

AGENDA



GR Forward GOAL 4 ALLIANCE

Members:

Mark Breon • Rick Chapla • Guillermo Cisneros • Omar Cuevas • Jorge Gonzalez • Kristian Grant • Farida Islam • Catlindt Landrum • Jessica Ledesma • Ace Marasigan • Brandy McCallum • Jason McClearen • Attah Obande • Scott Stenstrom • Brianna Vasquez de Pereira • Elyse Marie Welcher • Kara Wood •

January 16, 2019

3:00p – 4:00p

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of December 4, 2018 Meeting Minutes
3. Small Business Conference (enclosure)
4. DDA Contracting/Purchasing Committee
5. FY2020 Budget Priorities Discussion
6. Discussion
7. Next Steps
8. Next Meeting – TBD
9. Adjournment



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Goal 4 Alliance

December 4, 2018

1. Call to order: Jorge Gonzales called the meeting to order at 1:37 pm
2. Members Present: Rick Chapla, Jorge Gonzalez, Brianna Vasquez de Pereira and Omar Cuevas

Members Absent: Farida Islam, Catlindt Landrum, Jessica Ledesma, Ace Marasigan, Brandy McCallum, Jason McClearen, Scott Stenstrom, Elyse Marie Welcher, Kara Wood, Mark Breon, Kristian Grant, Attah Obande, and Guillermo Cisneros

Others Present: Andy Guy, Tim Kelly, Kyama Kitavi, Amanda Sloan (DGRI Staff), Alvin Hills IV, and Jamiel Robinson

3. Food Truck Ordinance

Mr. Guy gave an overview of the current Food Truck Ordinance as it was adopted two years ago on a temporary basis. As the pilot comes to an end in January, several recommended changes will be proposed to the City Commission along with the recommendation to make this ordinance permanent. The success of this ordinance can be seen by the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities and the significant boost of business operating hours in the public realm (from hundreds to thousands of hours). All of this while not negatively affecting restaurant business. (In the last two years 37 new restaurants were opened, 20 restaurants changed ownership, and only 10 closed.) Several proposed updates were suggested including the modification of the definition of mobile food business to accommodate push food carts. Another proposed change is to streamline business licensing in the Clerk's Office by moving from a fiscal year licensing to a calendar year licensing as well as provide the option for multi-year licensing. The noise level permitted by a food truck will to be updated to 80 decibels from 70 decibels but with an increase in noise level enforcement. We are in the process of looking for opportunities to run power to areas where food trucks are generally used (in order to help with generator power noise). We would also like to allow for one time use (event)

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permits. Rick Chapla asked if we have seen food drippings (grease) left by food trucks in areas of operation. Mr. Guy stated we require that each truck takes care of its own area; this is largely self-policed by the vendors. The GR Fire Department does participate in inspections for public safety while Mobile GR may ticket for inappropriate parking. Mr. Gonzales asked if there were progress updates to report. Mr. Guy responded we have data and will need some time to analyze but will be able to present that around the first of the year. Mr. Chapla asked if there were any downsides to this business expansion model. Mr. Guy stated we have not seen any. Mr. Chapla stated he is very surprised and excited by this update.

4. Small Business Conference

Kyama Kitavi introduced himself as the Economic Development Manager at DGRI. His focus will be on bringing business associations and economic support organizations together for natural collaboration in support of local business. Mr. Kitavi presented details on a city wide small business expo (conference) designed to organize our business ecosystem in a meaningful way. The proposed event would be an opportunity to engage with entrepreneurs (both recruiting and retaining downtown businesses) by providing educational support and encouraging technical support partnerships. Mr. Hills stated he will be representing The City of Grand Rapids and coordinating with the offices of Diversity & Inclusion, Economic Development and Special Events in seeking support for the success of this event. Mr. Gonzales asked when this conference may take place. Mr. Kitavi stated the expo could potentially take place in the spring or summer of 2019. Mr. Gonzales suggested coordination with the Start Garden 100, perhaps offering free registration for the top 10. Mr. Kitavi asked when the next ESO meeting will be. Mr. Gonzales stated January with the Start Garden Demo Day scheduled for July.

5. Contracting/Purchasing Committee

Mr. Kelly is asking for 2-3 volunteers from this alliance to join a committee that will review policy for the DDA in regards to contracts and purchasing procedures. Currently there is a lack of diversity and inclusion on the committee to determine the process. Mr. Chapla stated his organization is going through this process at The Right Place currently. He will share his draft with Mr. Kelly. Mr. Kelly will email the alliance with this request for volunteers.

