AGENDA

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBOR NETWORK Advisory

Members:
Amy Skentzos • Bill Coyne • Daniel Drent • Drew Terwee • Eddie Tadlock • Jane Reynolds • Kathy Steindler • Kelli Jo Peltier • Latesha Lipscomb • Laurie Craft • Mark Tangen • Michael Dorney • Robert Van Driel • Wilma Banks • Myric Harris • Christopher Billmeier •

June 6, 2019
11:30pm- 1:30pm
29 Pearl Street, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

1. Call to order/ introductions
2. Approval of minutes
3. DNN Newsletter statistics
4. DNN Talking Points
5. Events focus for Summer/ Fall
   • Yappy Hour- May 22
   • Tabling at Movies on Monroe- June 7, 21, July 12, 26, August 9, 23
   • Focus Group themes- Fresh Food Access, DID renewal, Ambassadors and Police?
   • Westside Streetfair- Sept 14
   • Openings: Studio Park, Sweetwater Coffee and Tea
6. Ad hoc project committees
7. Next meeting July 11, 2019 11:30am-1:30pm
8. Advisory member discussion
9. Public comment
10. Adjournment

The DNN exists to foster a community of downtown neighbors that are connected, informed and empowered to improve downtown living.
Downtown Neighbor Network
May 2, 2019

1. **Call to order:**
   Kelli Jo Peltier called the meeting to order at 11:34 am.

2. **Members Present:**
   Kelli Jo Peltier, Kathy Steindler, Mark Tangen, Amy Skentzos, Latesha Lipscomb, Bill Coyne, Jane Reynolds, Drew Terwee, Laurie Craft, Robert Van Driel, Christopher Billmeier, Myric Harris, and Mike Dorney (via call in).

   **Members Absent:**
   Eddie Tadlock, Daniel Drent and Wilma Banks.

   **Others Present:**
   Annamarie Buller and Amanda Sloan (DGRI).

3. **New Advisory Member Welcome**
   Ms. Peltier invited new advisory members Myric Harris and Christopher Billmeier to introduce themselves to the group. Brief introductions were made around the room as other advisors welcomed them to the committee and shared a “word on the street.”

4. **Approval of Minutes: April 4, 2019**
   Kathy Steindler, supported by Robert Van Driel, motioned to approve April 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes as presented. None opposed. Motion passed.

5. **Advisory Member Recruitment**
   Ms. Buller stated Ms. Peltier, Chair, and she met to consider the addition of both Mr. Harris and Mr. Billmeier to the DNN Advisory Board. To formalize this process for future recruitment she asked the group for feedback on their desired involvement. She recommended as potential advisors express interest she interview them, meet with Chair Peltier to review qualifications, and if recommended, would then bring the candidate in front of the board for a vote. Ms. Craft asked if we needed more advisors. Mr. Terwee suggested adding business owners to the board. Ms. Buller stated we recently lost a
young advisory member, Olivia Ross, and found it important to add a millennial to replace her. Adding business owners to this body is not a priority as the purpose of this board is to be a body for resident voice, though many of the members of this board also happen to be business owners. Mr. Terwee argued downtown business is a critical component of downtown the hurdles they face need to be addressed. Ms. Lipscomb stated this is where the neighborhood associations come into play and invited Mr. Terwee to meet with her to discuss involvement with other work that is already happening downtown. Ms. Craft stated a very large group can become extremely ineffective and suggested not growing the advisory board any larger unless someone was found to fit for a specific reason. Ms. Buller agreed and stated she will adopt a “one in and one out” protocol.

6. **Mix Mingle & Share 2019 Feedback**
Ms. Buller stated 75 residents attended the 2019 Mix Mingle and Share event and invited the board to provide feedback. Ms. Skentzos thought the table set up made it difficult for attendees to mingle. Several agreed. Mr. Terwee indicated the rolling slideshow was distracting. Mr. Tangen stated giving space to the neighborhood associations was a great idea. Ms. Lipscomb suggested next time assigning table captains to encourage folks to socialize with people they do not already know. Mr. Billmeier stated the resident bingo game was a good way to encourage mingling. Ms. Steindler stated the evening had a good turnout despite the traffic and weather. Members stated the food and service was great but the presentation could have been shorter and with more visuals. Ms. Buller stated next year we will want to hold in a larger venue, coordinate timing with the census and again include stations with representation from the neighborhood associations.

