

**WHITTIER ALLIANCE – Business Association Committee – DRAFT MINUTES**

Wednesday May 13, 2009 11:30am-1pm at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

**Present** Erica Christ (Black Forest Inn), Pastor John Darlington (Simpson United Methodist), Christian Fetsch (Natural Health and Fertility Center), Barry Gerst (Barry Gerst DDS), Elizabeth Grzechowiak (AZIA), Jada Hansen (Hennepin History Museum), Norbert Kapingiri, Tom Laing (Community Involvement Programs), Cindy Ohlenkamp (Franklin Bank), Felino de la Pena (WA board), Angela Piper (Gale Mansion), Marcy Tollefson (Washburn Center for Children), Lisa Vecoli (MIA)

**Presenters** Sculptors Mike Bigger & Norman Andersen; MCAD instructor Brad Jirka & MCAD students: Joshua Hosterman, Kaitlin Kahn, Mina Jang, Mere Pearson, Joel Peterson, Lindsay Pulver, David Skaurud  
**Staff** Marian Biehn, Karin Knudsen

**Call to Order** at 11:38am by Erica Christ, BA Chair, followed by introductions. Erica recognized the Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies. A **Motion** to approve the agenda—with the mention of Eat Street bike racks and preservation month—was **carried**. A **Motion** to approve the April 8, 2009 BA minutes as written was **carried**.

**SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS: MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS (LISA VECOLI)** The MIA is an encyclopedic art collection featuring over 80k objects collected from every inhabited continent and covering a wide range of artistic mediums and time periods. MIA was founded in the 1880s; the property was donated to the city. The original building facing 24<sup>th</sup> opened in 1915 or so, with museum expansions in the 70s (the wing on Third and the front entrance) and the Target Wing expansion in 2006. The permanent collection is free and open to the public. MIA is the largest arts educator in the state; over 100k youth attend the museum on school tours every year. The MIA brings over ½ million visitors to the museum every year. For example, the annual Art in Bloom brought in 23-26k visitors in 4 days the first weekend in May. Last year, MIA worked with the Whittier Alliance BA to help produce and distribute the Eat Street dining brochure, and their staff continues to give the brochure to patrons to encourage them to dine in the neighborhood. The museum security patrols the museum and the surrounding perimeter to try to provide a sense of safety and security to their patrons and the community. Lisa's time at the museum has seen lots of changes, including 2 replacements of the director, and work on a revised strategic plan. Upcoming special exhibits include "Sin and Salvation" this summer, and "The Louvre and the Masterpiece"—a large exhibition featuring work from the Musée du Louvre. The exhibition runs next October through January, and will only make 2 stops in the United States.

**PRESENTATION: VIRTUAL ART (BA-CPED GRANT INITIATIVE)** Using money from a BA-CPED grant from the city, the Whittier Alliance/BA contracted with two local artists plus an MCAD instructor and his class to create virtual art projects for the neighborhood. The project's goal is to give an idea of how public art could potentially enhance Whittier's commercial corridors. Each artist/group was given a commercial site and asked to create renderings or models & visuals of how art could look in the space without actually and physically being built or created on-site.

**"Toothbrush Dialogue"**—by sculptor Mike Bigger; a grouping of 40 toothbrushes standing in a half circle facing the street on the lawn. Location: 2701 Nicollet, office of Barry Gerst, DDS. **Artist's comments:** a colorful structure playing off the idea of a dentist's office with a touch of humor; made out of long lasting fiberglass with stainless steel brushes and fixed onto a base, envisioned at 7-8 feet high in bright colors; estimated expense of install and upkeep at 30k. **Attendee comments:** great advertising and promotion of the existing business; is cool, distinctive, and would be a landmark to guide people by; very original; is fun, meets the idea of really changing a building by putting art in front of it; kids could crawl around and in between—giving the artwork another use; makes the building look a little drab in color next to the bright artwork; concern about maintenance and mildew; concern about cost of replacing the brushes if damaged by a car collision, etc [individual brushes could be patched or rebuilt; damages could be sanded out]; would be expensive but long lasting.

**"Sound Sculpture"**—by sculptor Norman Andersen; a kinetic and sound sculpture with 2 sets of chimes and a rolling bell wheel on the upper front of the building. Location: 2110 Nicollet, office of AFC Mortgage, computer support, etc. **Artist's comments:** the box-like area on the second floor provides a protective space for a moving sound sculpture; aluminum tubes on the left act as giant low pitched chimes, tubes on the right act as low organ-bases pipes; as the wheel stern rolls from one end of the building to the other on the lip, the bells would shake; the performance would be on a mechanical timer so the event (of 2-3 minutes) could be scheduled for certain hours; the low pitches would occur in a random sequence so each performance event would be have a different "song"; the pipes and wheel are colorful to stand out against the building "stage"; estimated expense of 40k-50k depending on additional lighting and building upkeep. (Norman also presented another art option: a kinetic sculpture on a raised base, which could be installed for 3,500 or so.)

**Attendee comments:** is in very visible location for pedestrians: across the street there is lots of foot traffic, a busy intersection, bus stop, other businesses; could imagine people stopping to enjoy the performance as they would a musical fountain; reminiscent of church bells and their regularity; nice idea of intentional public sound that is controlled, regular, interesting; would it be a nuisance to those who lived in the building or worked close by? [can adjust the sound levels:

likely to be heard by the tenants of the building, but most sound would be projected outward and would go a ½ block or so, depending on the frequency]; would be a draw for tourists/travelers.

