

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING**

Minutes

December 3, 2015

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

Members Present: Jane Abe (Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce), Jimi Allen (at large), Lulu Blacksmith (WCC), Rory Bolen (at large), Cort Carlson (AAVCB), John Galles (at large), Keith Gerald (at large), Kim Granholm (at large), Fred Harrison (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Kimber Howard (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Melissa Mercado (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), John Nachtrieb (at large), Helen Nowak (at large), Jorge Pacheco (at large), Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

Members Absent (Excused): Doug Cheatham (Old Second National Bank)

Members Absent (Unexcused): Harish Ananthapadmanabhan (at large), Katie Arko (ACCA), Clara Diaz (at large), Megan Paul (at large), Daisy Porter-Reynolds (Library)

Others Present: Bill Wiet (COA), Joe Hopp (COA), Ken Schroth (COA), Rick Guzman (COA), Alex Voigt (COA), Hector Ochoa (Aurora Hispanic Advisory Board), Cadence Peterson (Invest Aurora), Judy Dawson (Invest Aurora), Marissa Amoni (Aurora Downtown), Michael Cobb (Hesed House), Vernon LaVia, Michael Rayford (Heartland Financial), Amy Petit, Dorothy Bentel, Spiro Korpas, Gina Salamone (new at large member), Dan Emerson (new at large member), Chris Rud (Bureau Gravity)

Call to Order and Introductions – Kim Granholm

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

Approval of Minutes – 11/19/2015

John Nachtrieb made a motion to approve the November 19, 2015 minutes. Terry Michels seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Kim Granholm said Doug is not here this morning, so we will have to table the Treasurer's report until January.

Old Business

12/03/2015

None.

New Business

a. New Board Members – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said let me introduce Gina Salamone from Law Elder Law and Dan Emerson from the Gillerson's Grubberty. These are our 2 new board members, so welcome.

John Galles said the results for the 4 openings for the Aurora Downtown Board is as follows: Dan Emerson, Kim Granholm, Kimber Howard, and Gina Salamone. These are the 4 member voted in.

John Galles said I would like a motion to retain the following officers: Kim Granholm as Chair, Terry Michels as Vice Chair, and Doug Cheatham as Treasurer. Dan Hites seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Kim Granholm said I look forward to working with you all in 2016. I think that we have a lot to accomplish and I think that we have a very energetic Board and we are looking to do some changes for 2016 on the way things are run a little bit and I'm excited to announce some things maybe come January.

b. Vision for 2016 – Kim Granholm

Kim Granholm said I had asked Chris Rud to be here. I was going to do a short PowerPoint presentation on just some conversations that were started at the last Committee meetings and the Executive Committee meeting and the Board meeting, but I am not quite prepared to make that presentation yet this morning, so I am going to table that until January. There has been a lot of discussion on the Executive level and the regular Board level and actually just from the community themselves that they want to see some different things from our Board of Directors and what our focus is. It has been a little challenging when we make financial decisions because we are not sure what our role is and where we are going and what our vision is, so we are working really hard on that to have something for the committees to really strive for next year and have kind of a checklist that the Board is approving and making sure things are getting done downtown and that nothing is slipping through the cracks. I did pass out a small little packet. It is the committee signup form for next year. I encourage you all to be at least active on one committee. Don't over commit yourself. I really want you to really excel at one thing and help with your passion on one particular thing. If you want to be more involved and you have the time, I'm certainly not going to discourage that, but we feel like it really helps when you have one focus and you are really checking your to do list rather than being overly involved and not getting anything done. The second thing that is in there is basically what is Aurora Downtown? Right now it is very vague and this is one of the things that we are working on is to try to focus a vision when we are making these decisions. I'm just going to read the first paragraph. I just want everyone to understand how Aurora Downtown was kind of brought together, what we are and where we get this budget from. "Aurora Downtown is the oversight corporation for SSA,

Special Service Area, Number 1. The SSA was established with specific goals; create, fund and staff a downtown management and development organization; assist business and property owners to enhance and maintain a safe, secure, clean and hospitable business environment; attract anchors and other businesses; plan, coordinate and monitor capital improvements for projects downtown; identify and work with business and property owners to encourage growth and improvement; design and implement a unified marketing plan and create programs to facilitate the funding of projects.” That’s quite a lot. So we are trying to just have a little bit more focus for 2016 and I encourage you all to send us e-mails and reach out to us and we can really figure out what we’re going to do for next year. Go ahead and sign up on the committee form. We would like to start these committees in January.