7. **DNN Newsletter Statistics**
Annamarie Buller presented statistics on the DNN Newsletter. In February there were 443 recipients and in April 717 contacts. This is great growth; keep on sharing! Our goal is to grow by 30-40 people per month to have 1,000 by the end of the year.

8. **Proposed DNN Budget Needs**
Ms. Buller stated she attempted to synthesize the budget priorities based on our April brainstorming session with Steve Faber. She informed the group none of the ideas have been thrown out and those not included this Fiscal Year can be considered after year one. As a reminder, we are an advisory board with Goal 2 Alliance facilitating our budget (which is ultimately approved through the DDA). We can expect our budget to be very close to this once fully approved.

Ms. Buller stated DGRI staffing support for DNN is estimated to be $67,950 for FY20. This includes the work Ms. Buller does for the DNN as well as Graphic Design and Communications work.
Communications and Marketing: As we develop our talking points, elevator speech, and motto we expect to spend about $7,000 to fuel promotional pieces with palm cards, posters, newsletters, photography, website, welcome materials, buttons, and volunteer t-shirts. The table cloth and tent have already been purchased and are ready for use at Movies on Monroe this summer.

$20,200 is the suggested budget allocation for Events which includes an ambitious list of regular meetings and signature social gatherings. With the help of agents on this board Ms. Buller stated she would like to host bi-annual real estate meetings as well as quarterly property management meetings. We will also want to create a potential welcome kit or possibly attend an association of realtors meeting. Other items that fall within this budget line include: engagement events, DNN previews and soft openings (such as the Downtown Dog Park Yappy Hour), DNN Advisory lunches, The Mix Mingle and Share (March/April), Holiday Party (Dec), and quarterly Focus Groups/Town Halls. We have also allocated $500 for The DNN Rummage Sale as a test project to coordinate with the Westside Streetfair in September. Ms. Buller stated for this event we would ask some of the largest downtown residential buildings to manage a tent for their residential rummage sale items limited to 10-15 tents. Mr. Terwee stated he believes we could actually raise money on this event and would love to spearhead the project. $500 has also been allocated to support the Project 1 Belonging dinner. Ms. Buller stated she would like to test some of these events to see how they go before potentially expanding in the future.

For Advocacy during this first year our goal is to obtain data and strengthen community support. $21,000 will fund our Resident Survey (covering direct mail, door to door, and publish a report), support near neighborhood associations, and provide a Downtown Resident Leadership Course.

Ms. Lipscomb stated this is a fantastic foundation. Ms. Buller asked if the group felt good about this plan. All concur.

9. Ad hoc committees sign up
Ms. Peltier stated there are 3 optional ad hoc committees for advisors to participate in. These committees will communicate by email and meet regularly to create progress in each of our 3 pillar priorities. The Communications and Marketing Committee will be responsible for creating our elevator speech, motto, and talking points which are needed ASAP in order to share at events as soon as June. The Events Committee can have a different chair for each event but would plan the quarterly focus groups, signature social events and other projects. These sub-committee members can also change at any time. The Advocacy Committee will determine the info we need in the resident survey and work to increase participation in that survey. A sign-up sheet was passed around for members to indicate interest in one or all of these committees.
10. **Events focus for Summer-Fall 2019**

**Tabling at Movies on Monroe** – Ms. Buller stated this is a great opportunity to meet downtown residents and get our name out there. She provided a sign-up sheet for volunteers to man the DNN table at each Movies date. The table and tent will be set up and promotional pieces provided. You would be responsible for collecting email addresses and sharing the elevator speech. Feel free to bring your own beverages and enjoy the first movie from the tent but please stay until the 2nd movie starts.

**Yappy Hour** is the Downtown Dog Park preview event for the DNN. This takes place on May 22 before the official opening of the dog park in June. Promotional photos and drone shots will be taken to promote the grand opening. Tin Cup and Mayan Buzz will open their patio spaces for participants from 5:30 to 7pm. Pet portraits will also be available.

