



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

DGRI Citizen Alliance Meeting
March 21, 2023, 2:00p
29 Pearl Street NW (DGRI Offices)

1. Call to Order (2:00)
2. Accept Minutes from January 24, 2023 (2:01)
(enclosed) Motion
3. FY24 Budget Overview (2:02) Info Item Kelly
4. Priority Project Updates (2:10) Info Item Staff
 - Grand River Greenway – Andy Guy
 - DNN Update – Kendsie Channing
 - Marketing and Communications Update – Bill Kirk
 - Calder Plaza Update – Mark Miller
 - Public Space and Event Overview – Kim VanDriel
5. Alliance Member Discussion (3:00) Info Item
6. Adjournment (3:10)



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Citizen Alliance Meeting
January 24, 2023

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 3:21pm by Tim Kelly.

Attendance

Members Present: Valerie Wahna, Daniel Krammer, Jono Klooster, Maleah Rakestraw, Stephanie Andrews, Sergio Cira-Reyes, Danielle Rowland, Kathy Steindler, Reb Roberts, Derek Call, Heather Ibrahim, Jenn Schaub, Tim Mroz, Emily Evers, Maddie Schaub, Scott Stenstrom and Nikos Monoyios.

Others Present: Tim Kelly, Mark Miller, Mandy McDaniel, Marion Bonneaux, Melvin Eledge, Kendsie Channing, Kim Van Driel, and Andy Guy.

2. Approve Minutes from October 20, 2022
Unanimous approval of the October 20, 2022, Meeting Minutes as presented.

3. Project Updates:

- River Equity Framework: Guy gave a brief overview and stated a draft document coming soon. This project over the last 18-months included a variety of stakeholder conversations to identify goals, strategies, and recommended accountability metrics (housing, cultural programming, etc.). Common themes include youth leadership. Execute an equitable plan. There will also be an invite to a luncheon in the coming weeks.
- Wayfinding: Eledge presented an overview of the downtown wayfinding. Phase A (skywalk) is nearly complete. Phase B (Center City) contractor was selected and revised

round 1 of kiosks. Currently scheduling a walkthrough for each site. Phase C (walking ramps) internal signage installed, and external signage is getting ready to bid out.

- Van Andel Alley Arena: Miller stated the design work for the Van Andel Arena alley is 90% finished. Next step is the bidding process and construction to follow.
- Hill & River Miller shared renderings and stated this project is comprised of 3 parts: Hillside, Street Connections, and Rail Tunnel. The 1st project to be completed is the rail tunnel once approved by MDOT. Consultant working on rail tunnel and eventually bidding as 1st phase. This is a long-term project and total estimated cost is \$30 million.
- Division Ave (MI to Fulton): Miller stated in collaboration with City GR this project is a complete reconstruction of Division Avenue. Including reconfiguring sidewalks, curb space and signage. Also an opportunity to add protected bike lane.
- Jefferson Ave: Miller stated in 2020 we piloted a program on Jefferson with a temporary pedestrian crossing to walk between the parking lots and the hospital. We would like to convert the entire street. This project is partially funded by Mercy who is working with Progressive AE for design work. The goal is to have this happen this year and potentially included in our budget.
- Bridge and Winter Working with the city and business owners to modify the intersection. City published an RFP. There is a strong desire to get it constructed this year and potentially on our budget for FY 24.
- Veterans Memorial Park Miller stated the master plan goal is to activate public spaces. DDA, Parks and Has Heart Foundation is working together to add patio seating, a coffee shop, and public bathroom to Veterans Memorial Park.

4. FY 24 Budget Priorities

Kelly reviewed the annual budget process and reminded members DGRI manages 3 funds housed with the City; DDA, MNTIFA, and DID. Total DDA revenues is near \$10 million. Kelly stated the budget process is reliant on stakeholders for accountability.

Goal 1:

Guy reviewed Goal 1 of the *GR Forward Master Plan*; *Restore the River as the Draw*. Upcoming projects include, in channel improvements (removal of dams) and trail connections. Working with various partners to discuss the operations and maintenance around trail network. The goal is to begin constructions in the coming fiscal year.

Goal 2

Channing presented current projects the Downtown Neighbor Network (DNN) is working on to help “Create a True Downtown Neighborhood that is Home to a Diverse Population” as stated in *GR Forward*. This past year, the advisory committee broke into subcommittees to focus on more actionable items. This year, the group’s

focus is groceries on the East side of the Grand River and how neighbors define *safety*. The DNN continues to present educational opportunities and updates on projects for neighbors.

Goal 3

Miller stated Goal 3 of the *GR Forward Master Plan* is to Implement a 21st Century Mobility Strategy. Goal 3 has primarily helped fund street projects with the city and will continue to do so. FY24 plan is to continue DASH support, work diligently with DAKC for universal accessibility, and implement new street furnishings. Priorities for FY24 is to focus on places where in terms of transportation or accessibility that need to be improved and on.

Goal 4

Eledge stated Goal 4 of *GR Forward* is to expand job opportunities and ensure continued economic growth of the downtown. The primary focus going into FY24 is to support businesses through Third Thursdays, retail innovation grants, and educational opportunities for business owners. The team is currently reviewing other ways to provide business support and open to recommendations. Also plan to continue the weekly newsletter and programming in the summertime.

Goal 5

Van Driel presented Goal 5 of *GR Forward* and FY24 priority projects. The plan is to continue funding the same projects and events such as, WOW, Global Water Festival, dog park, mural program, etc. An RFP has been issued for the public to submit activation ideas with emphasis on activation along the river corridor.

5. Member Discussion

Member Schaub suggested an online feedback form for budget or suggestions.

6. Public Comment

No public comment.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:35PM.