

**AURORA DOWNTOWN  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Minutes**

**November 5, 2015 – 8:00 A.M. – 5<sup>th</sup> 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), Karen Kramford (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), John Nachtrieb (at large) and Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

**Members Absent (Excused):** None

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** None

**Meeting Highlights**

**Call to Order and Chair's Remarks**

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

**Approval of Minutes – 10/1/2015**

Dan Hites made a motion to approve the October 1, 2015 minutes. This was seconded by Doug Cheatham. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham**

Doug Cheatham said we have \$110,000 in the bank. We are in very good shape from a cash standpoint and we still have the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter payment yet to be received. There were no dramatic changes in the month as far as expenses. As I mentioned, I think we had some things misclassified into Marketing over the course of the year, so the categories may be a little mixed, but the bottom line is we are in very good shape relative to budget. The expenses during the month are on the last page.

John Nachtrieb made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. This was seconded by Dan Hites. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Old Business**

- a. Friends of LaSalle Street Grant Update

Kim Granholm said I finally do have an update. We met with Sandy and Joe Dispensa 2 weeks ago now and it was actually a very nice meeting. They understood we asking for the money back and they had to bring it to their Board to approve. I think they were disappointed that they were giving the money back and that the projects themselves didn't happen. From what I'm told, the city originally went to them and said we want you to be the Friends of LaSalle and kind of gave them the idea and then the city didn't have the money and the budget got cut. They were kind if hyped up and then we gave them money and the city never followed through on their point, so they were disappointed in the whole process itself. We don't have the money back yet. We kind of gave them a timeline by the end of the year we would like to have it, so hopefully we'll have a check by the end of the year.

b. New Logo/Branding of Aurora Downtown

Kim Granholm said I just left this on here. We had a long discussion about it and I don't want the conversation to go by the wayside. It has kind of turned more into the vision. I did e-mail out the link.

Dan Hites said what is the status of the conversation of Benjie being involved?

Jimi Allen said he will do the interviews. We're scheduling interviews. We basically get all the interviews in and then we will write it up. We are trying to get a scheduled meeting.

Kim Granholm said he wants to do it on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, at 8:00 a.m. at City Hall on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. He basically just wants to get us all in a room together and have an open conversation and ask some questions and just get our feedback on downtown.

Jimi Allen said what we want to do is talk to everybody and then put it basically into a document. Everyone will look at the document and agree or disagree and then there will be another discussion and then try to get it nailed down in black and white and not in an unusable document. The key is that it is usable, that it is short, concise and to the point.

Kim Granholm said hopefully this will give us some direction because I think right now in some of our decision making we spin our wheels on that and it could be cut and dry.

Karen Kramford said how did we go through the process of selecting the company that we chose to talk about transparency to our members? How did we go through the process of selecting the company?

Kim Granholm said I don't think there was real process involved. I think the conversation started that it was someone that was already familiar with our organization. He knew some of our background already and at this point he is far enough removed from being on the Board and having a business downtown, but still familiar with us, so we were comfortable with that. We didn't request bids.

Karen Granholm said is there a reason we chose not to open it up to the public.

Jimi Allen said efficiency.

Dan Hites said is there payment involved?

Jimi Allen said yes, we are billing on it.

Karen Kramford said what is the estimate on it?

Jimi Allen said I don't have an estimate. I know we are 10 hours into it, so roughly \$1,000 is where we are at.

Karen Kramford said my question is we have an open-ended contract. We don't have a budget for this item and we did not put it out to the public. I just wanted to go on record so that if there is ever a question. Do we have a not to exceed? Do we have an estimate for what the cost would be?

Kim Granholm said I think we have a rough idea. There was some rough discussion of how much it would be and that the decision was that we have enough in the budget right now to proceed with it. I'm just trusting him not to overbill us and to give us exactly what we want. There are some decisions I think we just make without consulting everyone.

Doug Cheatham said I think it is a resource that we're familiar with and I don't think it is prohibitively expensive. I'm comfortable not putting it out to bid. There is no requirement.

Further discussion followed on the cost and the process that we will be going through.

John Nachtrieb said in talking about this project, could we say this project will not exceed \$5,000 and if it gets to that point there will be a regrouping and a conversation about why is it going to be more, what are we going to gain and do we want to go forward at that point? Is that realistic?

Jimi Allen said I think that is absolutely realistic.

John Nachtrieb said I motion we say this project will not exceed \$5,000 and if it does we regroup and discuss. Terry Michels seconded the motion.

Karen Kramford said would that not to exceed also include clear steps and identification of what we are going to do. Once again, we are doing another project that is kind of murky as compared to saying these are our expectations coming out.

John Nachtrieb said I would be comfortable with something less than bullet points, but something more than a cloud of concept. So why not Jimi you produce a statement, a paragraph that says this is why we are going this way and this is why it is different than what others have done and it is a learning process so we are not quite sure where we are going, but we know that we don't want to stay where we are, so something along those lines. Can you do that?

