



METRO Blue Line Extension Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

January 10, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting Southwest Project Office/Microsoft Teams

Virtual attendees in italics

BAC Members: Ian Alexander, Terry Austin, John Barobs, K.B. Brown, Dan Doerrer, John Hacker, Candace Oathout, Donna Sanders, Jamar Smith, Jamez Staples, Sabrina Williams, Dr. Tara Watson, Jackson George

Agency Staff and Guests: Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Cathy Gold, Nick Landwer, Trevor Roy, Koehl Simmons, Dan Soler, PaNhue Vue, Annie Xiong, Kjerstin Yager, Jer Yang, Colin Cox, Lex Brand

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order and Welcome (Nkongo Cigolo)

Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 8:04 AM.

2. Introductions (Nkongo Cigolo)

Nkongo introduced himself to the group and provided an opportunity for BAC Members and agency staff and guests to introduce themselves.

3. Review Membership and BAC Charter (Nkongo Cigolo)

Nkongo explained the BAC charter, he explained the City of Golden Valley will not be appointing a member to the BAC. Nkongo asked if the group wanted to remove the Robbinsdale Chamber of Commerce, Ian Alexander disagreed, explaining the committee should leave the position open in order to “extend an olive branch”.

Nkongo asked if anyone was interested in being a co-chair, Dr. Tara Watson nominated Ian Alexander, Ian nominated Dr. Watson, Nkongo asked Terry Austin if he was interested in being a co-chair he said he’d be interested in co-chair and not chair. K.B. Brown mentioned that he was interested in being co-chair as well. Chris Beckwith, Metropolitan Council, explained the role of summarizing the BAC at the CMC is extremely important. Ian stated it is important that someone from North is represented as co-chair. Nkongo agreed and stated that it is important that all four cities along the corridor are represented and noted the four BAC members who had showed interest in becoming a co-chair up to that point were from Minneapolis. Chris asked everyone who demonstrated interest to state why they are interested:

- Dr. Tara Watson: Dr. Watson stated that as a business owner on the corridor, she is interested in being a co-chair because she feels that the business community along the corridor has not been able to have a proper voice throughout the project. She stated that businesses need to be properly engaged in terms of benefits and impacts and that she thinks businesses need to be given a voice.
- Ian Alexander: Ian stated that he would like to withdraw and support Tara.



- Dan Doerrer: Dan stated he is the pastor of Elim Lutheran church and has been privy to some of the tension the project has brought to his community.
- KB Brown: KB explained that being underground in North Minneapolis, he is able to get a lot of perspectives that the project team is unable to get through surveys.
- Terry Austin: Terry stated that he thinks that someone needs to be there to advocate for the businesses in the community.
- Donna Sanders: Donna stated that she is the chair of the West Broadway Business Coalition. She explained that as chair, she knows there are businesses on West Broadway that were unaware that their buildings may be impacted or removed as part of the project. She stated that the majority of the businesses want the alignment on 21st [Avenue] and do not want parking removed. Donna expressed a desire to provide these businesses with reassurance that their main street will not be destroyed.

Nkongo: Is there consensus to have Pastor Dan represent the three cities other than Minneapolis? The committee agreed. Chris stated that the committee will now vote, Kjrsten Yager, Metropolitan Council, passed out ballots for each BAC member to write a name on in order to vote and instructed virtual members to email their responses to Pa Nhue Vue, Metropolitan Council. After giving some time for the members to vote, Pa Nhue tabulated these votes and Dr. Watson received the most votes.

Discussion

- The things you brought up, Dr. Watson, are the things we want this committee to focus on. I heard that the businesses feel that they are not being properly engaged. There are two possible reasons for that 1) we may not be reaching out properly as a project or 2) maybe we are reaching out, but they feel they have not been heard. If it is reason 1, please let us know how to be engaged correctly, if it is reason 2, please help us engage properly. Dr. Watson said she thinks what most of the problems are is that there are unknowns that nobody can answer, is my business going to be relocated? how much of my property is going to be removed? Is my parking going to be taken? K.B. clarified that he was not saying the businesses are not being heard, he's saying it is impossible to reach out to everyone and we need to think of strategies to reach out to as my people as we can. Dan Solar, Hennepin County, agreed saying that that is a great point.

4. Project Update

- Chris gave an update on the environmental phase of the project.
- Nkongo gave an update on the latest engagement efforts.
- Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, gave an update on the latest project engineering scope.
- Cathy gave an update on the anti-displacement work and cultivate arts.

5. Next Meeting: February 7, 2023

While the group ran out of time to complete discussion questions, Nkongo stated these questions will be sent out as part of a survey after the meeting. Nkongo stated the next meeting of the BAC will be February 7th.

6. BAC Mentimeter Responses to discussion questions and Survey Responses:



What would the community/organization you represent think about the schedule and decision process presented above?

- *Some reservations, but open to it.*
- *The schedule and decision process as presented looks reasonable.*
- *The timeline is tight, but it can be done. Solid representation from all communities is vital.*
- *I think it would be supportive, our community has not been affected by changes since the project started*
- *It a good work plan, I would allow flexibility for any unseen changes.*

Is there any information you need to help answer questions you receive about the project?

- No responses

What other outreach/engagement tips would you suggest for 2023?

- No responses

7. Adjourn

Nkongo adjourned the meeting at 9:34 AM.