

# Division Avenue Business Association

## Minutes November 13, 2008

### 1. Call To Order

Members Present: Tom Brann, Brann's Steakhouse and Grille; Jerry DeGood, Auto Finance Company; Aida Slogar, Lake Michigan Credit Union; Lisa Golder, City of Kentwood, Bob O'Callaghan, Wyoming-Kentwood Chamber of Commerce; Dick Jasinski, the Wisinski Group; Wayne Ondersma, The Dock Ministry; Steve Karris, Metro Motors; Tim Cochran, City of Wyoming; John Lind, Wyoming Police Department; Jeff Augustyn, Kentwood Police Department; Dave Van Houten, Window World of West Michigan and Santa Claus Parade Chair; Joel Burgess, Ernest Lorraine Associates; Jackie Brown, Maplelawn church; Doug Kochneff, 28<sup>th</sup> Street DDA; Tim Reeves, Kelloggsville Schools; Jim Kubicek, Bubble Magic Laundry; Jeff Avousand, Kelloggsville Schools

### 2. Approval of Minutes

**A motion was made by Steve Karris with support from Bob O-Callaghan to approve the October minutes of the Division Avenue Business Association.**

**--Motion Carried--**

### 3. Treasury Report

Gary Ball was not present. Tom indicated that the weed bill will faxed.

### Kelloggsville School Board:

**--- from the Kelloggsville School Board was present and indicated that they would like the study area for the 54<sup>th</sup> Street BRT to be renamed "Kelloggsville Square" This will give identity to the area. A request to change the name from Fisher's Station to Kelloggsville square has already been made to the Kentwood and Wyoming Commissions. The Kelloggsville district has been around for many years and it would be a good identity for people in the area to associate with the district.**

### 4. Roundtable

Tom said that he does not think that the DABA Board should make a decision on naming the area yet. He said it could be put on the agenda for DABA in December.

He said there was an article on the charrette. General discussion ensued regarding the area and the changes that may come with the BRT. Tim Cochran said that a code writer has been hired to write new zoning regulations for the area.

Tom reviewed the Goals, although he indicated that there will be a subcommittee to work on the goals. He said that he would like to make sure the goals include

- Open house should have more people and cost less
- wants to learn from other business associations
- increase memberships
- increase then umber of planters
- knowledge of BRT and new zoning regulations

Tim Cochran discussed the BRT and that Wyoming will be discussing this at their retreat in December.

Joel Burgess: has a background in city planning. He offered suggestions for the improvement of the area. DABA should look at what funds are available and a theme. He said he has had experience in real estate and economic development in the USA and in other countries. He has brought businesses to communities such as St. Joseph. The question is how wealth is created in a community. He has done urban and retail redevelopment and obtained monies to change streetscapes. He felt that he could offer ways to implement a plan and not have just theory. He could identify sources of funding.

Doug Kochneff: from the 28<sup>th</sup> Street DDA was present. He said the new ordinances could include some language on what color people should paint their buildings.

Steve Karris: asked Tim about the proposed setbacks in the new zoning district.

Jackie Brown: said that Maplelawn in gearing up for their new tax return assistance program. They have had computers donated and are looking for volunteers.

Aida Slogar: said that Lake Michigan Credit Union is offering scholarships to 8 students. There are 8 scholarships of \$2,000 each. They are sponsoring the Santa parade and also a movie at Studio 28 for middle school aged children.

There have been some counterfeit bills passed through the bank.

Major Lind: There have been some counterfeits; 2-3 reports are coming through everyday. The Secret Service has recently made a large arrest on this; the numbers should be decreasing.

GM closing will mean the city will take a \$900,000 tax hit.

Dave VanHoute: said the Santa parade is gearing up. There is a possibility of getting a military flyer-over. Billboards are up and information will be in the press soon.

Wayne Ondersma:

Concern regarding the pictures being taken of businesses in area. There is a concern that this is related to the BRT and that properties would be taken through eminent domain or the rents would become very high as a result of the new development.

Tim Cochran said the cities would not be in a position to buy up properties.

Wayne was concerned also about diversity. He had brought Brandon Lai to the last meeting. He said that Brandon commented that within the Asian community, where there is not cooperation between business owners, so this concept is new. There is a perception that the Division Avenue group are the good old boys that would accept someone new to the organization. The Asian business community is not always comfortable in the association.

Several people commented that they tried to make Brandon feel welcome both at the DABA meetings and in the community. Steve said maybe it would help if they had Brandon go with them to visit businesses when the membership drive is going on.

Steve said that AI looked into the tree situation. Twenty-two or so trees need to be replaced. The cost would be about \$3,900. Wyoming is not able to put the money in to replace the trees. Possibly next year we can look into this further.

Jerry said that the banners are up and hung correctly with the bands around the poles so that the banners will not tear. There were several banners made for the parade.

#### **5. New Business**

Tom, Jerry and Steve will get together to work on the new goals for the year.

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

The next meeting of the Division Avenue Business Association is scheduled for December 11, 2008 at 8:00 AM.

# DIVISION AVENUE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

## GOALS

### IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS OF THE DIVISION AVENUE AREA

- a. Look at other examples of successful area such as Rockford and Spring Lake to get ideas on how the Division Avenue could be more successful.
- b. 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

### 2. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF VACANT BUILDINGS ON DIVISION

- a. Continue to promote advantages of being in Division area
- b. Develop list of vacant buildings

### 3. CONTINUE ADOPT-A-BLOCK PROGRAM

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

### 4. 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
- e. Better website for DABA
- f. Look into other ways to promote—direct mailers, etc.

### 5. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Increase membership to 60
- b. Encourage the active participation of membership at monthly meetings
- c. Increase members from 44<sup>th</sup> to 54<sup>th</sup> Street
- d. Promote benefits of membership—networking, neighborhood watch etc.
- e. Increase diversity of members—Asian and Spanish populations
- f. Involve the residents in the area