

# Division Avenue Business Association

## Minutes February 12, 2009

### 1. Call To Order

Members Present: Jerry DeGood, Auto Finance Company; Lisa Golder, City of Kentwood, Tim Cochran, City of Wyoming; Dave Johnson, Maplelawn Baptist Church; Jim Kubicek, Bubble Magic Laundry; Jessica Savino, Beltline Bar; Steve Karris, Metro Motors; Aida Slogar, Lake Michigan Credit Union; Tim Reeves, Kelloggsville Public Schools; Jim Leach Jr. Hobart Sales and Service; Curt Behrens, Behrens Body Shop; Arelis Diaz, Godwin Heights Public Schools; Gary Ball, B-Quick Printing; Dave VanHouten, HWC, Bob O'Callaghan, Wyoming Kentwood Chamber of Commerce. Bill Vander Vennen, Stegenga Funeral Home; Lee Groth, South Godwin Neighborhood Association.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

**A motion was offered by Steve Karris with support from Bob O'Callaghan to approve the January 2009 minutes of the Division Avenue Business Association.**

**--Motion Carried--**

### 3. Treasury Report

Treasurer Gary Ball reported that there is \$1,353.49 in the budget. Some funds were spent on the hardware for the street banners. The Tuff Turf bill was also paid and the Association's insurance policy. We will be walking around to hand out the billing information. Godwin Heights Schools joined for 2009, as did Engles and Bubble Magic. The new membership forms have been printed and are also on the website.

### 4. Roundtable

Jerry discussed goals. He said that everyone should look at the goals and see what way they can assist with attaining the goals for DABA. Jim Leach and Lee Groth said they would work on the first goal—the improvement of the aesthetics of the area. Tom Brann and Jerry De Good will be working on the second goal regarding the open house. Tom will also work on improvement of the safety of the area. Everyone should help reducing the vacancies in the area. Steve Karris will continue to work with the Adopt a Block. All will continue to promote Division Avenue area. Lisa Golder and Tim Cochran will help the Association prepare for the BRT.

The pots were discussed. Last year it cost \$65 to have them planted and they did not look as good as they did the year before. Lee said that there is a master gardener that is part of the neighborhood association that may do the plantings cheaper. Her name is Liz

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Ohlman. There are about 25-26 planters. Some of the businesses want to plant their own, but then the planters might look a lot different than those that are planted by Molesta. After discussion, Steve Karris said he would look into the planters and call Molesta.

The ITP sent a letter to the Association asking for their support for the millage increase required for the BRT system. Any monetary contributions that would help with the millage campaign would also be appreciated. Mr. Van Houten said that he is not in favor of supporting the campaign because of the cost to homeowners and because the current buses do not seem to be running efficiently. After discussion,

**A motion was made by Karris with support from Kubiak to support the ITP millage campaign and to contribute at \$100 at this time to support the campaign.**

**--Motion Carried--**

Mr. Van Houten reiterated that he would rather see money put into the businesses in the area rather than in the bus system. Discussion ensued further regarding how the BRT will be an advantage to the business community.

**Roundtable, continued**

--Curt Behrens was introduced. He operates a business down 44<sup>th</sup> Street in Kentwood.

--Tim Reeves said that Kelloggsville Schools will be having Rocket Night next Tuesday at 7:00 PM. There will be activities and food.

--Dave Johnson said that Maplelawn is continuing its free tax preparation. Last year, 90 taxpayers were assisted. In the first two weeks of this year, there were already 25 applicants.

--Lee said that the association is cooperating with the inspections department to develop a vacant property list in order to have more control over the neighborhood and to limit the decline of properties in the area. If you know of any properties that have been vacated, please call Lee or the Inspection Department. Lee's number is 246-1038 or 406-9213 (cell).

--Jim said he went to the Wyoming DDA meeting. The DDA discussed the city's \$200,000 EPA assessment grant.

--Dave discussed the graduated income tax which would be better for businesses. Dave will be co-chairing the Santa Claus parade with Jerry DeGood in December 2009.

--Bob O'Callaghan discussed the Business Expo to be held at the Woodland Sports Center.

--Bill VanderVennen said that he is in his business at various hours if anyone wants him to check on their business.

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--Tim Cochran said that the presentation related to the Bus Rapid Transit has been further refined, and that a community presentation should be scheduled. We should have a flyer to announce the meetings. It would be preferable to have both a morning and an evening meeting. Both businesses and residents would be targeted for the meeting. Bob offered the Chamber of Commerce for the meeting; Maplelawn Baptist Church offered their facility as well, should Brann's large room not be available for either or both meetings. After discussion, the date of Thursday April 23<sup>rd</sup> was selected for an 8:00AM and a 7:00PM meeting. Jerry will check with Tom to see if Brann's is available, otherwise we can look at Maplelawn Baptist or the Chamber of Commerce. Kelloggsville Public Schools said they can send home flyers with the school children. Maplelawn Baptists said that they also can advertise the meeting to their congregation.

Tim also said that Wyoming is working on the budget and money has been set aside to apply the principles of the 54<sup>th</sup> – 60<sup>th</sup> Street charrette to the other intersections along Division Avenue where the BRT stations will be placed. There will be additional neighborhood meetings along the entire corridor.

Also the City is working on a grant through the DNR for tree replacement to replace the street trees that have died along Division. There is a 50% match for the grant -- in kind services can be used.

Tim also mentioned that there will be improvements made to the 44<sup>th</sup> Street interchange at US 131 that will cause some occasional street closures and delays from April to November. Traffic may also use other methods to get through the areas that are under construction that could cause congestion along Division.

Gary said that the sidewalks looked bad this year due to the issues with the removal of snow.

#### **7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Division Avenue Business Association is scheduled for March 12, 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 44<sup>th</sup> to 54<sup>th</sup> 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 44<sup>th</sup> Street, 36<sup>th</sup> Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Street, etc.