

Division Avenue Business Association

Minutes March 12, 2009

1. Call To Order

Members Present: Tom Brann, Brann's Steakhouse and Grille; Jerry DeGood, Auto Finance Company; Al Reurink, Modern RV Center; Lisa Golder, City of Kentwood, Tim Cochran, City of Wyoming; John Lind, Wyoming Police Department; Jeff Augustyn, Kentwood Police Department; Pete Leach, Kentwood Police Department; Jim Kubicek, Bubble Magic Laundry; Steve Karris, Metro Motors; Aida Slogar, Lake Michigan Credit Union; Tim Reeves, Kelloggsville Public Schools; Jim Leach Jr. Hobart Sales and Service; Dave VanHouten, HWC, Bob O'Callaghan, Wyoming Kentwood Chamber of Commerce; Lee Groth, South Godwin Neighborhood Association;

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was offered with support from to approve the February 2009 minutes of the Division Avenue Business Association.

--Motion Carried--

3. Treasury Report

Gary was not present to give the Treasury Report. Tom indicated that he, Jerry, Steve, Jim Leach, and Jim Kubicek distributed applications for the Association to the entire area. Jim said he was surprised to hear the business at 3712 Division say that this was the first time anyone had contacted him regarding the association. Steve said that the business was contacted in the past.

Dave Van Houten said he could try to get information to people south of 44th Street.

Tom indicated that there are window stickers available for members.

4. Roundtable

Bob O'Callaghan – said that March is reading month. The chamber is going to every elementary school in the city to read to second graders. The After Hours program will be held at Woodland Creek Apartments on March 12th The Business Expo to be held at the Woodland Sports Center on April 18th from 11:00AM-5:00PM. August is the Metro Cruise.

Steve: April 11th is the Clean-Up Day. We will be working on getting probationers in to help. April 23rd is the date we chose to have the charrette meeting. He asked where it is being advertised. Lisa said the websites will have the information. Bob said that the Chamber can put the information on their website also. The information should also be placed in the DABA website as soon as possible.

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Lee: said that National Night Out is in August. Last year there were over 500 people that attended; 2/3 of these were children. They will be looking for sponsors. Last year the sponsors had some good advertisement with the event. The same will be offered this year. The sponsor will also be announced at the event. The association was considering an auction; proceeds would go towards a program for remedial school and other programs.

Jeff Augustyn: said that Kentwood is looking into having another Citizen's Academy starting April 14th for 6 weeks, from 6:30-9:30. Also a high school academy will be held in June.

Tim: said that Kelloggsville is working with Wyoming Schools to try to obtain a 21st Century grant to begin an after-school program for at-risk kids. It has been very successful in Wyoming. Tim would like businesses that support this concept were asked to sign a form indicating the need in the area. He has these forms available. The program will be geared toward middle and high school students.

Major Lind: said that the Police Department has captured 5 people responsible for area robberies. They were caught in part because of the Neighborhood Watch program in the South Godwin Neighborhood Association.

There is a fundraiser sponsored by the Police Department and other departments across the country to raise money for a memorial in Washington DC for fallen officers. The event associated with the fundraiser is a bike tour called the Police Unity Tour.

Lisa: said that there will be a carnival at Woodland Mall in April. There has been issues in the past at other carnivals so the Police Department will be watching this closely.

Tim Cochran: said that the city has new sign regulations. The inspectors will be looking for signage that does not comply with the new regs. For example, the city will now only allow window signs to cover 25% of the area of a window.

Wyoming's assessment grant will be used to do Phase 1 and 2 Environmental reviews for property located at the southeast corner of 36th and Division. They hope that this will help jump start a sale of property for the redevelopment of the area. It would be a good location for the bus rapid transit station in conjunction with the redevelopment of the property.

5. Goals

Improve Aesthetics:

Jim Leach and Jim Kubicek are leading the efforts toward improving the aesthetics of Division Avenue. Jim Leach looked at the planters through Google earth and mapped them. He said there are not enough of them to make a big impact. Also they have to be watered and the flowers in the planters last year were not very attractive. He talked to Molesta Floral about replanting them this year. The cost is the same as last year. Some of the people with planters are forgetting to water them, and this is also a problem. He made a map showing how many planters there are currently and how many more would be needed.

Liz Uhlman from the South Godwin Neighborhood Association is a master gardener, and we could find out whether she could plant the planters and also maintain them for the same price that Molesta charged for the planting.

He said the Frankenmuth as in other towns with a downtown area; there are planters with flowers on the light fixtures, which can have a big impact. Watering the plants is also challenging; it would be difficult for a property owner to water the planters on a lights pole because they are so high

Tim Cochran said he was in favor of them, but the question was whether the light poles can support the weight. Ron Dressander may be able to answer that question.

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 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.

Jim indicated that part of the work plan under this goal is working with an intern. He said that before you ask schools such as Grand Valley for an intern, you need to know the kind of work that he or she will be doing, so that the internship is worthwhile to the association and to the student. After discussion, it was determined that the intern could help with the marketing, membership and newsletter aspects of the association. Tim Cochran said that Wyoming has an intern that is beginning work with the city. This intern may be of some assistance to the association.

Open House:

Tom said that he would like to get more city officials to the Open House. He wanted to know when the City Councils/Commissions of the cities of Wyoming and Kentwood are meeting.

Improvement of Safety:

Tom said that he wanted the Avenue to have a police officer dedicated just to this area, but knows this is not possible. It would be helpful to improve lighting. Major Lind said that the city has purchased bicycles that may help patrol in the area.

Vacant Buildings:

Difficult times for real estate

Membership: Working on this now

Bus Rapid Transit: We are preparing for the meeting on April 23rd.

Jerry DeGood raised the issue of the website payment. He thinks that we pay for this years' maintenance of the website. All agreed it was necessary. He thinks that the fee is about \$500.

After discussion,

A motion was made by DeGood with support from Leach to approve the expenditure of approximately \$500 for the ongoing maintenance of the website.

--Motion Carried--

Steve said that we should have more material on the website. We should get an idea of how many hits the city gets on its website. A recommendation was made to ask Mike Endres to attend the next DABA meeting to let the members know how many hits the website is getting, how we can improve the number of hits we get, and what part of the website seems to be getting the most attention. Lisa will contact Mike and ask him to attend the April meeting.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Division Avenue Business Association is scheduled for April 9, 2009 at 8:00 AM.

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.