Consultant Report – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said we’ve had a good year. We’ve accomplished a great deal. The Business Attraction and Retention Committee actually got 5 businesses going this year. That’s pretty good. They are all still operating. That’s a real accomplishment on our part. We’re going to have some different Chairmen next year in different positions. Karen Kramford is going to be taking over the BAR Committee. I’d like to make the plea again that if you do sign up for a committee, and I expect everyone to sign up for a committee, that you show up. We’ve been to a number of committees where we are shorthanded. We’ve got a quarter of a million dollars that we spend every year and we’d like your input on how it is spent and who gets what and how things go. The Holiday Decorations Committee needs help. Let’s keep going. We’ve done well this year and we are going to do better next year.

Committee Updates

Kim Granholm said I’m going to have Dan and Gina give a quick bio just so we are a little bit familiar with where they came from, why they are here and how they plan on participating in Aurora Downtown.

I’m Gina Salamone. I’m an attorney. I practice at Law Elder Law. I work with a lot of estate planning, but I also work with people that are moving into nursing homes or trying to get care at home, so I do a lot of administrative hearings to get people benefits and work with the VA a little bit. I’m just really interested in Aurora and I live in the Riddle Highlands and like to participate in everything down in here. Just interested in getting involved and improving the city because I’ve lived here for about 7 years. I’ve seen great improvement over the time I’ve been here, so I’m interested in more.

I’m Dan Emerson. We opened Gillerson’s Grubbery 2 months ago. We’ve been working on it since June. I grew up in Genoa and moved to North Aurora with my wife about 8 years ago. I bought a house. I’ve worked in restaurants since I was 14 years old. I met a buddy of mine about 7 years ago and we talked about opening a restaurant for the last 5 years. He worked with Chef Amoury prior to us opening and that’s how we found out about the space and we decided to

open Gillerson's and it has been going great ever since. Hopefully we will help out downtown Aurora.

John Nachtrieb said for the BAR Committee there is not a whole lot to say other than what Bob Reuland already told you. We've spent our entire budget for this year, which is a success. I want to talk a little about the kind of funding that we do because it is important to understand that not all, but many of the businesses come to us for retention assistance or rent assistance because they can't go elsewhere. They can't go to a bank or it is very difficult or cumbersome to go to a bank. The vision of the committee is to provide funding to as worthy an applicant as we possibly can, but knowing full well that we're taking a risk. It is our job to try to help support a new business or get a business to move to Aurora or to help a business to do marketing it couldn't otherwise afford to do. We know there is a bit of a risk involved in that, so we expect there to be a failure rate. So far we've dodged the bullet. It is not because we are brilliant, but because we happen to be very fortunate in attracting little businesses that are really intentional and they are doing good planning. It's been a good year and we've got some businesses in the pipeline for next year, so I think we are going to continue to grow.

Karen Kramford said for the Float Committee we had our final event this year with Winter Lights. It was successful. We came in well within budget. Next year I'm hoping to do both events again, Independence Day as well as Winter Lights.

Melissa Mercado said for Holiday Lights complaints are rolling in. We're popping circuits left and right from what I understand. Kim and I will be meeting either this week or next week to troubleshoot that and make plans for the coming year on whether they will continue.

Joe Hopp said our electricians have worked this week on trying to get most of them up and running. I did call before I came here. I was a little surprised to hear that our lead electrician was saying now they all working, but I wasn't downtown last night. He is saying that every other one is LED. Half of them are incandescent. Incandescent is going to be a lot brighter than a LED. I was down here Saturday and there were a lot of them that were out. We kind of put a press on to get most of them up and working.

Kim Granholm said within the next month we will be talking about next month's Christmas decorations.

Bill Wiet said we need to thank Helen for all her hard work on getting the Christmas Tree and the Star on top of the Leland lit.

Helen Nowak said for the Legislative Committee this year I will be chairing the committee. I had my first official meeting last month. We're kind of taking the Legislative Committee in a new direction in the sense that what we're trying to do is build a bridge and be a liaison between Aurora Downtown, the business owners and the legislative branch of our city government so that we can be pre-emptive with a lot of things instead of reactive with a lot of things that are going on and things that will be coming up and working with the Aldermen. Lulu and I also would like to do something for a point of entry for people with businesses. If anyone would like to be on the committee, I would appreciate some fresh blood.

Rory Bolen said for the Marketing Committee we are putting together the marketing calendar for the next year of projects. We just had a Hump Day thing, which Keith may talk about later. Gillerson's is the next recipient of our direct mail piece that is going out.

Marissa Amoni said First Fridays is tomorrow. We have 17 venues. We hope you all come out. We are offering free transportation from 7:00 until 10:00 p.m. We also have SciTech unveiling their World of Wow. The map is up online and on the website. We also have DAM tonight at the Yetee. That is great opportunity to meet people who are involved in the arts downtown. The Yetee is at 110 Cross Street across from Jimmy Johns behind the library.

