

AGENDA



GR Forward GOAL 4 ALLIANCE

Members:

Ace Marasigan • Alex Caceres • Ana Jose • Attah Obande • Brandy McCallum • Brianna Vasquez de Pereira • Caylie Peet • Farida Islam • Jason McClearen • Jorge Gonzalez • Kara Wood • Kareem Scales • Kristian Grant • Mark Breon • Omar Cuevas • Scott Stenstrom • Tim Mroz

September 17, 2019

3:00p – 4:00p

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of August 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes*
3. Purchasing/Contracting Policy Discussion – Patti Caudill Diversity & Inclusion Manager, City of GR
4. S. Division Construction and Businesses Discussion
5. ESO Updates
6. Other Business
7. Public Comment
8. Next Meeting – October 15, 2019
9. Adjournment

***Denotes Action Item**



Goal 4 Alliance

August 20, 2019

1. Call to order: Jorge Gonzales called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm
2. Members Present: Attah Obande, Alex Caceres, Jorge Gonzalez, Omar Cuevas, Kareem Scales, Ana Jose, Scott Stenstrom, and Tim Mroz

Members Absent: Farida Islam, Ace Marasigan, Brandy McCallum, Jason McClearn, Mark Breon, Kristian Grant, Kara Wood, and Brianna Vasquez de Pereira

Others Present: Kyama Kitavi, Marion Bonneaux, Amanda Sloan (DGRI Staff)

3. Approval of Minutes
Mr. Cuevas, supported by Mr. Obande, motioned to approve July 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes. None opposed. Motion approved.
4. River Restoration Discussion
Andy Guy invited the board to attend a discussion to be held on September 5, 2019 regarding the Grand River Restoration. This meeting (co-hosted by DGRI, the City of GR, and Kellogg Foundation) is intended to further our efforts in developing an organizational framework (governance structure) to build, manage, activate, and maintain the public amenities we have envisioned throughout the Grand River Corridor. Mr. Guy stated this project will provide opportunities for urban redesign and recreation as well as support community building. Economic development opportunities can be found both in the short term (with construction and implementation) and long term (through the connection of neighborhoods along the river and redevelopment) opportunities that will happen along the banks. Our guest speaker, Daniel Tellalian, who served as a founding board member and Chair of River LA, will lead us to explore how we might leverage the revitalization of the Grand River as a vehicle to achieve growth, equity and a high quality of life that is widely shared by all Grand Rapidsians.

5. Retail Grant Proposal: Mel Styles

Kyama Kitavi introduced Archie Sudue of Mel Styles to present a Retail Grant Proposal. Mr. Kitavi reminded the group this proposal has been submitted under the updated version of the RFP which provides funding to subsidize rent for a new Downtown business. He noted the space Mr. Sudue will be leasing is owned by The Dwelling Place (on S. Division and Wealthy) and would activate a vacant space in the Heartside neighborhood.

Mr. Sudue introduced himself as a father of 4 from Liberia, West Africa, raised by his grandfather who instilled upon him the importance of a respectful appearance. He listed his experience including work as a stylist, sales associate, and manager at Men's Warehouse and Macy's (suit department) giving him leadership, management and customer service skills. During this time, he also took classes to improve his sewing skills and stated dressing well is a passion of his. With the encouragement of customers, coworkers, family and friends, he launched Mel Styles where he has been frequently featured as a designer in fashion shows nationwide for the last 3 years. Mr. Sudue stated this year he also launched the first annual Passion for Fashion charity event which supported Bethany Christian Services, bringing awareness to the needs of refugees in our community, and had over 400 guests, 10 local designers, 70 local models and 14 small business vendors participate. He successfully completed the SpringGR business course and won the Start Garden 5x5 Pitch Contest in 2019. Mr. Sudue stated there is only one suit store located downtown Grand Rapids and it is not accessible or affordable to all. His target audience includes young professionals, men attending prom, grooms, groomsmen, and professionals of all ages not interested in spending \$1,000 on a suit. Of the 96,761 men in Grand Rapids, 55.8% of them are 19-44 years old and 10.4% between the ages of 45-55, making up Mel Styles' target market. Mr. Sudue estimates the current annual market at \$5-7 million. The increased popularity of the brand will continue with social media marketing. Mr. Sudue stated having a store downtown will increase diversity and provide a necessary service that has outgrown his home office in the last 3 months selling 30-40 tailored suits per month.

