

Division Avenue Business Association

Minutes

February 11, 2010

1. Call To Order

Members Present: Tommy Brann, Brann's Steakhouse and Grille; Jerry DeGood, Auto Finance Company; Al Reurink, Modern RV Center; Lisa Golder, City of Kentwood, Steve Karrip, Metro Motors; Juliette Cowall, Godwin Plumbing; James Leach Jr. Hobart Sales and Service; Aida Slogar, Lake Michigan Credit Union; Robert Duck, Elite Security; Tim Cochran, City of Wyoming; Jim Kubiak, Bubble Magic Laundry, Tim Reeves, Kelloggsville Public Schools; Kelloggsville Public Schools; Susie Hudson, Chase Bank; Gary Ball, B-Quick Printing; Lee Groth, South Godwin Neighborhood Association; Chris Hennessey, Java Cone; Greg Mahalick, Callander Realty; Chip LaFleur, Callander Realty; Mike Endres, Bluevortex.net; Tim Pomorski, Affordable Automotive Service; Richard Clanton, City of Kentwood

2. Approval of Minutes

There was a motion by Al Reurink with support from Jerry DeGood to approve the minutes of January 8, 2010.

--Motion Carried--

3. Treasury Report

The current balance in the DABA account is \$2,743.35, and will be adding \$1,170 from paid dues. There are 24 paid members and 8 Adopt-A-Block participants. We will be paying the bill for Tuff Turf of \$2,151.28 for weed control between 28th and 44th Streets.

Memberships were discussed; many applications for membership were delivered and many indicated that the application and fee would be mailed in. The area on the west side of Division from 43rd to 44th Street was covered by Susie Hudson from Chase; these applications should be coming in.

4. Roundtable

Tom commented on perceptions of Division Avenue and how we have to be proactive to change the perceptions.

Lee: said that they are trying to find a way for the business community to mesh with the neighborhood; he is open for suggestions. He commented that Mapleview Apartments on Madison has changed hands and is not the problem that it used to be.

Robert Duck: said that he has a concern regarding the security service for Godwin School.

Division Avenue Business Association

Minutes

Page 2

James Leach Jr: reported on the 28th Street Committee. They are looking at hiring a consultant for their 28th Street plan. Five proposals have been submitted and they have narrowed it down to 3 firms. He is working on planters for the Division area. Planters are planned around the street trees. The cost is about \$50.00 each. They are looking at fundraisers to help with the expenses.

Chris Hennessey: is from Java Cone at 52nd and Eastern

Chip LaFleur: is formerly from Godwin Plumbing and is now with Callander Realty. They list several properties in the Division Avenue area. He is looking for ideas of the types of businesses the group would like to see and whether there are any plans relating to that. The Bus Rapid Transit plan for Fisher Station was mentioned. Chip said that their company has a website where information on DABA could be provided.

Miek Endres: discussed the website. He said that the DABA website is kept as up to date as many business association websites. He gets the minutes right before the meetings and sometimes an event included in the minutes has already passed. He would like to get a list of activities that can be posted on the website. Could DABA ask each month about events for the membership and provide this information to him? He said that the way to make websites more interesting to visit is to change the content. He needs information from the association to change the content.

He said that DABA could add a place on the website that payments could be made on line or donations could be accepted. He could put the membership form on line. Also he could make a rotating banner on the webpage for the various businesses that would link to the businesses' websites. He needs someone from the association to be in communication with him. Jim Hobart said he could get the information on events to Mike. Lisa will add "items for the website" to each month's agenda.

Mike was asked how many hits that DABA has on its website; DABA last month had 446 unique hits; this means from different computers. Chip asked if Mike could provide a map to see where all the hits are coming from. The group discussed the fees for the website. Mike said that the charge is \$50.00 a month; this is already less than his regular fee. He is willing to bring it down to \$45.00 per month. DABA should be paid through June 30th of this year.

Susie said that Chase might be interested in the scrolling banner; they might be able to offer coupons for opening a new account, etc. She will check with her marketing people.

Tim Cochran: said that yesterday there was an event for Shopping Locally. Contact Megan Sall at the city for more information.

He said the motorcycle place is in operation and they are looking at converting an adjacent house into a coffee shop.

The Hope Network building may have a new tenant. Vendors may be occupying some of the open areas in the back of the building, while offices would be provided in the front. The merchandise would be new rather than used, such as in a flea market.

The city is working on ordinances to deal with medical marijuana. They are looking for regulations that would prohibit its sale in storefronts.

Wyoming, Kentwood, and Gaines are working on a form based code for Division Avenue. This is related to the provision of the Bus Rapid Transit, if it is approved by the voters. Form based codes allow mixed uses and regulate the form that the buildings take rather than the uses within. It may have an impact on Division Avenue businesses if it is adopted but it probably will not be adopted unless the BRT is approved.