6. FY19 Project and Program Review

Mr. Kelly reviewed the priorities that Goal 4 committed to in May for FY19 in order to determine areas of focus for the upcoming calendar year.

The Downtown Incentive Evaluation has been in development for several years. A contractor will be brought on in January or February in coordination with The City's Equitable Economic Development Plan. This process may take more than a year and something we contribute to in FY20.

Mr. Kelly stated our intention to continue with MWBE Support. So far, the Retail Incubation/Support Program has supported Tamales Mary with several other minority

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and women owned business enterprises still under evaluation. We would like to partner with existing providers to proactively advertise this program and increase participation. The small business expo Mr. Kitavi is planning will aid in this effort. Relax and Rosa is a Workforce Program marketed to the downtown workforce we wish to continue. Finally, Recruitment Efforts include marketing materials, in development, intending to broaden our city's national exposure for attracting investment. Mr. Kelly opened the floor for questions and comments regarding this list of priorities and asked if there were other opportunities for growth and development that this group wanted to pursue.

Ms. Vasquez de Pereira stated she would like to see a partnership with Kent County Kids, which works with at-risk children and provides employee development skills to parents. She attended a talent workshop at Amway, which was a great opportunity to highlight these programs and would like to see participation in more of these types of events. Mr. Kelly stated Embassy Suites will be hiring around 300 employees upon opening in March, which presents an opportunity to collaborate with a job fair event. Also, river construction presents long term (5 – 10 years) opportunities for tremendous growth and governance which is being discussed at a DGRI Board level. Mr. Chapla stated these employment undertakings are a big deal; employment challenges in bordering counties are real and bring opportunities to change how we do business. Mr. Kelly agreed there may be opportunities to collaborate with high school workforce preparatory schools (such as the GRPS Ottawa Hills High School Academy of Hospitality & Tourism) and community colleges to address the structural employment challenges that exist. Mr. Gonzalez requested we define at our next meeting who our collaborative partners should be and discuss specific actions that we can engage in.

7. Discussion:

Mr. Kelly stated that in order to increase active participation in this and other alliances, a survey will be sent in the near future via email to members requesting feedback. Jamiel Robinson, with Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses (GRABB), requested financial support to assist with occupying a downtown storefront location at 98 Fulton (former WMCAT space). GRABB supports black owned small businesses in Grand Rapids and would like to pilot programs specifically focused on downtown business growth in conjunction with the GR Forward plan to expand racially and ethnically diverse business owners in downtown. Mr. Robinson stated they have already seen success with offering concierge services and connecting entrepreneurs with opportunities but believe downtown offers increased potential, based on proximity. Mr. Kelly stated we would like to present this official proposal at our next alliance meeting in January and could potentially make a recommendation to the DDA in February.

8. Next Meeting- TBD

9. Public Comment:

None.

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10. Adjournment:

Jorge Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 2:50pm

Minutes taken by:

Amanda Sloan

Administrative Assistant

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

City of Grand Rapids and Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Small Business Resource Conference

Overview

Over the past few years the entrepreneurial spirit in Grand Rapids has taken hold as small business development and support has becoming a major pillar in the City's economic development strategy. As a result, there has been an increased focus on policy that encourages and supports entrepreneurs as well as programs that provide technical and financial assistance for small businesses. This has further led to an increased desire to "buy local" from residents as well as major institutional buyers.

However, while Grand Rapids has seen an increase in technical assistance providers, financial resources and programs; there still remains a disconnect between different networks. This applies to both resource providers as well as entrepreneurs.

This expo/conference is to bring the cross-section of players within the ecosystem, to a signature event that promotes Grand Rapids as a vibrant place to do business and who's public institutions are taking a proactive, collaborative and leadership role in the entrepreneurship discussion.

The primary activity will be networking across the ecosystem; including business to resource provider, business to business and resource provider to resource provider. There will be at least one panel discussion on a particular issue of relevance. This year the focus will be on local small business financing environment with panelists made up of non-profit and traditional lending institutions as well as other alternative financing options.

This event falls squarely into Goal 4 of GR Forward. Specifically, 4.1: Promoting Inclusion and Equal Participation in the Local Economy, 4.3: Create and Preserve Space for Job Creation and Economic Growth and 4.4: Brand Rapids. It should be noted that similar to other initiatives, such as the Mobile GR Commission or Food Truck Initiative, this downtown event can be used as a template for similar efforts at the neighborhood business district level.

