

Division Avenue Business Association

Minutes

August 13, 2009

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 Karris, Metro Motors; Aida Slogar, Lake Michigan Credit Union; Susie Hudson, Chase; Tim Cochran, City of Wyoming; Juliette Cowall, Godwin Plumbing; Matt Rooks, City of Wyoming Police Department, Pete Leach, City of Kentwood Police Department; Lee Groth, South Godwin Neighborhood Association; John Kennedy, Kennedy Auto; Jim Kubicek, Bubble Magic; Tim Pomorski, Affordable Auto Service; Josh Wasenborg, Affordable Auto Service; Chief James Carmody, City of Wyoming Police Department

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Al Reurink with support from Jerry DeGood to approve the July meeting minutes.

3. Treasury Report

There was no Treasury report.

4. Roundtable

September 12th is the date for the fall clean-up. We will be meeting at 8:00AM at Godwin; we will need 25 people to help. Thursday September 17th there will be an Open House at Brann's starting at 5:00PM.

Jerry said that there will be an event at Kelloggsville School for the neighborhood. He will let others talk about it. He introduced Matt Rooks, a new police officer for the city of Wyoming who may be assisting the DABA when Major Lind retires. Jerry expressed interested in having some kind of appreciation event/coffee for John Lind for his retirement.

Tim Cochran: said that the parade will be on August 26th at 7:00 PM. There will be organizers to get everyone lined up for the parade. He said that the work on the 44th Street Bridge is about 3 weeks behind, but should be completed and open by November.

Juliette Cowall: said that she has provided a list to the membership of drought-tolerant plants that could be used along Division Avenue. She said that the plants need full sun. It would not work to have the plants underneath the street trees because they would all be fighting for the same nutrients and water. Discussion ensued about whether the planting could be completed during the clean up in September. Although September is a good

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time to plant perennials, there would not be time during the clean-up to prepare the soil and do the planting. Tom suggested that a subcommittee meet afterwards to discuss how to address this issue. Tom, Tim Cochran, and Juliette will meet after the regular DABA meeting to discuss.

Tim Cochran said that while they were talking about planting he would address the issue of street trees. He said that the city has applied for a grant for tree replacement, but is using this grant in the parks where the emerald Ash borer has destroyed many of the trees. He said there is another grant that can be applied for. The city has already bought the original 160 trees in 2002 and replaced 16 in 2007. The city is not in a position to make another application with matching grant funds, in part because its CDBG funds are being used for other things such as code enforcement. He said that DABA could take the lead on this; it is estimated that it may cost as much as \$5,000 to replace the trees and therefore the DABA match would be \$2,500. In addition, a grant recipient would be required to submit a plan as to how the trees would be maintained. Tom said it would be difficult for DABA to come up with the matching funds for this program.

Lisa: said the city of Kentwood is applying for a similar grant but is putting the trees in the areas affected by the Emerald Ash Borer on Breton Avenue near City Hall.

Tim Pomorski and Josh from Affordable Auto said that they would like to join DABA, and would like to see more of the businesses around 52nd Street join. They would be willing to help recruit because they know several of the owners/operators in the area. He is concerned about property maintenance in the area, especially the Four Star gas Station on Division Avenue.

Tom said that he and Steve and Jerry have tried to get businesses to join the association. He said that DABA may not be able to provide weed control to that area until other businesses join in the 52nd Street area. He gave Tim some applications for membership.

Tim said that he is also the President of the Kelloggsville School Board. There is an event planned for tonight from 5-7 PM to get the community more involved with the school and the businesses. He asked about what happened to the Bus Rapid Transit proposal.

Chief Carmody said that the Police Department is not able to do as much as it used to given budget cuts. So they are reaching out to community groups to assist them, and are building on the relationships they have. Steve said that the business community is watching people in the area that are causing trouble. He said code enforcement would help.

The chief said that that crime is up somewhat, but the biggest increase in calls for service is for domestic calls. The Police Department can't be everywhere at all times. They will need the assistance of the community.

The Police Department has specialists to assist in making the reducing crime to businesses, by making businesses more difficult to break into. One way is improvement of lighting on the site.

Discussion ensued about a group of kids that had been breaking into the car lots and stealing cars. One way that this type of crime could be reduced is by not leaving the keys out in plain view.

Many people commented on the benefits of befriending with the kids in the area. Several expressed that property damage decreased after doing this.

Lee Groth: said that National Night Out was a big success. There was about 600 people there and a lot of interaction. He said that the participation by area businesses was appreciated. He noted that John Kennedy donated 4 bicycles.

Tom suggested that we start collecting for the 2010 memberships in October. The next meeting will be held on September 10th.

5. Goals

Improve Aesthetics: Jim and Lee and working with this goal

Open House: Set date of September 17, 2009

Improvement of Safety:

Vacant Buildings:

Promote Division

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

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Division Avenue Business Association is scheduled for September 10, 2009 at 8:00 AM.

DIVISION AVENUE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION 2009 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. Meet with City
 - ii. Meet with Molesta
 - iii. Develop a plan for financing
 - iv. Promote to members - assist members in financing the planters
 - v. 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. 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

3. IMPROVE SAFETY OF THE AREA

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

4. 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.

5. 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

6. PROMOTE THE DIVISION AVENUE AREA

- a. Continue running the Comcast commercial
- b. Have Comcast people come in and discuss commercial/updates
- c. Seek more sponsors of the Comcast commercial
- d. Promote positives of the Avenue in the media—Contact media anytime an business expansion or any positive event takes place

7. MEMBERSHIP

- d. Increase membership to 60
- 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.

8. PREPARE FOR THE BRT

- j. Receive and review final report of the charrette
- k. Become involved and understand the new zoning regulations pertaining to the BRT and transit oriented development
- l. Participate in additional meetings/charrettes regarding other station locations such as 44th Street, 36th Street, 28th Street, etc.