**Fresh Food Access** would be the perfect first town hall discussion topic in June as the farmer’s market season kicks off. Ms. Buller stated she would like the DNN to host a panel discussion to address fresh food access in Downtown GR.

Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF) is building senior housing at Wealthy and S. Division Ave and a proposed commercial tenant would be the Grand Rapids Food Co-op. Right now the Co-op is looking to grow owner membership (currently around 200) and need 1,000 members by the end of 2019 in order to meet construction deadlines for this project. The co-op would be a grocery store owned by members that anyone can shop at. A Fresh Food Access Town Hall meeting could help raise awareness that memberships are needed in this co-op in order to make it happen. Potential panelists include Linda Jones from Grand Rapids Food Co-op, our own Daniel Drent as Heartside Fresh Food Access Working Group Chair, Lisa Sisson from Heartside Gleaners, and potentially Mimi Fritz at Downtown Market or Ken Bair with Bridge Street Market.

Ms. Lipscomb relayed her support and offered to moderate this discussion stating this falls directly in line with the GR Forward plan for promoting fresh food access; this provides the perfect opportunity to highlight all the fresh food access available or becoming available. She suggested the Downtown Market host this event. Ms. Steindler asked who the audience is. Ms. Buller stated this would be an informational session for downtown residents including anyone who is interested in increasing fresh food access but ultimately this is a call to action for residents to become involved with the GR Food Co-op and make this grocery store happen. Ms. Buller asked for a show of hands who would be interested in attending this discussion. As 5 hands were raised Ms. Buller acknowledged the group’s endorsement of hosting this. Ms. Peltier stated there needs to be some education on the co-op and what residents can do to support it. Ms. Buller will email the Events committee to get work going on this. Ms. Steindler suggested including Fulton Street Market. Ms. Lipscomb suggested including Access of West Michigan. Ms. Buller stated she would like to limit the panelists to 5 members for the sake of time but will leave that up to the Event committee to determine the area of focus.
11. Advisory Member Discussion
Ms. Lipscomb stated The Heartside Neighborhood Association (now Heartside Downtown) has officially expanded to downtown and she requested introductions to businesses we may have connections to in an effort to share the mission and vision for the organization.

Mr. Billmeier and Mr. Harris asked if the DNN is trying to recruit residents to live downtown or to just to connect with more residents already downtown. Ms. Buller stated our primary goal is to connect with current downtown residents (growing our newsletter distribution list).

Mr. Terwee asked, as it relates to our elevator speech, what are the basic goals of this group that will directly improve the experience of downtown. Ms. Buller stated the 3 pillars of our mission will help us to get there. With better communication we are able to reach a broader audience of downtown residents and in turn be a resource for them. After our next survey, if we have 1,000 take it, the information gathered will give us a better idea of how to focus our energy. So far we are sampling a very small number of people. Another way to improve the downtown experience is through events that help residents feel a sense of belonging and connection. And through advocacy we are finding out what residents want and empowering them to create changes downtown. Ms. Steindler stated we also have the opportunity to take the voice of this group to other organizations, such as the city commission, to affect change. Ms. Lipscomb stated the function of the DNN as it stands is to concentrate on these three things but encouraged Mr. Terwee to also join a neighborhood association.

Ms. Reynolds stated our elevator speech needs to be completed. Mr. Van Driel agreed. Ms. Steindler requested the communications committee have this created and present it at our next meeting.

12. Next meeting June 6, 2019 11:30-1:30pm

13. Public Comment
None.

14. Adjournment
Ms. Peltier adjourned the meeting at 1:26pm.
Downtown Neighbor Network:

**Mission:** The Downtown Neighbor Network exists to foster a community of downtown neighbors that are connected, informed and empowered to improve downtown living.

The DNN helps the community:

- Get connected
- Stay informed
- Know your neighbors
- Get involved

The Downtown Neighbor Network or DNN is an affinity group for people who identify as Downtown neighbors. The DNN is a pilot project in partnership with Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. serving downtown and downtown adjacent neighborhoods with a focus on neighbors living in multi-unit buildings.

