



Alliance for Vibrancy

February 18, 2015

11:00am - 12:30pm

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

Agenda

1. Call to order (11:00) Moeller
2. Approval of Minutes: 1/21/14 (11:02) Moeller
3. Alliance Updates (11:05)
 - Investment
 - Livability
4. Valent-ICE Recap (11:10) Cech
5. Fiscal Year Budget Introduction (11:20) Cech
6. GR Forward Update (11:45) Kelly
7. Special Events Advisory Council Update (12:00) Larson
8. Meeting Evaluation Survey (12:20)
9. Next Meeting – March 18 (12:22)
10. Public Comment (12:25)
11. Adjournment (12:30)



Alliance for Vibrancy

January 21, 2014

1. Call to Order- Moeller called the meeting to order at 11:03 am.
2. Members Present: Kate Betts, Mimi Fritz, Christian Gaines, Janet Korn, Brandy Moeller, Cicely Moore, Nick Nortier, Evette Pittman, Joanne Roehm, Scott Stenstrom, Eddie Tadlock

Members Absent: Chad LeRoux, Dennis Moosbrugger, Teresa Thome, Aaron Turner

Others Present: Mandy Cech, Kim Van Driel, Mary Sierawski, Liz Hertl
3. Approval of December Minutes-
Motion: Mimi Fritz supported by Scott Stenstrom, moved approval of the December 15, 2014 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Alliance Updates-
Cech gave a brief update about the Alliance for Livability and Investment. Cech also gave an update on the GR Forward effort. Gaines said the GR Forward speaker series held last week was very interesting and the goals seemed right on target. Cech said next month Kelly can present the latest information about GR Forward to the Alliance for Vibrancy. Gaines commended DGRI about how inclusive they have been in all of their efforts for GR Forward.

5. DGRI updates-

This item was skipped due to time constraints.

6. Dr. Manual Pastor Community Leadership Video

Knowing Together Growing Together, a video from September 24, 2014 was viewed.

7. Working Group Exercise-

VanDriel said she and Cech will email updates to each of the working groups.

8. Meeting Evaluation Survey-

Moeller asked everyone to continue to fill out the post meeting evaluation surveys.

9. Next Meeting –February 18, 2015

10. Public Comment-

None

11. Adjournment-

Moeller adjourned the meeting at 12:19pm.

Minutes taken by:
Mary Sierawski
HR & Office Manager
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc



Alliance for Vibrancy – February 18, 2015

Investment & Livability Updates

Alliance for Investment Updates

The Alliance for Investment held their last meeting on February 10, 2015. The following topics were addressed:

- James Botts was elected Vice-Chair
- The Alliance separated into four groups, each devoted to discussing one of the DDA incentive programs. The purpose of the discussion was to identify potential improvements to the program guidelines and application process. The recommendations are being researched by staff to determine the opportunity for change, and will be brought back to the Alliance for consideration in March. Below are highlights of some of the recommendations:
 - **Areaway Fill:** Increase funds available to make program more appealing; Market program to buildings with existing areaways; Prioritize installation of street trees during areaway improvements.
 - **Building Reuse:** Consider changing 1950 cut-off date to allow more properties to take advantage of the program; Update LEED threshold so it is current with established criteria; Simplify and clarify application.
 - **Development Support:** Require a percent of new occupants form outside the DDA for eligibility; Delete the \$10,000 per job reimbursement cap; Create a simple application and establish a fee to administer program.
 - **Streetscape Enhancement:** Prioritize growth of the tree canopy as part of guidelines; Increase available funding;
 - **General Comments:** Program fees should allow for full cost-recovery of administration fees; Explore opportunities for combining resources of the individual programs into one “Downtown Grant” fund.
- A general update on GR Forward activities and upcoming events, including:
 - Ongoing neighborhood meeting schedule - SWAN (2/18); Roosevelt (2/19); West Grand (2/23); Creston (2/25); Black Hills (2/26); Heritage Hill (3/10); Belknap (3/11)
 - GR Forward Thinking Speaker Series – Peter Kageyama (2/12); Dan Biederman (3/12)
 - River and Downtown Steering Committee Meeting – 2/19
 - Focus Group Meetings (River Art, University Students, Diversity, Social Services, Merchants): Week of 2/16
 - Public Forum #2 – 3/19

Additional project updates:

- Development of Veteran's Park construction documents underway. Anticipated completion is May 2015.
- Collaboration with KCAD on development of a parklet for DGRI is ongoing. Anticipated installation May 2015.
- Exploring opportunities for Downtown bridge lighting and pedestrian enhancements in partnership with the City. The timeline for this project is unknown at this point.

Alliance for Livability Updates

The Alliance for Livability held their last meeting on January 26, 2015. The following items were on the agenda:

- GRForward Update:
 - Tim Kelly provided a recap of the latest GRForward information including the draft Vision Statement and Goals, and a preview of the next phase of the effort (Strategies). A discussion followed with the full Alliance membership to identify areas of opportunity, as well as any critical components that might be missing. Some of the feedback included:
 - A focus on ensuring that the drive for critical mass via residential density takes into account and accommodates current residents of the Downtown neighborhood, with an emphasis on the under-housed population
 - Prioritization of activities and strategies in the next phase of GRForward that meaningfully forward DGRI's goals related to diversity and inclusion
 - This included a desire to see more emphasis on assets (both physical and those related to "human capital") that are "uniquely Grand Rapids", as well as strategies to maximize existing cultural amenities and activities
 - Deliberate focus on the importance of connectivity and access for near neighborhoods
- Staff updates on AFL working group projects:
 - Streetscape Beautification: with the help and support of working group members, staff is moving forward with Viridis Design Group on a streetscape enhancement project focused on Ottawa Avenue and the Commerce alley between Weston and Oakes
 - Exit Space Mural Project: DGRI staff continues to work with the UICA to implement public art projects on selected locations in the Downtown neighborhood (Heartside Health Center at Wealthy and Division, Bethlehem Church, Cherry/Commerce parking ramp, MDOT retaining wall on N. Division); UICA has activated a call to artists: <http://www.uica.org/apply-for-a-show>
 - Bike Friendly Improvements: DGRI staff is securing bike repair stations and working with City staff on early spring installation at 5 Downtown locations
 - Urban recreational Trailhead: staff is moving forward on concept design for the first phase of the trailhead at Ah-Nab-Awen park
 - Downtown Census project: a job description has been posted for a Downtown Demographic Researcher to begin the first phase of the Downtown Census project
- New Alliance membership:
 - Matt Koning of Broadmoor Motor Group and Johannah Jelks of Generation X&Y for Michigan and SheRides both attended the meeting as prospective new Alliance members
- Budget discussion:
 - Staff led a planning discussion for the AFL Fiscal Year '16 budget prioritization process, with members vocalizing priorities around pending GRForward recommendations related to

Livability. Additionally, members expressed a desire for better definition related to staff-driven versus member-driven projects

- Members also highlighted the need to bridge the gap between the 1st and 2nd neighborhood concept (Downtown as the 2nd neighborhood for most GR residents), specifically, how can the AFL balance its efforts to maximize investments that create value for Downtown residents and visitors of all types?

Alliance for Vibrancy Meeting Evaluation

Date: _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The purpose of the meeting was clear.	5	4	3	2	1
2. The purpose was accomplished.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The meeting was worthwhile.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I felt comfortable expressing my ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
5. There was good team collaboration.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I enjoyed the meeting	5	4	3	2	1
7. Comments, future topics, etc.:					