Fred Harrison said for the Parking Committee, the objective is to work with the city to identify some of the current parking problems and bottlenecks. We pretty much look for proposals, and suggestions for improvement of the overall parking. We meet the 3rd Thursday of the month from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Chamber building. At our last meeting we had come up with a survey to try to identify some of the problems. The survey was sent out to our parking committee team and we did get some feedback. Once we refine that data, then we will send the survey out to the overall Board and others. Once we get feedback from the survey, we'll come up with further proposals to where we could possibly role that into a plan for the city.

Keith Gerald said Hump Day was started last year in July of 2014. The idea behind this was to just get together. We went around to the different restaurants. I've done it at every restaurant in downtown. This will be the 8th one since we started and it is really just an after work get together networking and just friends of the community in Aurora and it is to bring people into downtown Aurora and let them see the restaurants in downtown. It is Wednesday, December 16th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

City Updates

Gina Moga said I just want to thank Aurora Downtown again for their sponsorship and all their help with Winter Lights. We had a very good crowd. We need to change things because of the amount of people that we are getting. It is going to be very different next year, the same and yet different, just kind of enhanced. I'm going to be looking for a not-for-profit group to partner with because we need a lot of extra hands. The window decorating contest went very well. We had 12 entries. AKA Dance won this year. They also performed out on the street and they also has some of their girls in the parade. We are going to enhance the parade a little bit next year and make it just a little bit longer. I just want to thank you again. It was really amazing. Also, thank you to Cadence and to Justin from Neighborhood Redevelopment. The pop-ups were a great addition. It really helped that they handled that portion of the event. Working together with that was really great. Santa at Riverfront Playhouse was also amazing.

Bill Wiet said I just have a couple of things. Next Tuesday the IGA between the city, library and Support Techs will be approved by city council, so we will get 100 tech jobs in the old library. From what I hear and understand, a number of the employees can't wait to get over to this to be actually part of the downtown scene. Right now they are in a business park at Meridian Business

Park, so this will be very exciting to them to be downtown. Another thing going on right now, I know that Rick Guzman from the Mayor's office has been more of a lead on this than myself, but the old St. Charles Hospital up the hill they are still poised to convert the old hospital into senior living and get it done within a year from now so they can get their occupancy permits in and they can take advantage of all the tax credits that are offered.

Ken Schroth said I just wanted to say thank you for your patience. The millions of dollars worth of storm sewer separation that we came through with and did ahead of these two-way conversions, that was hard enough, but now we are in the home stretch. We have actually 18 traffic lights in the next couple of weeks to convert to two-way traffic. That's a lot harder than it sounds. We have to schedule IDOT to be out here with the electricians. They are going to go from light to light converting them to two-way operation. Then they have to sit there and test it for hours and hours and make sure it is safe and then go up and down each corridor. You are going to see lights in two-way operation, but you are still going to see the barricades there to keep you from going in two-way operation. If all goes according to plan with all these agencies involved, the week of Christmas we should be converting New York and Galena. As far as big projects next year, the Galena bridge deck will be replaced on the east side of Stolp Island. We are going to be replacing that deck along with the sidewalk. Then also a storm sewer project that will get done ahead of that as usual.

Announcements

Jane Abe said our annual holiday celebration unfortunately cannot be at the Paramount this year just because the dates that they are available we're not available. It is at Belle Salle, so it will be outside of downtown Aurora. It is next Wednesday, December 9th from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and it is \$25.00 a person.

I'm Spiro Korpas. I own 6 properties in the downtown, along with other properties outside of downtown. I live in Aurora all my American life. I have enormous interest in the downtown. I always wanted to see things happening. For the first time, I have a feeling that the momentum has started. I committed myself to buying 2 buildings and put them into vital properties.

Rick Guzman said Michael Cobb, before he left, wanted me to invite you all to O'Malley's for their 8th annual holiday fundraiser. It is kind of an all-day thing, but then at night I think it is from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. there is a little more activity and things that all benefit Hesed House. O'Malley's does this every year on their own. With the winter coming up, it an important time to be thinking about those residents and so we can show our support for them. It is on December 12th. Tickets for dinner are \$35.00, but there is stuff going on throughout the day, so you can go in and support any time. There is a special prime rib dinner at 6:00 p.m. and then raffles.

Terry Michels said last January I introduced Rafael Verde, who was our General Manager. He is moving. They are transferring him to our Toledo property. For 15 months we have been working with the state on getting an approval that we can have what's called shared services between our Joliet property and Aurora. They have given us the approval for a General Manager that will oversee both properties, so we are getting a gentleman by the name of Bill Hales, who

comes to us from our Pennsylvania property and he will actually be stationed out of our Joliet property, but he will be responsible for both Aurora and Joliet.

Kim Granholm said I am participating tomorrow in Frist Fridays. I brought these invitations for you all if you didn't get one in the mail, but you are more than welcome to stop by. It starts at 5:00 p.m. We usually end up going until about 10:00 p.m. or maybe a little after. I've got some calendars too for 2016.

Adjourn

Terry Michels made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Melissa Mercado. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.