

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee June 18, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Tanya Bell, Denise Currie, Julio Fesser, Lori Fritts, , David Jones, Brenda Kyle, , Sharon Johnson, Sondra Reis, Brian Thoenke, Christine Wiegert, David Youmans, Jim Roth, Jeannine Kessler, Guy Mingo, Tom Olesak, Kay Baker, Kathy Bjerke, Khue Yang,

Members Absent: Ken Hinz, Harry Melander, Nell McClung, Chang Thao, Peter Latuff

Others Present: Robin Caufman, Karri Plowman, Va-Meng Thoj, Shoua Lee, Tigi Dekker, Manny Gonzalez, Joyce Wisdom, Carl Kuhul, Laura Beean, Craig O'Brien, Eve Vang

1. Welcome

Brief welcome by Lori Fritts, Co-Chair BAC

2. Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves and were asked to tell the location of their business or property they owned or operated. Modification of the Agenda out of respect for the speaker's time: Lake Street Business Mitigation and Next Steps moved forward in the Agenda.

3. Lake Street Business Mitigation

Joyce Wisdom, Director of Lake Street Council, Tigi Dekker owner of Universal Hair Salon on Lake Street, Manny Gonzalez owner of Manny's Torte with two locations on Lake Street discussed their experiences good and bad with the construction along Lake Street and the after construction experience.

Three themes emerged from the discussion:

1. The importance of communications both informally and formally. Manny and Joyce spoke at length about being prepared during utility movement and shut off and then if there was a change to the schedule going out in person to tell other business owners. In several instances because of language barriers, one or two key individuals would be notified and then information would be delivered by word of mouth. Formal communications, listening sessions, and a one-stop area to let people know about shut downs, lane closures, and other constructions related information was very helpful.
2. Collaborative marketing and collaborative efforts on the part of the businesses themselves greatly assisted the mitigation of the construction. Formal things like the Metro Transit 21 Hop and Shop were mentioned by Joyce as a way of bring to light the construction impact of the business and keeping people aware that business was still open. Shop locally signs also helped in this regard. Informal things like shared parking, utilization of business councils and non-profit assistance also helped the businesses get to know each other and consequently help each other through the construction. Tiki spoke about sharing off-street parking with a business that didn't need as many spaces during Tiki peak time since she had lost all of her on-street parking.
3. Most of the businesses who went through construction thrived once the project was completed in their specific area. A few businesses did go out of business but Joyce felt that those were one's that were going out of business before the construction began. It is noteworthy, that many of the emerging market businesses fared better than those who

have a long history on Lake Street. It was felt that many of the community of color had more up-to-date business plans and had received help from non-profits to begin their businesses. Where as those that might be multi- generational on Lake Street had old business plans or was not as flexible with the concept of change. In addition, the City of Minneapolis and the CDC's did provide some gap-financing and low interest loans to businesses that needed them. Once again it was those businesses who were prepared who faired the best during the process.

4. Next Steps and Next Meetings

Currently, the City of Saint Paul, the Metropolitan Council, and Partnership staff are working on business and construction mitigation plans. It is hope that by next month or the month after a draft will be prepared to bring forth to the BAC. After that is accepted with changes, the BAC will hold a series of listening session along the corridor specifically for the business community to hear about opportunities to assist them through the construction period. We will keep the BAC informed as this develops.

5. Met Council Updates

Robin Caufman presented an update of the Central Corridor Management Committee meeting and the recent Metropolitan Council meeting. Four contracts have been signed or are in the process of being signed including: HDR as the Final Environmental Impact Statement consultant, URS updating the 1991 study of the Washington Ave. Bridge, Pier Engineering on contaminated properties work, and DMJM Harris as lead Environmental Engineer.

Ms. Caufman was asked about the use of local sub-contractors and informed the committee that much of this work must follow Federal Guidelines and contractors or sub-contractors must qualify based on those guidelines. However, many of the Contractors had local firms listed as sub-contractors on the project.

In addition, Ms. Caufman informed the Committee that the Project Management Office had been selected and Central Corridor Staff would be moving into their new location in October at the Griggs Midway Building located on University and Fairview Avenues in Saint Paul.

Finally, Ms. Caufmann informed the Committee that four Central Corridor Outreach Coordinators had been hired to work with business and community members along the line. They are Nkongo Cigolo formerly outreach coordinator for the Rural Integrated Development Program of Africa based until recently in Golden Valley, Jessica Hill a support services staffer for the National Institute of Health Policy, Shoua Lee formerly project manager/loan specialist for the city of St. Paul's Department of Planning and Economic Development, and Rita Rodriguez formally the executive director for the Association of Women Contractors and a previous business owner on University Avenue. The Outreach Coordinators will start June 25th, 2007.

6. Next Meeting: Monday, July 16, 2007, 4:30-6:30 pm

7. Adjourn

Prepared by Karri Plowman, Director of the Central Corridor Partnership