**“Mr. Pippi Longstockings”**—by MCAD students Josh Hosterman, Kaitlin Kahn, Teresa Audet; 2 15’ pigtailed of painted polystyrene/fiberglass installed on the sides of the building 28 feet up, and a 10’ mustache of similar materials installed on the front on the building above the door. Location: 109 E 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Joe’s Chicken Shack. **Artists’ comments:** using humor to attract the attention and interest of passerbys, as they attempt to figure out what is going on with the building; art for all ages; high and out of reach, and able to be seen from 26<sup>th</sup> as cars drive by and by pedestrians as they fall under the shadow of the sculpted pieces; idea of playfulness and a sense of randomness [the addition of a mustache to add the curiosity factor]; the pieces would be attached by heavy duty brackets; estimated cost of 30-45k. **Attendee comments:** playful, the mustache takes the piece in a different direction; idea could be extended to other nearby buildings [like noses or ears, or big toothy grins, or non-human characteristics].

**“Curious Windows”**—by MCAD students Brian Nigus and Alexandra Roche; four faux windows added to the east side of the building. Location: Joe’s Chicken Shack. **Artists’ comments:** working with the building’s own placement of windows and using the vocabulary of the building to add additional interest, mystery, and quirkiness; using similar building materials to make them look like the originals; using aluminum, adhesive vinyl and attachment brackets; placed at the edges and top of the building; estimated cost at 28k. **Attendee comments:** interesting solution to lot line [property is built right to edges of the lot]; is placed on the high traffic side and would be visible for those driving down 26<sup>th</sup>; could even slow down the traffic as they look to see what’s going on with the building.

**“Co-op Art Gallery and Community Art Project”**—by MCAD student Meredith Pearson; façade work and interior redesign to turn the building into a space for a community art gallery, a center for the community arts, and a space for creating art. Location: Joe’s Chicken Shack. **Artist’s comments:** a renovation of the existing space to create a center for community art; a self-sustained art project in which the building is the blank canvas; run by community volunteers, with support of the neighborhood association, and local business buy-in; estimated cost of 15k. **Attendee comments:** is there a way to bring a connection that would be mutually beneficial for the local businesses?

**“The Vines”**—by MCAD student Joel Peterson; green steel tubes shaped like vines that extend from the roof to an extension of the existing yellow frame that borders that top of the building; it would create a green vine canopy as the existing vines grow up the wall and onto the extension. Location: 22<sup>nd</sup> and Lyndale, Loring Car Wash. **Artist’s comments:** idea of using the existing horizontal shapes—the yellow border—to enhance and draw attention to the wall of wines on the side of the building; the yellow band would be reinforced to house a lattice of green tubes for the vines to grow onto; could create a shaded gathering space below the canopy; thinking of year-round use and how the artwork would seem to change/reappear as the seasons change; using pain green steel tubular and reinforcing the band on the building; estimated cost of 30-40k. **Attendee comments:** like how understated it is, but would also like something to be seen within it; like the seasonality: the vines losing their leaves and the structure reappearing; could hide metal animals inside that reappear after the summer has ended; nice treatment of banal building, the piping itself is a sculpted item.

**“Projected Public Gallery”**—by MCAD students Mina Jang, David Skaurud, Lindsay Pulver; using the garage doors as a location for public art. Location: 22<sup>nd</sup> and Lyndale, Loring Car Wash. **Artists’ comments:** installing a projector inside each of the garage spaces that projects an image onto each garage door, which would be made of frosted or sanded plexiglass; the images would be most visible at night, projecting art into the community (rather than art that’s found inside a space); the images could be submitted by the community, or could be edited to fit a theme; estimated cost of 50k or more, depending on upkeep and maintenance. **Attendee comments:** temptation would be to use images for advertising; could be set up somewhere else, like projected onto the side of a building; fun idea; as information is more and more tied to technology, could have links to a website for the artwork seen; space presents lots of technical challenges (of car wash environment—have to waterproof the projectors—would add to the cost); changes in technology could lead to a smaller cost; the doors are translucent already—ideas works well with existing space; could also use video panels; would be spectacular to see at night from Lyndale.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS** There is an open **For-Profit BA Seat** to the WA Board of Directors; please let any interested parties know. **Draft of the Design Guidelines for Commercial Corridors:** The Design Guidelines/Standards for the exterior design of commercial development and rehabilitation is nearing completion. Lunning Wende will likely present a revised draft at the June BA meeting. **Marketing Study of Potential Retail:** The WA BA has contracted with Maxfield Research to conduct a preliminary study of potential retail opportunities for the commercial corridors. They will present at an upcoming BA meeting. **BA-CPED initiatives for 2009-10:** please begin thinking about initiatives and projects the BA should put money toward. **Graffiti materials:** The office does have graffiti removal materials available for free for business use. **Preservation Month:** is May; please be aware of events happening all over the city. **Eat Street Bike Racks:** please contact the office if you are interested in installing racks with an Eat Street logo on them. **Meeting adjourned** at 1:08pm. Minutes submitted by Karin Knudsen. **Next meeting: June 10** at Nook & Cranny, 118 E 26<sup>th</sup> Street; 11:30am to 1pm.