

**Business Association
Black Forest Inn, 1 E 26th St
Wednesday, April 13, 2016**

Attendees: Andy Cohen, Bad Waitress; Erica Christ, Black Forest Inn; Geri Burns, AAUW/Gale Mansion; Felino de la Peña, Felino Spanish Academy; Araceli Perez, Marissa's Inc; Halumo Yusuf, Ame Acu, Samsam Ghedi & Fadumo Abdinur, Tasho Community; Hamdi Hassan, Preserved Pearls; Hassan Warsame, 2nd Ave S BP; Brianna Darling, Wedge Co-op, Osman Abu, Banadir Fashion Center, Paul Jablonsky, Nicollet Car Wash; Geri Jerez, Calvary Church/MPRB **Staff:** Ricardo McCurley, Lucy Lawson **Presenters:** Andrew Novak & Laura Hurley, Metro Blooms

Introductions:

Meeting **called to order** at 4:17 pm by Andy Cohen, who explained board elections would be today. The agenda and code of conduct were reviewed. A **Motion** to approve the agenda as written **Carried**. The March 2016 minutes were reviewed. A **Motion** to approve the March minutes **Carried**. Introductions were made.

Spotlight on Business – Black Forest Inn -- Erica Christ

Erica's father started the business 50 years ago in 1965, and the beer garden was built in the mid-70s. They share the kitchen with about 8 different food producer organizations. The banquet space hosts movies, performances, speakers (including the League of Women Voters), free movies once a month with free popcorn and a writers group that meets every Wednesday. Oktoberfest is a good way to bring people in each year.

Election of BA representatives to the Whittier Alliance Board

Whittier Alliance ED Ricardo McCurley called for nominations for BA Chair, and explained the duties of the position. It can take around 6 hours per month. Andy Cohen was nominated as BA Chair. Osman Dinani was nominated as BA Chair. Andy was elected Board Chair. Geri was nominated as non-profit representative. Fadumo Abdinur was nominated as non-profit representative. **Motion** to elect the slate **Carried**. Araceli Perez was nominated as for-profit representative. Osman Abu was nominated as for-profit representative. **Motion** to elect the slate **Carried**.

Metro Blooms – Stormwater project presentation – a

Metro Blooms presented an artistic stormwater collection project that has been installed in the Black Forest Inn's beer garden. Previously in spring the patio would flood, which also affected the adjacent banquet space. Now the system has more capacity and the water is filtered by the soil rather than going directly into the stormwater system and the river. Metro Blooms hopes many other similar projects will be installed this year. They also help businesses apply for grants to cover some of the costs of the projects. Small business owners are attractive to the funding agencies.

Old/New

- **Whittier Business Loans & Grants** – Ricardo is still looking for help creating a program for business loans and grants. Need to write some loan program guidelines. He has been talking with individual businesses.
- **Open Streets Nicollet** – Whittier is partnering with Lyndale on the Open Streets event this year. The Kmart parking lot will be open and we hope to have Whittier businesses set up there.
- **Bring Your Own Bag** – The plastic bag ban ordinance passed: within two years all businesses will stop using plastic bags. Rules start June 2017. It will be phased in similarly to takeout containers – with no penalties at first. People can still get paper bags, but the City wants businesses to charge for those.
- Attendees discussed addressing issues affecting the Somali community at Community Issues meetings and Business Association meetings.

Adjourn: 5:30 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lucy Lawson