Mr. Cuevas asked if alterations would be available. Mr. Sudue stated yes. Ms. Jose asked what the average price of a suit is. Mr. Sudue stated a standard suit ranges from \$250-\$450 per suit. Mr. Gonzales stated that is an exceptionally reasonable price. The Mr. Stenstrom asked how he makes his suits today. Mr. Sudue stated he currently works out of his home and offers standard (from the rack) options as well as custom designs. He also provides alteration services at most hotels downtown. Mr. Caceres asked if Mr. Sudue could speak to the location of this new storefront. Mr. Sudue stated he will have 900 square feet with a business next door offering wedding and prom dresses which will work as a built-in referral system for them both. Mr. Gonzales stated with the construction projects on Division Avenue, operating

a new business will benefit this area greatly and supports this idea. Mr. Cuevas asked what his major concern is. Mr. Sudue stated the construction in the area will be a concern for customers accessing the storefront but there are no concerns regarding expanding the business. He has been working with SCOR coaches and SpringGR to guide him along this transition and is very confident he is ready. Mr. Stenstrom asked how much of his business is from local customers. Mr. Sudue stated 60% of his business is local to Grand Rapids, the other 40% are customers from Detroit, LA, even Libera government officials. Mr. Caceres pointed out that this indicates his business would not be dependent on foot traffic and asked what impact this storefront would have on his business. Mr. Sudue stated he is building a team to help run this store and doesn't expect impact on turnaround time or quality. Ms. Jose asked, with the current growth trajectory, if he believes he will outgrow this space too quickly. Mr. Sudue stated he doesn't believe so as he plans to keep a simple inventory. Mr. Mroz asked if he considered going into corporate sales. Mr. Sudue stated potentially in the future. Mr. Cuevas stated this is very exciting and thanked him for this presentation.

Mr. Kitavi stated the request today is for \$10,800 which is based on 50% of \$1,200 monthly rent for 18 months. Before this recommendation goes to the DDA we will receive a copy of the lease for review, as this funding will be contingent on appropriate documentation. Mr. Cuevas, with the support of Mr. Caceres, motioned to approve this proposal and present this funding recommendation to the DDA. None opposed.

6. Purchasing/Contracting Policy Discussion

Mr. Kitavi stated we continue to discuss the development of a purchasing/contracting policy for the DDA that allows economic diversity and inclusion of minority owned businesses. He provided a copy of the current policy, dated May 3, 2013, which does not speak to this priority. Mr. Caceres stated a Micro-Local Business Enterprise is in place with the City; perhaps we can expand that model where points (preferential treatment) can be given for minority owned businesses. Mr. Cuevas stated the biggest aspect of this will be the intentionality on our part. Ms. Jose agreed and stated enough time also needs to be given to these businesses to provide an appropriate bid.

7. Other Business

Mr. Kitavi stated we closed registration for the Business Expo with 124 registered vendors, 26 of which are resource providers. This is a free event to small business owners that we hope to make an annual event. Please attend and provide feedback.

DGRI staff met with a group of business owners on Monroe Center determining the need for Monroe Center Business Association. We will continue to engage regularly with these businesses as they form this association. Mr. Kitavi stated DGRI does have a budget

specifically to support business associations and are currently engaged with Heartside Downtown, Stockbridge, and North Monroe Business Associations.

Mr. Kitavi thanked The GR Chamber for hosting a debrief with local businesses regarding ArtPrize Project 1 opportunities.

Start Garden invites all of you to our Demo Day next week. This will showcase 100 businesses with the Top 10 receiving \$20,000 each and the Top 5 invited to table at the Business Expo.

Mr. Cuevas asked that each ESO be allocated a minute to provide updates to the group at each meeting. Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Kitavi agreed.

8. Next Meeting- September 17, 2019

9. Public Comment:

Ms. Jose stated Hispanic Chamber will host the Latino 5k this Saturday and encouraged everyone to register for the event.

10. Adjournment:

Jorge Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 3:49 pm.

Minutes taken by:

Amanda Sloan

Administrative Assistant

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.