

Whittier Alliance Business Association Meeting
Zeus Jones, 2429 Nicollet Ave
Wednesday, August 10, 2016

Attendees: Andy Cohen, Bad Waitress; Mel Guse, Gyst; Brianna Darling, Wedge Table; Rita Stodolka, consultant; Lauren Gryniewski, Greater Goods; Erica Christ, Black Forest Inn; Cedar Phillips, Hennepin History Museum; Felino de la Pena, Felino Spanish Club; Hassan Warsame, BP Amoco, Geri Burns, AAUW/Gale Mansion, Michelle Bruch, SW Journal **Staff:** Paul Shanafelt, Ricardo McCurley, Lucy Lawson **Presenters:** Jill Krueger, Zeus Jones; Susan Hagler, Lyndale Neighborhood News; Paul Jablonsky, Nicollet Car Wash

Meeting **called to order** at 4:05 pm by Andy Cohen.

Introductions: Introductions were made. The agenda and code of conduct were reviewed. A **Motion** to approve the agenda, with the addition of a history project about Eat Street, **Carried**. The June 2016 minutes were reviewed. A **Motion** to approve the June minutes **Carried**.

Spotlight on Business – Zeus Jones – Jill Krueger

Zeus Jones is a marketing agency and its clients include 3M and Nestle Purina. They do package designs, web designs, strategy work, etc. They have reached out to local food businesses to make a Nicollet Cook Book this year. They intend to reach out further to the Whittier community, so be aware that you might get some emails from folks in their office. They want to create a good presence, and Jill is the main contact.

The old building was a rental. They started out with one giant table, and as the company has grown, they decided to invest in their own, much bigger, space. Employees have lockers, and the working space is flexible and collaborative.

The rehab went right down to the walls, because there was a ton of asbestos in the building walls. They have kept some beams and floors. The building was previously the 5th precinct police station, an animation studio, an asian grocery and then a hair salon. The basement still had shackles to tie prisoners to the showers. They have 52 employees plus freelancers. The neighborhood has been very welcoming. All their employees are enthusiastic about Eat Street: the office is full of foodies, and they also do a ton of catering.

Item 1 – Whittier Wheels – Paul Shanafelt

The Environmental Sustainability Task Force has a project to incentivize biking in the neighborhood. Businesses offer low stakes incentives for customers or employees who bike. This is common elsewhere, e.g. the Seward Co-Op does a monthly prize drawing for cyclist customers. Whittier Wheels will provide stickers and counter signage to businesses who participate, and you can keep track of people who bike to your establishment. The City's stickers for recycling program participants are one-sided, so they look bad on one side. Need to get double sided stickers for business windows. The program offers promotional opportunities, participants will be indicated through online advertising, and events and newsletters. In terms of bike shops in the n'hood, Flanders Cycles is already in a nationwide biking incentive program, and so automatically qualify for Whittier Wheels as well. Sunrise is going to be hosting a bike event on Saturday, September 10, with Bike Cops 4 Kids helmets, food and tune ups. Will follow up on ways to partner with Whittier businesses.

The bike rack cost share program means that the City will pay up to half the cost of your bike racks. The City doesn't do a quantity discount but Dero, the bike rack seller does. There are Eat Street designs already. To qualify for the cost share program, the City has to come out to do a sidewalk visit and make sure your sidewalk dimensions are okay.

Item 2 – Open Streets Nicollet – Ricardo McCurley & Susan Hagler

Open Streets Nicollet is the only Open Streets not run by the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition; it has traditionally been outsourced to Lyndale and Kingfield neighborhoods. Whittier is involved this year, as Kmart donated \$10,000 and the use of their parking lot to the event. Whittier businesses on Nicollet can table at no cost. If you're not on Nicollet, there is a \$150 sponsorship fee to table. That includes the short term food permit, the sound permit, etc. Some businesses have already signed on, including some home-based businesses. Businesses can opt to be in the Kmart parking lot, where there will be a lot of food vendors, and a kids playground. The main stages will be further south on Nicollet. There will be crossing guards on East Lake St to protect cyclists and pedestrians. Two other streets will also be open to traffic. Susan Hagler is the ad person at the Lyndale Neighborhood News, Their September paper will be devoted to Open Streets. It will serve as a program and an extra 900 copies will be distributed to adjoining n'hoods in coffee shops and restaurants before the event. The cover will be Open Streets, not 'Lyndale News'. The paper will be published September 6. The program will include a map and deadline for inclusion in the map of the event is September 20.

Item 3 - Super Bowl Update — Paul Jablonsky

As a representative of the Whittier BA, Paul attended a Business of Sports event hosted by Destination Minnesota about the Superbowl in 2018 and the Rider Cup at the end of September. It was all big business, he was the lone voice from neighborhoods talking about small scale businesses. Virtually everything will be digital -- so the business district needs a robust digital presence. A lot of Super Bowl guests fly in the Thursday before, so there is limited time to get their attention to go to a restaurant. Event venues also have opportunities around the event. There are many corporate sponsors for the Superbowl and a shortage of venues. Meet Minneapolis has already requested businesses involved with them to reserve their banquet space for 10 days for the Superbowl. All corporate sponsors need venues for meet & greet events with customers and are not afraid to pay for venues. The Super Bowl Committee is very concerned about hotel capacity, but Airbnb will likely be big, not so much for the Rider Cup, which is very hotel-centric. Whittier is very close to the Metrodome. Need to distribute all Whittier business marketing material to Meet Minneapolis. The marketing angle is authenticity, with genuine small restaurants.

Old/New

Recycling

Business recycling grants and recycling consultations can save you money on your trash collection. Matt Kazinka from Lake St Council does everything, he's very helpful. All haulers now have to provide recycling and organics. Hennepin County offers infrastructure grants to integrate recycling initiatives into your trash handling.

Oral history of Eat Street

A historian who specializes in oral history has approached the Whittier Alliance and wants to do an oral history of Eat Street. Some WA people and a rep from Preservation Alliance met with her to talk about a rigorous history project. For the 20th anniversary, we could have a project with placards on Lake Street, a street fair, or some kind of celebration next summer, and maybe an online component. Black Forest Inn gets calls from all around the world asking about how they started the Eat Street branding. There is a lot of value in having the information out there. Hennepin History Center has a pretty good collection of menus. There is lots of opportunity for cross-partnership. WA has some historic preservation funds and there are oral history grants out there and so on. The capacity of WA is perhaps to come up with money not the people. We would need to get the right interviewers, with plenty of ways for people to get involved. Could find volunteers to pursue the stories they're interested in. Original language interviews could also be good historical documents. Many business histories are lost. Legacy Minnesota may have funds. Paul Jablonsky will supply the contact information of a Channel 2 reporter who does stories on food and community in Minnesota.

Adjourn: 5:40pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lucy Lawson.