



## **WA Business Association Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 9th, 2018

Whittier Alliance(10 E 25th St) 3:00pm - 4:30pm

### **Attendees:**

Araceli Perez- Marissa's Bakery- Board Chair  
Angela Ritchie- Wedge Table  
Jeff Cowmeadow- Calvary Church  
Erica Christ- Black Forest Inn  
Christina Le- Lake Wine and Spirits  
Denise McAlpin- Nuway  
Mary Kaminski- Hennepin History Museum

### **Speakers:**

Mikey Weitekamp, Stephanie Weir- Environmental Initiative

**WA Staff:** Kaley Brown, Dan Stanton, Marcus VanderSanden

### **Introductions/Call to Order**

Call to order at 3:08pm by Araceli Perez, Business Association Chair.

Agenda is reviewed. Approved.

Minutes from April BA Meeting are reviewed. Approved.

Introductions.

### **Host Highlights- Whittier Alliance**

Housing Issues Committee- second visioning session May 23rd at Calvary Church

Earth Day Clean up rescheduled for Saturday May, 12th

Clothing Mend and Swap- Saturday the 19th at Black Forest Inn

Community Building Campaign June 7-9th- working with 10 other organizations, goal is to build neighborhood pride and awareness about the neighborhood. Three day event including panel discussion. Cookout- in Simpson parking lot, and classes regarding awareness and safety strategies.

Lyndale Open Streets- Whittier table at 26th and Lyndale

Eat Street Food Music and Arts Festival- September 15th- 1pm-9pm

- Planning committee; Whittier Alliance, Icehouse, Black Forest, Brave New Media

### **2018-2019 Business Association Plans - Araceli Perez**

Araceli addresses the group on how she feels the BA can be most effective moving forward and seeks input from the group centered around. What is business bringing to community? What are we doing for the neighborhood, for neighborhood businesses, the point of the association?

Araceli likes the idea of keeping the monthly meeting structure to keep people engaged. Would like to explore the possibility of Introducing a social hour, happy hour component to the business association either after a meeting or in lieu of.

Jeff- has thought taking a more proactive approach, potentially in the form of doorknocking could be effective strategy to reach new business

Erica- Anything we are working on collectively will draw interest. Brings up examples of dining out for life, restaurant week or other events in which businesses work together.

Whittier Alliance is starting a business specific newsletter- the more information the better to promote events, logos, branding, descriptions, links to internal or social media pages are all helpful to fully promote the event.

Whittier vs Eat Street Branding

Araceli believes we could increase reach via Instagram

Would like to make effort to include Whittier areas outside of Eat Street, including non-restaurants.

Denise- International Neighborhood brand recognition. Is there potential to grow that brand as part of non-Eat Street branding.

Accentuating hidden gems and accentuating things in Whittier that are out of plain sight examples of Once Upon a Crime, Woodworking shop and Bingleys Tea.

Access to Greenway is hidden- would like to see something happen in wayfinding or beautifying Whittier access to Greenway.

Christina- Whittier BA could potentially sponsor signage on private property either Pho Tau Bay or Nicollet Car Wash to expedite the process by avoiding city processes. Could reach out to Paul about his property for creative signage.

Could reach out to Hennepin County regarding lack of signage

Christina brings up idea of revitalizing Whittier calendar as BA sponsored promotion. Araceli likes the idea of calendar.

Kaley says calendar costs roughly \$8,000 to produce.

Potentially sourcing businesses at \$1,000 dollar by-in per month of calendar- Marissas, Lake and Wine, NuWay all expressed interest in sponsoring month.

### **Environmental Initiative - Speakers**

25-year nonprofit

Collaboration - bringing views together towards environmental outcomes

Bring together business, nonprofit, government to find common ground around specific environmental issues/projects.

Business to Business Initiative- Environmental Initiative has been contracted by Hennepin County to increase outreach about their program. Hennepin County has 900,000 dollars in grant money to give away to businesses for recycling and organics waste but year after year don't give it all away, due to lack of awareness. MN Waste Wise, a non-profit Mikey previously worked for was effective using this method in St.Paul.

Their goal is to work with organizations and business associations to increase relationship with local business, they could help train the association to help them administer the program. Outside of environmental benefits they feel this can make a lot of sense for businesses from a bottom line stand point. Trash is taxed heavily while there is no tax on recycling or organic. There is also external benefit of marketing and image regarding recycling and green initiatives as customers are looking for and expect this.

What sorts of strategies do you feel would work to get businesses?

Networking events- at a participating business

One-to-one business assistance- educating staff to help business through process

Doing a site visit at one visit and inviting others is effective way to make process approachable.

Customize to each business regarding the waste they produce or the barriers they face.

Christina- If we have a grant thats tailored to the need of business or their specific barrier whether it be bins, enclosures or implementation that would be helpful.

Composting- awareness is out there but the how to is lacking, knowing that the money is out there is crucial  
Could be way to add tangible benefit

What would help this?

Starting at the finish line- a recognition for work done "gold star" "silver star" using benchmarks to work toward.  
Untapped marketing potential. Whittier Alliance promotion. Make environmental initiatives part of the way we talk about business in the neighborhood.

Every business can be improved. Even if its not full scale implementation there are small steps. Approach businesses in ways they appreciate its not all or nothing.

If business owners need it, they will be interested. Won't invent a need. Could also strive to go from ground up, get in when people are opening.

How do you feel your business can improve?

History Museum- pretty good in the staff areas about recycling. Could improve on public areas.

Black Forest- Recycle very actively, have signed up for other programs in the past

Wedge- Is active participant in recycling and organics program

Hennepin County has trouble engaging. Staff training has been good in conjunction with a participating business. Money could be available for staff time for Whittier Alliance in addition to grant funding for business. There is a pool of about 20 businesses that are willing to spread the message. Using a train the trainer method to use a grassroots approach to bring awareness to other businesses. Lake Street Council was very persistent and effective using employing this approach. Environmental Initiative will continue to work with Whittier on this program, will try to connect with Araceli about a site visit/walk through.

### **Current News and Events**

Celtic 5-Piece Band at Calvary Church Friday May, 16th

Community Issues meeting Monday May 14th, Kurt Vickman will be speaking about Good Grocer development  
Urban Works will speak about G&L Furniture development

Simpson Housing exhibit at Mia Target Wing tonight

Clothing Mend and Swap, sponsored by Black Forest and Learning In Style School, Saturday May 19th 1-4pm in Black Forests banquet room.

### **Old & New Business**

**Meeting adjourns at 5:30**

**Minutes respectfully submitted by** Marcus VanderSanden