Proposed Event Details

The City of Grand Rapids and Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. host "Small Business Expo"

Dates: August 2019 or September 2019 after Labor Day?

Time: 8-12pm or 9-1pm

Location: DeVos Convention Center

Goal/Purpose

This is to be a signature event that invites local aspiring entrepreneurs and current business owners (of any size) to interact with small business resources found throughout the city. This will include technical assistance providers, financing options and contracting institutions.

The hope is that this event will not only attract a cross section of entrepreneurs and business owners but also cross section of entrepreneurial support organizations. The goal is for this event to foster an environment that encourages cross pollination in the following ways:

- Understanding who the active resource providers are in the ecosystem are and what they provide.
- A time to not only promote and inform on upcoming individual org events or programs but also city-wide efforts promoting small business. Ex: 100 Ideas, Neighborhood Business Awards, City vending opportunities.
- Create momentum for the City or any institution/org to do similar events outside of downtown in collaboration with CIDs and business associations.
- Encourage collaboration and communication between resource providers
- Place the City at the center of the small business ecosystem conversation as a neutral convener, promoter and supporter of small business and entrepreneurship in Grand Rapids.
- Be a venue for the City to speak directly about upcoming policy developments or development projects and their impact on or opportunities for local businesses.
- Provide another opportunity to check the pulse of the ecosystem from the perspective entrepreneurs as well as resource provider
- Add to the excitement of doing business in Grand Rapids by showing an interconnected and supportive environment.

Registration

Attendees will enter for free with a small registration fee of about \$25 for resource providers to have a vendor table. The City can use their new website for services to promote the event, register vendors, and collect payments.

Planning Team

The City of Grand Rapids (Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Economic Development, & Special Events)

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Communications

Communications will be co-managed by both The City of Grand Rapids and Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. for all social media, written, and live interviewing.

Marketing & Design

The Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will use in house staff for flyer design, videography, and photography for the event. Event signage will be printed by the City and DGRI.

Parking

All proposed venues have on-site parking via parking ramps downtown. Parking will not be validated for vendors.

Partners

Main

- City of GR – EDO/D&I
- DGRI
- GR Chamber?
- Experience GR
- Local First
- The Right Place
- Neighborhood Business Alliance

Additional

- Start Garden
- GROW
- LINC
- GRABB
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Urban League
- SBDC?
- Spring GR
- Opportunity Resource Fund
- United Bank
- GROW
- Michigan Women Forward?

POTENTIAL FY19 PROJECTS: GOAL #4

Committed FY18

- MWBE Support
 - Retail Incubation
- Workforce Programs
 - Relax at Rosa

Proposed FY19

- Partial Funding for Citywide Economic Development Plan and Strategy
 - Downtown Incentive Evaluation
- MWBE Support
 - Retail Incubation
 - Others?
- Workforce Programs
 - Relax at Rosa
 - Others?

Additional GR>> Recommendations

- Develop industry partnership programs between employers and workforce representatives with targeted recruitment efforts in Downtown Grand Rapids and neighboring communities
- Expand and promote youth workforce and internship programs including the Mayor's 100 Campaign
- Expand entrepreneurship and capacity building programs to support the growth of minority- and women-owned business enterprises in Downtown Grand Rapids
- Promote corporate and institutional policies that increase workforce diversity [especially at management levels], and the hiring of ex-offenders
- Continue to evaluate the potential structure of an inclusion module for business licensure - include area businesses in the process
- Begin an active engagement program with college Millennials including a range of internships and co-ops programs to increase their access to entry level jobs and support their retention in Grand Rapids
- Ensure pathways exist so that Grand Rapids residents can develop and maintain the needed skills to have access to jobs in the City's growing technology sector
- Support micro-enterprise opportunities and entrepreneurial activity by establishing partnerships with local incubators and start-up funds
- Work with existing groups to include start-ups and small businesses in potential employment pool
- Tailor a trailing spouse "product" for small businesses & start ups
- Create an inventory of flexible work space and landlords in or near the Downtown, including institutional space
- Initiate discussions on creating a Production Development and Space Modernization Entity
- Work with institutional users and other single-use building owners to identify non-traditional spaces to incubate small businesses in Downtown
- Target companies farther out from Downtown that have a substantial design or innovation component that may find recruiting creative class type workers difficult into far flung suburban locations
- Undertake direct marketing to strategically chosen "Top American Cities" list
- Evaluate the current fiber infrastructure Downtown, coordinate with local utilities and assess opportunities for the development of Fiber to support the growth of start-up businesses