Aida: said that LMCU is participating again in the Relay for Life on May 14th and 15th. They will be offering finance classes. She was asked whether the credit union is considering doing more commercial loans. She responded that LMCU is a large credit union so they are already doing commercial loans, and this will continue.

Jerry: said he found some extra banners if there are some that need to be replaced this spring.

5. Goals

Improve Aesthetics: Everyone is working on this. Jim is working on planters.

Visiting other associations: We should visit other organizations and see what they are doing and how we can improve the association. Jim said he would visit the Easttown Association and report back.

Stay in touch with cities: Ongoing—DABA has had good participation

Open House: Continue to invite city officials and find a time that brings people to the open house, without excessive cost to the association

Improvement of Safety: We will talk to the police department representatives if they are able to attend the next meeting.

Conduct a survey: Tim Cochran will send Lisa a copy of the survey for 28th Street to see if we want to do something similar, Lisa will send to the Committee.

Address Graffiti: Already doing this

Vacant Buildings: Dick Jasinski and Callander Realty will keep us informed on this

Adopt a Block: Ongoing

Promote Division: We are all promoting Division. We do not have the money to continue the Comcast commercial at this time.

Membership: Will be going door to door to get new members

Prepare for the BRT: Tim Pomorski, Tim Cochran, Lisa Golder

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Division Avenue Business Association is scheduled for March 11, 2010.

DIVISION AVENUE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION 2010 GOALS

1. IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS OF THE DIVISION AVENUE AREA

- a. Go to other communities—and to other business associations to see how we can improve our association
- b. Increase/Improve the planter program
 - i. Replace trees
 - ii. Plant perennials in other locations
 - iii. Develop a plan for financing
 - iv. Place more planters along the Avenue, and benches, etc.
- c. Increase financial resources available—grants, tax capture programs, etc. Contact colleges such as GVSU to get interns to assist businesses in identifying resources for improvement
- d. Continue clean up efforts
- e. Pursue with city the development of incentives for property owners to use a pre-selected palette when painting their properties.

2. STAY IN TOUCH WITH CITIES ON ISSUES THAT IMPACT DIVISION

- a. Sign Ordinance
- b. Lighting
- c. Property maintenance
- d. Patrol of area

3. HAVE A MORE SUCCESSFUL AND AFFORDABLE OPEN HOUSE

- a. Get available dates for both cities
- b. Make reminder calls to assure attendance
- c. Continue awards—highlight in GR Press and Advance
- d. Invite media

4. IMPROVE SAFETY OF THE AREA

- a. Promote police patrol by bicycle
- b. Meet with Ron Dressander regarding lights
- c. Get police endorsement of brighter lights
- d. Get lighting information from other communities
- e. Have Mayor and Council come out at night so that they understand the lighting issue

5. CONDUCT A SURVEY OF THE DIVISION AVENUE BUSINESSES

- a. Talk to area colleges re: the possibility of offering an internship
- b. Develop list of possible tasks for the intern
- c. Meet with intern to discuss survey and how it is to be accomplished
- d. Conduct survey and analyze results

6. ADDRESS ISSUE OF GRAFFITI IN AREA

- a. Program for notification, instructions on how businesses can take care of the graffiti themselves.

7. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF VACANT BUILDINGS ON DIVISION

- a. Continue to promote advantages of being in Division area
- b. Develop list of vacant buildings
- c. Get periodic reports from realtors/businesses regarding available properties, sales, etc.

8. CONTINUE ADOPT-A-BLOCK PROGRAM

- a. Maintain a list of participants and phone numbers
- b. Contact participants for Adopt-A-Block to clean area when necessary

9. PROMOTE THE DIVISION AVENUE AREA

- a. Seek more sponsors of the Comcast commercial
- b. Promote positives of the Avenue in the media—Contact media anytime an business expansion or any positive event takes place

10. MEMBERSHIP

- d. Increase membership to 65
- e. Encourage the active participation of membership at monthly meetings
- f. Increase members from 44th to 54th Street
- g. Promote benefits of membership—**networking**, neighborhood watch etc.
- h. Increase diversity of members—Asian and Spanish populations
- i. Involve the residents in the area by advertising meeting information in stores, schools, etc.

11. PREPARE FOR THE BRT

- a. Review final report of the charrette
- b. Become more vocal in promoting the financial benefits of the BRT for the area
- c. Become involved and understand the new zoning regulations pertaining to the BRT and transit oriented development
- d. Participate in additional meetings regarding other station locations such as 44th Street, 36th Street, 28th Street, etc.