

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minutes

October 1, 2015 – 8:00 A.M. – 5th Floor Conference Room B – City Hall

Members Present: Jimi Allen (at large), Doug Cheatham (Old Second National Bank), Kim Granholm (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Aurora Public Library), and Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

Members Absent (Excused): Karen Kramford (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), and John Nachtrieb (at large)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Jim Schweizer (Preservation Commission)

Meeting Highlights

Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

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

Approval of Minutes – 9/3/2015

Doug Cheatham made a motion to approve the September 3, 2015 minutes. This was seconded by Dan Hites. The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Doug Cheatham said I did not run month end statements. I didn't have the bank statements yet, so I'll bring that to the next meeting. The Budget Committee met earlier this week. We did come up with an A budget and a B budget, depending on what our income is going to be from the city. Probably the most controversial thing in there is that in this draft we've zeroed out the line for Hesel House. I anticipate we may get some discussion that item.

Kin Granholm said the city is going to cut our budget by \$25,000, which is one of the reasons that we've kind of played with some of the money that was there. We give them \$18,000 right now. We hate to cut it, but the reason we give it to them is to keep people off of the street. We don't think that \$18,000 is going toward the people that we don't want to see on the street, so that was the reason behind some of that.

Bob Reuland said we also had to jigger around \$55,000 worth of money in that we ran a \$30,000 deficit this year, so we had \$30,000 less to spend on our budget for next year, so we are really talking about \$55,000 for the 2016 budget.

Further discussion followed on the impacts of cutting the Hesel House funding and the other cuts to the various committees.

Doug Cheatham said for years it was a flat \$220,000. Then 2 years ago, they increased it by \$50,000 to \$270,000. Now we've been told that they are considering cutting it by \$25,000. So we had to cut \$25,000 plus the \$30,000 that we were over. If you look at that current year column, we are running a \$30,000 deficit. We need to get back to a balanced budget, so it was that \$30,000 plus the \$25,000 that they are cutting that would be \$55,000 that we need to cut somewhere. I'll e-mail that out and invite people to think about it and make comments. It is a draft. We can still make changes.

Jimi Allen said I think it is not about the budget so much. It is about what are we focused on and what we are spending our time on. I'm not being critical of the budget. I'm being critical of what's happening downtown and how can we improve it.

Kim Granholm said Doug will e-mail out the budget for everyone to look over to discuss at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Old Business

a. LaSalle Street Grant Update – Bob Reuland

Kim Granholm said Bob and I have contacted Sandy and Joe. We should be meeting with them this month.

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

Bob Reuland said we are working on this. We met with Rory. I think further work needs to be done. It is going slower than I anticipated. We are not pleased.

Jimi Allen said can we just put a hold on that? We need to talk about some bigger picture things and I think we just need to put a hold on what we are doing there. I'm making a motion that we put a hold on the logo and renaming until we can review our objectives. Eva Luckinbill seconded the motion.

Dan Hites said somewhat along the same lines, but reluctance in that unfortunately this has been an ongoing discussion as far as who we are and what we want to do for the last few years. I gather this new logo/branding was an attempt to kind of solidify that and put some impetuous behind that discussion. Perhaps instead of putting a hold on it what we should do is have Rory present what he has, which will open up the discussion again on more concrete things than everyone just kind of throwing out their opinions of what Aurora Downtown is and what it should be, so maybe we can use this as a guidance for discussion.

Jimi Allen said I could go over a lot more background of how this evolved and discussion we were having when Benjie was still here and kind of give an idea of why. You can't go into creative before you get the objectives taken care of on the front end and we started backwards. If we do that, you are just going to continue to spend time and resources picking something creative that should ultimately have been decided where is our focus and what kind of message do we need to be putting out there. It won't win out of the name and logo.

Doug Cheatham said where and when does that conversation need to take place?

Jimi Allen said I mention this again because we are doing marketing work that we don't have charter document. We do these for clients all the time. Benjie is our main charter writer and I thought I would talk to Kim and Bob about proposing that Benjie do some background phone calls and interviews with individuals.

Dan Hites said we do have a charter that we are supposed to be working under. I think you are right that it needs to be re-emphasized and clarified.

Jimi Allen said I'm proposing that we take a very light-handed approach to that, that we get a document that just puts some things in black and white to ask people what they think the focus is and then set in motion that that's the new direction we take.

The motion carried.

Kim Granholm said we've been talking about a vision for years. I understand what you are saying, but it is frustrating because we can't move forward with any of our projects, like we've spent how much money on this now and now we are going to put it on hold, and not that this is the wrong decision, I'm just being the voice of frustration that it's like now we are starting back. Maybe we should have started there originally, but we tried it and I think one of the problems is that there are so many different entities on the Board that everyone has a different vision and maybe the first time we started to focus too much and that is where it all fell apart. We do have a Strategic Plan that we put together a couple of years ago. We did have a vision. It is generic compared to maybe a small business of some sort, but it is hard. We put together this vision and I have someone call me and say this shouldn't be the vision. I'm just hesitant because number one, nobody knows who Aurora Downtown is and even if we rebrand and we do this new logo are they still going to know who we are? Do we care that they know who we are? We are the quiet voice that helps out. Are we focusing too much on the rebranding issue instead of maybe on what we should be focusing on?

After further discussion Kim Granholm said maybe the next step is we meet and chat with Benjie and get it going and talk about our timeframe and all that. We have to get something done because we have an identity crises right now and it has been going on for years. It is hard to make decisions based on this when we are all over the board.

Doug Cheatham said I would make a motion to talk with Benjie Hughes to see what the cost would be to prepare a charter document for us by the first of the year. Dan Hites seconded the motion. The motion carried.

New Business

a. Secretary for 2016

Kim Granholm said Bill Wiet has called and suggested that as of January 1st we might need to look at getting a secretary because Sue's duties are becoming more and more with some of the other committees from the city being more active and that she just won't have the time to dedicate to Aurora Downtown. We need to decide what to do for January 1st. Most other Boards that I have been a part of have a board member that is a secretary. I've been the secretary. I just wanted to get some thought on that. We don't have to make a decision on that now, but we probably do need to make a decision at the next Executive Meeting so that we can bring it to the full Board and tell them what's going on.

Consultant Report

Bob Reuland said the elections are coming up. Nomination forms will be going out shortly.

Committee Updates

Kim Granholm said we will be e-mailing the budget out for further discussion at the next Board meeting.

Dan Hites said for BAR, the arts and entertainment district hopefully will begin to be revised within the next month or two.

Kim Granholm said for the Float Committee, Karen is working hard on participating in Winter Lights.

Bob Reuland said the holiday decorations will be up before Winter Lights.

Kim Granholm said for landscaping, they will be taking the pots down soon.

Bob Reuland said the hanging baskets are coming down this week.

Dan Hites said for Legislative they decided to reconsider the report from Larry Lund as far as the 4:00 a.m. liquor license analysis was concerned.

Kim Granholm said for Marketing it has not been an easy transition and we need to do some work on that. Bob and I will talk about that going forward as of January.

Kim Granholm said the Parking Committee has had a meeting. I'm not sure what the focus is. I know there were some things that were done over on Downer that I think we are discussing at this point.

Announcements

None.

Adjourn

Bob Reuland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Dan Hites. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.