**How to learn more:**

- Subscribe to our monthly newsletter on our project page
- Send an email and set up a meeting with your Manager of Neighbor Experience at Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. abuller@downtowngr.org

**Key programs:**

- Communications- Share information and develop tools to deepen communications with neighbors
- Events- Organize events that educate and connect neighbors, for example Mix, Mingle & Share events held throughout the year to combine social networking with information sharing about downtown developments and events.
- Engagement - Develop tools to help neighbors organize and increase opportunities to inform policy and projects impacting downtown
1. **Background:**

The GR Forward Downtown and River Activation Plan identified the goal to create a downtown neighborhood that is home to a diverse population. To that end, DGRI looks to support initiatives that improve downtown living for existing residents and attract new downtown residents in order to foster civic engagement and strengthen community ties downtown. GR Forward specifically identifies the opportunity to establish a downtown resident council (attachment A- GR forward sections). In early 2018, an ad-hoc Downtown Resident Steering Committee was formed to explore the creation of a standalone organization that would represent downtown neighbors.

The Downtown Resident Steering Committee (attachment B- Steering Committee Roster) was constituted to represent various viewpoints and perspectives on the unique challenges and opportunities of living in or near downtown Grand Rapids (attachment C- process timeline). Although DGRI convened the group, it was made explicit that there was not a predetermined outcome and that the group had the authority to determine if there was need or desire for a downtown neighborhood group and what form that group might take. The group began with an extensive “data dive” to better understand who was living in downtown, what groups currently (or potentially) exist in and near downtown, what concerns residents have, how is downtown changing, and what type of organization might be the best fit to represent the unique voice of downtown living.

2. **Process:**

   a) Recruitment of Steve Faber, Byrum and Fisk to facilitate the independent process for the Downtown Resident Steering Committee, supported by DGRI Stakeholder Engagement Specialist Annamarie Buller

   b) Research and Data:
      i. Resident survey (attachment d)
      ii. Housing analysis (attachment e)
      iii. Scan of organizations and associations (attachment f)
      iv. Focus group discussion with existing neighborhoods (November 2017, April 2018)

   c) Scenario Planning: No growth, slow growth, high growth (attachment g)

   d) Structure Pros/Cons: Nonprofit vs Joint Venture

   e) Heartside residents reorganizing the Heartside Neighborhood Association to support Heartside and proposal to support Downtown boundaries that have not yet been represented. 501C3 application submitted in winter of 2019, proposed boundary map. (attachment h)

   f) Downtown Resident Steering Committee Recommendations Engagement (attachment i)

3. **Mission/Vison/Guiding Principles:**

   **Mission:**

   The DNN exists to foster a community of downtown neighbors that are connected, informed and empowered to improve downtown living.

   **Vision:**

   The DNN envisions a neighborhood that is vibrant and culturally diverse, active, safe and full of opportunity and experiences unique to downtown living.
Guiding Principles:

Accessible & Inclusive – We desire to be a network that is open to all neighbors

Empowering – We desire to be a network that supports downtown neighbors and provides an avenue to advance collective interests

Collaborative – We desire to be a network that brings people and groups together across boundaries

Equitable – We desire to be a network that is intentional about listening to our neighbors and elevating the voices of those who have been historically marginalized

Unique – We desire to be a network that embraces the peculiarities of living downtown and convey that perspective with the broader community

Key Programs:

Improved communications and greater awareness

• Communication - share information relevant to living downtown
  o Identify neighbors who want to join the Downtown Neighborhood Network
  o Outreach to building owners and property managers
  o Implement a communication tool that allows for information to be pushed out
  o Implement a communication tool that allows for information to be pulled in/feedback
  o Find opportunities to tell the stories of downtown neighbors
  o Develop a brand and marketing materials for DNN

Increased participation in events, surveys and committees

• Events – organize events that bring downtown neighbors together
  o 4-6 events a year
  o Event opportunities for education and welcoming new neighbors
  o Feature Downtown and near neighborhood assets
  o Recruitment events to grow the DNN

