



WA Business Association Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 9th 2017
Learning In Style 4:00pm - 5:30pm

Attendees: Grant Rockwood
Martha Nemesi Learning In Style
Denise McAlpin Nuway
Steve Horsfield Simpson Housing
Andrew Nordick Logica Law

WA Staff: Ricardo McCurley, Marcus VanderSanden

Introductions/Call to Order

Meeting begins at 3:57, Minutes approved, Agenda approved

Spotlight on Business - Learning In Style- Martha Nemesi

Learning In Style is an ELL school teaching english to immigrants and refugees with 240 students enrolled on a rolling basis. Learning In Style has been serving the community for 23 years, previously operating out of St. Stephen's and Calvary churches, moving into their current location which in 2009. The students are 70% Somali and 30% Latino and range from early 20's to early 70's and are mostly local. In addition to english language classes they offer math, citizenship and computer classes. As of last year they no longer offer Friday classes due to attendance issues and have been offering more specific seminar sessions on Fridays for things such as healthcare, role playing police interactions and other things helpful to learning how to live in a new culture. Over the 23 years over 5,000 students have passed through their doors and they have been very happy to be in the Whittier neighborhood to provide them and their clients a "sense of ownership".

NDC Business Training Scholarships (Business Growth Task Force)

The Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) offers 12 week entrepreneurial training sessions that focus on different aspects of business including growth of existing business and help with new ideas. The cost of this course is determined on a income based sliding scale and can range from \$150-600. The Whittier Business Association is proposing to offer a scholarship to any Whittier resident accepted into this program. The amount and criteria for receiving this scholarship are not yet determined but conversation centered around adequately advertising the existence of the scholarship to avoid bias to technologically savvy people or particular social groups. The amount of the scholarship was also discussed as to whether it would be a full or partial part of the cost to the applicant given that the cost of the class is sliding based on income. In addition to the scholarship, transportation in the form of bus passes and childcare being provided by the Whittier Alliance to scholarship recipients. Ricardo felt confident in WA's ability to reach out to networks and channels to equitably get word out about scholarship as well as the capacity to incorporate transportation and childcare. Ultimately the consensus of the group was that it is a project in line with the WA and Business Association and to maximize potential outreach the scholarship should be capped at \$150 per accepted Whittier resident into the program furthermore that it would be beneficial to foster a relationship with the NDC for future programming. Additional details to be figured out is how the scholarship will be administered in the event there is an excess of applicants necessitating a selection process.

Motion for \$150 scholarship to the NDC Entrepreneur Training Course per accepted Whittier applicant unanimously carries pending board approval.

Business Inclusiveness and Outreach Discussion

The topic of inclusivity and attendance of the BA meetings was again a subject with a helpful and insightful conversation surrounding why people are inclined to come. It was roughly established that the value of the meeting is directly tied to the agenda topics, if people are interested or think they could be affected by the topic they will come. A solution proposed to breach that was having time formally allotted for people to bring up issues more organically within the agenda rather than vying for agenda topics. Another point was the diversity of business in Whittier making it difficult to bring value into the meeting for all attendees, potentially creating task forces for different sectors of Whittier business. Another key was providing some consistency in timing. People enjoy the rotating location as it lets people see different spaces and meet different people however a more consistent time would allow people to schedule around possible attendance.

Big Ideas Grant Voting

A representative from TigerLion Arts was present to pitch their Nature play happening in Washburn Fair Oaks Park. The play is an interactive play focusing on the friendship of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and using the natural space of the park to convey the transcendentalist ideologies and relationship with nature within our own urban setting. There will be 8 performances for adults and a presentation for a school per day.

Ricardo presents for Trailhead Games, a local gaming company. Trailhead is proposing a role playing game for students at Whittier International that will interactively show students about energy consumption through decision making. They would run the game for 4-5 times each time for 100-150 students plus the potential for an adult version.

Ballots are handed out to attendees for voting.

Other Announcements

Nicollet Open Streets is coming up and Whittier businesses are encouraged to be apart of that and boothing for Whittier businesses will be set up in the K-Mart parking lot. A \$150 dollar sponsorship fee is requested but not required and businesses located on Nicollet are free. Erika from Lyndale Neighborhood Association is point person for boothing.

[The Nuway Annual Picnic](#) is coming up and people are encouraged to attend there will be a variety of family friendly activity. It is from 1:00-4:00pm on Saturday, September 9th at Nuway located at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue S.

Meeting adjourns at 5:47pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marcus VanderSanden