



WA Business Association Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 8th 2017
Mefe Charter School- 2201 Blaisdell Ave
4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Attendees:	Andrew Norick	Logica Law Firm
	Laura Ford	Innate Foods
	Andy Cohen	Bad Waitress
	Paul Jablonsky	Nicollet Car Wash
	Martha Nemesi	Learning in Style
	Jesse Oyervides	Whittier Board Member
	David Schuster	Property Manager
	Joan Little	Director MEFE
	Mohamed Ali	MEFE
	Abshir Hirsi	MEFE
	Steve Rudd	MEFE
	Francis Freeman	MEFE
	Ryn Kelly	MEFE
	Katie Ross	MEFE

WA Staff: Ricardo McCurley, Joey Whitesman, Marcus VanderSanden

Guest Speaker:

Introductions/Call to Order - Ricardo McCurley

Meeting begins at 4:10pm. Introductions are conducted and the meeting agenda and February meeting minutes are approved.

Spotlight on Business - MEFE Career Pathways Charter School 6-12-Dr. Joan Little- director

MEFE stands for Metropolitan education for future employment. They are changing the name in the next year to Career Pathways. The building was formerly the Minneapolis Urban League High School. Dr. Little introduces MEFE's staff and describes the school with following key points:

- MEFE has many English language students, offers business courses, and helps with resume/ job prep
- Teacher-led school: new and developing leadership model in public schools
- Dr. Little is more of a convener and facilitator and has been an educator for 25 years /Working in charter schools for 8 years
- Kids come from 25 zip codes throughout the city
- 90% english language learners
- Public school funding from state but school is in its own district
- Presentations are given to students from the community (ie law students describing street rules)
- Youthbuild Program- one week students at school in regular classes, next week out in community helping build homes
- Basic computer skills for 7th/8th graders, resumes for older students.
- Mock interviews / assistance with resumes from WA and business community
- Community members are welcome to help students with learning

- Currently 100 students Goal: 125
- Advertising: Word of mouth best way but also do mailings and have social media
- Building needs a lot of repair, found new place in community still finalizing plans so can't release location
- Primary customer is credit recovery kids and newcomers (new to country)
- Breadth of experience from students and their backgrounds. About 25 graduating this year
- Youngest 7th grade, oldest 19 (super seniors)
- Various reasons students step out of school for a time
- Experiential learning brought to classroom
- Charter School structure in MN has Charters as their own districts
- Full and part-time 17 staff members
- Close at noon on Fridays, many students go to mosque. Starts earlier other days
- Food from CKC (Caravan Kids Catering): food is Kosher and Halal
- About 50% receive instruction to speak better English, Many multilingual students

Minneapolis Downtown Council Platform Statement

Review the statement and find Neighborhood overlap for Whittier Business District

The Platform Statement discusses what's important for businesses in this municipal election year Whittier is unique in proximity to downtown and that many business owners in whittier are also residents of Whittier- so there is opportunity to have a political voice. As a Business Association we can do a couple things in response to this statement: acknowledge, make a similar or different statement, or no action

Key Questions: What would WA businesses like to see as outcomes of next municipal race? Any policies we want to support and send on to the board? The downtown platform is a potential starting place for a conversation about city ordinances and policies for small businesses. For example opinions on:

Safety

Walkability, Greenness, aesthetic/ lighting

Competitive Business Environment (sick leave, minimum wage, etc.)

Comments:

- Concern with downtown saying key driver of economic prosperity is downtown (neighborhoods play an important role)
- We share some key pieces with downtown- ie services for people experiencing homelessness
- How comparable is Whittier to downtown?
- Crime: Whittier is one of Highest in city for police calls/reports but average per capita
- One of the most accident prone intersections in state- Franklin/Nicollet (traffic, crimes of opportunity)
- Walkability? We have a pedestrian overlay- development guided towards being pedestrian-friendly
- Jesse brings up transit issue with bus stop being moved from Pillsbury to Grand (changed due to city pedestrian overlay?)Metro Transit vs. City jurisdiction
- Recent downtick in perceptions of safety in downtown. Whittier surveys? Whittier info: street harassment group, 5th precinct info., Franklin Nicollet safety group
- If platform made by BA, Definitions should be tailored to Whittier
- Whittier businesses and neighbors want an active, welcoming environment- Not a lot of 24-7 businesses
- No need to support document- more relevant to downtown

Business Association Vision/ Potential Policy Statement

- Should address needs of small businesses - example: property tax relief (shifting tax value from downtown core to businesses and residents around the downtown core. Buildings downtown not always paying fair share
- We could facilitate a session to make Whittier B.A. platform and get viewpoint out to Council/ candidates
- Safety for both visitors and residents essential / Uptick a couple years ago in crime, safety of customer is a priority

- Visually, Nicollet Corridor looks good
- How to break perception of neighborhood not being safe
- The 3 tenets of the downtown statement apply to Whittier in their own way (focus on Whittier's priorities)
- Views on density, parking, new developments could be important
- Micro apartments and their effect on neighborhood and business
- High density could be good, means more customers
- Density coming and growth is projected
- We should be proactive with developers but not get into the nitty gritty
- If there is market demand they will put it in ground level retail
- More vacancy now than before possibly because of uncertainty with city policies on Minimum Wage

Follow up with businesses and see if we can get participation to develop platform

Old and New Business

\$15 Minimum Wage

- Updates and Planned Listening Sessions (Jungle Theatre next week)

Eat Street 20th Anniversary

- Whittier Community Event
- Discussions ongoing for Community Festival bring attention to Whittier community and Eat Street Phenomenon
- Saturday June 3rd
- Close off Nicollet ave between 26th and 28th
- Food vendors from local businesses and local retailers
- Music performances
- Info. booths for non-profits, gov., etc.
- Budget- will need some corporate sponsors- still in development
- Stages in parking lots- rock/jazz stage as well as cultural stage/ kids area for families
- Each stage would have program director and programming 6-8 hours of programming
- Before most other festivals in the Summer. Same weekend as Grand Ole Days though
- Ramadan starts May 26th
- Hours of event: 11am to 10pm (music stops at certain time)
- If you have things planned for kids, parents will stick around (haven't had that for a while)
- WA would cover insurance and secure other licensing requirements for beer gardens, food, etc.
- Younger crowd in evening hours, families during day
- Logistics are being planned first then a call for volunteers

Eat Street Oral History Project

- Joey gives updates on project: interviews are underway and fundraising from 20th anniversary will help grow the mediums and audience for final project (possibility of documentary, book, etc.)

Whittier Farmer's Market

- Seeking market manager/ call for vendors
- Whittier was the favorite market for one of the attendees. Why? The culture and diversity
- Last year change in vendor popularity over time

Other Announcements:

- Last BA Meeting for Andy

Meeting adjourns at 5:40p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joey Whitesman.