Jimi Allen said I'll do that. I'll write it up for you.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **New Business**

a. Budget 2015

Doug Cheatham said this is what we came up with after 2 meetings of the budget committee. Most of what we came up with on the first pass stayed. We did do some shifting at the second meeting. I guess the most sensitive item was the elimination of the contribution to Hesus House, which we discussed pretty thoroughly at the committee meeting. Unless we make any change here, I think the plan is that this is what would go to the full board. We received word that we're going to get \$25,000 less from the city, so that was \$25,000 that we needed to make up and this year we had the \$30,000 that we allocated to First Friday's, which really made it a deficit budget, so we had \$55,000 to make up.

Dan Hites made a motion to accept the 2016 budget.

Discussion followed on the landscaping in downtown and why Aurora Downtown is spending the money they do on landscaping, etc. Discussion also followed on the vision and how that will affect the budget in 2016 and 2017.

Terry Michels said what I'm envisioning is it is not a vision by the end of the year. It is what we see the purpose of this group is and developing a vision from that and the way it is structured currently and how we move forward is the focus of the conversation. To me, from deciding that and what this group looks like, what the city's involvement is, what this group's involvement is and these related expenditures are going to drive where this money gets allocated next year.

Doug Cheatham said the budget flows from all of that and not the other way around. I hope when we have these discussions that we don't even have a copy of the budget with us. If necessary, I would be comfortable with sometime in the second quarter next year we do a revised budget if it makes sense at the time. Don't let the budget hold us back.

Further discussion followed on some of the budget items.

John Nachtrieb seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. First Friday Liquor Update

Kim Granholm said there was some conversation of the legality of First Friday's and the alcohol that is being served at certain venues and the bottom line is someone complained to the city about that, about the legality of it, not that there has been any problem or anything like that, so we had to step in and have a conversation with the venues and just explain to them that by State laws this is completely illegal, but there is nothing that they can do about it at this time because we don't really have a law that says you can do it or that you can't. Obviously, you are serving alcohol to the public, so by law that is incorrect, so we went over some tasting options, which are laid out on the State's website that you can't serve over a certain amount and you can't overserve someone. We've contacted the police. They've never had a problem. They actually have been

controlling the streets for the last 2 months when this complaint first came out and they said there is the exact opposite. People are walking around with coffee and bottles of water and it is very nice. The city is very happy with the event and they want to help us continue it. We just made sure to have that conversation with the venues.

c. CMAP Downtown Plan

Kim Granholm said Jimi do you mind maybe giving your opinion on the meeting itself and giving a little background on it?

Jimi Allen said I'm not analytical so I tend to get an impression about how something feels and there was a strong feeling at the CMAP meeting that it was preservation, very strong preservation, very strong historical perspective. There was an art level interest. There is just not a lot of room, there is like a vacuum where you couldn't dialog about maybe a plan, an economic plan. CMAP was brought in. They got a grant. They will carry the development of this plan. They are going to facilitate the investigation, documentation, and the city planning methodology of how this vision book or plan will be developed. I talked to Stephane Phifer after the meeting to get clarity because I don't understand this process, but it will be something that will stay with the city. It doesn't stay with an administration. It is a vision for Aurora's development.

John Nachtrieb said just by way of a background, CMAP is the Chicago Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, so it is governmental and the byline is a comprehensive regional planning agency for metropolitan Chicago.

Dan Hites said what it does is it helps set the budgets of the federal government. I think it is incumbent upon Aurora Downtown to take a higher position in these meetings and push it.

Kim Granholm said I just wanted to share with everyone that we at least have 2 seats at the table. I think the good thing about this is, at least from my perspective at this point, they are trying to engage the community so they get as much feedback from the community as they can versus just Aurora Downtown or the city. I think it is great to have that perspective of visitors that visit downtown, not just our perspective being property owners and business owners and just community members. I think it is important to have the perspective when you are making some of the decisions.

Karen Kramford said well they are claiming there are 3 phases. Did they specify which phase they are in? Is this the first phase?

Kim Granholm said the first step or phase was getting the public engagement, doing the social media and meeting the people. There is going to be some sort of a community forum.

Further discussion followed on the CMAP plan and the Arts and Entertainment proposal for Aurora Downtown.

Dan Hites said well that's one of the concerns about CMAP and one of the reasons I revised all of the Arts and Entertainment is because of the new Mayor coming in, CMAP and a probably

change in the City Council, so at this point this is a prime opportunity to feed ideas and direction for downtown. We need to jump on a lot of things quick.

Karen Kramford said we've pushed a lot of responsibility onto the committees. As the committees have made their decisions as to where they want to focus based on the Strategic Plan, Business Attraction and Retention has a tremendous burden when you look at it. So how much effort are they going to put into the grant programs? Part of it is our budget drives that as well, but we are reinforcing it through these conversations and allowing the budget to go in that direction. That's why I think it is a 2017, but I think your project is worthy.

Kim Granholm said let's put it under New Business for the next meeting.

Dan Hites said precisely what?

Kim Granholm said that we can discuss the Arts and Entertainment. Potentially have Jimi put a proposal together and maybe we can have a conversation beforehand of budget and how long it might take and I can look at the documents as well and send it in one PDF file to people if they want to take a look at it before the next meeting because that seems larger than what we have time for right now.

Further discussion followed on the procedure of putting a vision together without having a written agreement and having a budget plan for it.

### **Consultant Report**

None.

### **Committee Updates**

None.

### **Announcements**

### **Adjourn**

Dan Hites made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Jimi Allen. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 a.m.