Increased opportunities to inform policy and projects impacting

• Advocacy – provide opportunity for downtown neighbors to speak into and influence decisions that impact their quality of life
  o Conduct an annual survey of downtown neighbors to identify trends and issues
  o Develop tools to help neighbors organize and navigate systems
  o Provide a space for issues/opportunities to “bubble up” that need action
4. DNN Structure:

- An affinity group/network for people who identify as downtown neighbors but may already be in a neighborhood
- Downtown Resident Network name change to Downtown Neighbor Network
- The DNN has blurred boundaries to be more inclusive— including Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods in its boundaries
- Work collaboratively with DGRI and near neighborhoods

Governance Structure: the Downtown Neighbor Network Advisory

The proposal is that the DNN Advisory will live within DGRI for at least two years. The DNN Advisory is most aligned to help the DGRI's Goal 2 Alliance achieve their outcomes; however, there is a desire for the DNN to exist outside the hierarchy of being under any specific committee. This will give the DNN Advisory a level of autonomy and recognize that the voice of downtown neighbors is valuable to all DGRI committees. The DNN Advisory may establish ad hoc committees to direct their work as need.

DGRI Alliance Representation:
The DNN Advisory will present to each Goal Alliance annually (winter each year)

- The DNN's Advisory Committee members will:
  - Live in or in a near neighborhood that is Downtown adjacent
  - Live in a multi-unit building
  - Be a mix of renters/owners
  - Embody values of the DNN
  - Represent full diversity

- The DNN Advisory Committee Recruitment process:
  - September 2018—Outreach to property owners to solicit residents to apply
  - November 1—DNN Event to announce structure and recruit board members
  - October 2018—Online application/paper application for engagement events
  - November 21—Deadline for applications due by Thanksgiving

- The DNN Advisory Committee will be determined by:
  - Staff of DGRI
  - Members of the Downtown Resident Steering Committee
  - Representatives from the DGRI Goal Alliances

Partnerships:
- DGRI to provide staffing and direction
- Neighborhood Associations – interaction with near neighborhoods
- City of Grand Rapids
Downtown Resident Steering Committee  
Downtown Neighbor Network Recommendation  
9/5/2019  

Timeline:  
- Year One Milestones- October 2018- October 2019  

Fall 2018  
- Final engagement with near neighborhoods, City Commissioners, Committee and Chair recruitment, DGRI Board Approval  
- Data enhancement  
  - Outreach target downtown properties, condo leadership and property management each month  
- November 1, 2018- DNN Announcement and Recruitment Event  

Winter 2018  
- December 2018-Selection of DNN Advisory  
- January 2019-First convening of the DNN Advisory  
- January/ February 2019-Focus on Board Governance for DNN  
- January/ February 2019-Update and overview, planning with the 5 DGRI Alliances  
- January 2019-Bring communication tools online  
  - First monthly newsletter with announcement of first meeting  
- February/ March 2019- Downtown/ Near Downtown Resident Survey updated and deployed  

Spring 2019  
- March/ April 2019- Identify project opportunities shaped by the survey and issues identified throughout the year, look to budgeting and planning for 2020  
- Events  
  - Decision to continue to convene DRN Events Committee or reorganize  
  - Building previews, education events, speakers etc.  
  - Set remaining events for the year  
  - Mix, Mingle and Share 2019 date tentatively set-April 10, 2019  

- Year Two Milestones- October 2019 - October 2020  

Fall 2019  
- September/ October 2019- Evaluate year 1 progress  
- Data enhancement  
  - Outreach target downtown properties, condo leadership and property management each month  
- November 2019 Event/Recruitment next wave of committee members  

Winter 2019  
- December 2019-Selection of new DNN Advisory members  
- January 2020-First convening of the new DNN Advisory/ Strategic Planning  
- January/ February 2020-Update and overview, planning with the 5 DGRI Alliances  
- February/ March 2020- Downtown/ Near Downtown Survey updated and deployed  
- Events 4-6 per year  
- Issue advocacy, project implementation  

Spring 2020  
- Mix, Mingle and Share with your Downtown Neighbors  
- Begin evaluation and make recommendation for the future of the DNN Advisory in 2021