broadway series are at about 28,000 people now that come down to each of the shows. The season actually starts on Friday. The kick-off party is Friday and the Happy Together Tour show is Friday night. The Get the Lead Out show is at RiverEdge Park this week. Earth, Wind and Fire as of Wednesday was at 6,970 tickets. We've capped that at 7,500 now, so I would expect that to be a sellout. Most of the summer stuff is over. Right now I'm working on Miss Merry Christmas/Jack Frost, Winter Lights and Veterans Day. We had a great couple of ideas at the pop-up shop meeting yesterday of doing some pop-up shops at Winter Lights and maybe even possibly doing them over on River Street across from the library where we do the Experience Aurora Homeownership Expo.

Bill Wiet said we are bringing to Finance Committee Tuesday a couple of new Finish Line Grant Program provisions. One is regarding restaurants in the area about helping that. Also we are looking to work on a sanitary sewer relocation program and a grease trap program for W. New York Street. There is an 80 year old sanitary sewer that runs behind Pinney Street. We are trying to look at a long-term plan to actually abandon that sanitary sewer, so we are offering a program for the whole block that the city would pay through TIF funds for the relocation of the sanitary sewer over to New York Street, which is a brand new sewer that dumps into River Street and keeps on going.

Cadence Peterson said the other program would be a forgivable loan program for new restaurants. It would be up to \$100,000 for a 10 year period. If they borrowed \$100,000 and closed after 8 years, they would have to pay \$20,000 back.

Announcements – Everyone

Birnie Harper said Wayside Cross had their grand opening. We started moving last week and basically all of the office areas are occupied now and everything is working very well. The big issue is moving all the residents and that starts today. After that move is complete then we can start tearing down the building next door and finishing up the site. It really is a nice building.

Michael Cobb said Hesed House is trying to make up quite a bit of money regarding our Housing Program and some of the challenges with the State, about \$130,000, but we believe we'll be okay at the end of the day, but I wanted to thank you for supporting that. This Sunday we have our first Dignity Ride. It is a motorcycle ride for the Hesed family. On October 3rd we have our annual hike for Hesed. The proceeds from that will go to continue our HEAT Program. I just want to thank you for all your support.

Eva Luckinbill said both gardens at the library opened up, the Children's Garden and the Parker Garden.

Hector Ochoa said we have 2 festivals going on next month. The first one is on Sunday, September 13th, Fiestas Patrias. I believe Nestor Garcia was here last month and told you about the parade that will begin at 11:00 a.m. and end at RiverEdge Park. Doors will be open at noon. We have merchant space available. We do have spaces for non-profit organizations to set up shop also. It will be running from noon to 8:00 o'clock at RiverEdge Park. Admittance is free

for everyone. On Saturday, September 26th is the 3rd annual Roots Aurora Festival. This year it is going to be held at the LaSalle Street Historic Auto Row. We have several cultural groups that will be performing on the main stage. This is also free admittance. That will be running from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Judy Dawson said I would like to thank Kim and John, graduates of our first two Scale Up Aurora classes and, of course, Seize the Future and Waubensee. We have been extended for our first option year, so we are able to offer this service for free to business owners for another year. We are still alive through the end of September of 2016. Also, our next class starts October 6th. Last but not least, we are growing. We've doubled our employees. The success of the program depends on the graduates and the referrals for those, so thank you.

Marissa Amoni said there is a concrete wall at the corner of Downer and Locust that a community grass roots group is working on beautifying. The Emergency Vehicle show was a real success. It brought hundreds of people to the downtown. Sci-Tech has some really great things happening right now. It is really impressive.

Adjourn

Terry Michels made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Hites seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 a.m.