



### WA Business Association Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 8th 2017  
Learning in Style- 2200 Nicollet Ave  
4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

<b>Attendees:</b>	Martha Nemesi	Learning in Style
	Michelle Bruch	Southwest Journal
	Paulette Will	Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging
	Gil Bessard	Tasks Unlimited Inc.
	Jasha Johnston	Nightingale, Tilt, Mortimers
	Ky Guse	GYST Fermentation Bar
	Herb Frey	Learning in Style
	Peri Jo Mckay	Chroma Apartments
	Andrew Nordick	Logica Law Firm
	Araceli Perez	Marissas Inc.
	Erica Christ	Black Forest Inn
	Paul Jablonsky	Nicollet Car Wash
	Paula Rodjur	

**WA Staff:** Ricardo McCurley, Joey Whitesman

**Guest Speaker:** Allison McGuire- City of Minneapolis

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#### Introductions/Call to Order - Ricardo McCurley

Meeting begins at 4:04pm. Introductions are conducted and the meeting agenda and January meeting minutes are **approved**.

- Jasha Johnston is added to the agenda to speak on liquor license for mortimers

#### Spotlight on Business - Learning in Style

Martha Nemesi- Director

Learning in Style (LIS) is an English language learning school for adult immigrants. LIS has been in the current building since 2009 before that they were at 26th and Blaisdell. The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph updated the building to suit the school's needs. LIS serves a diverse clientele- 60% from East African nations, 30% from the Americas, the rest other Europeans/ Americans. Clientele ranges in age from 22-65 with a full time staff of 19 members and 20 volunteers who help teach. LIS runs like a school with same teacher, agreements for attendance, and students are tested every 40 hours. Basic math, computer skills, and citizenship classes are also taught. LIS also works with a sponsor- family organization/ gift matching program that helps with bus cards, emergency cash, etc. There are reading programs for parents and children that promote reading to children. Most students live in the Whittier neighborhood.

LIS was mentioned in a "hiring locally" conversation in the November BA meeting. They accept volunteers to be teacher's aids and for one on one conversations with students.

## Reissuing Class E liquor license for Mortimers (2001 Lyndale ave)

### **Jasha Johnston**

Jasha started off at mortimers years ago and is the co-owner of Nightingales Restaurant with his wife. The Owner of Mortimers past away 2-3 years ago. Jasha made an offer on Mortimers with partners CPM. The real estate of the Mortimer's property is worth so much money that the bar and restaurant can't support it so they partnered with CPM and found a way to keep the bar included in new plans for the site. They will tear down back segment including Gringos Bar and make some updates to Mortimer's including upgrading the menu-using chefs from nightingale in the kitchen.

Mortimer's will stay a bar but expand as a restaurant. There will be a mixed-use parking lot for patrons of the restaurant and CPM property residents (8 spots for the restaurant). The CPM building is looking to cater to pedestrians. The

Wedge Co-op is also on board with the plan. Changes to Mortimer's should come by Mid-May. There is a desire to clean up the Franklin/Lyndale corner without changing it drastically.

**A Motion** to recommend approval for class E liquor license for Mortimers is **approved**.

## Discussion of \$15 Minimum Wage

Background- Many people in the community and Minneapolis Council Members are supporting \$15 minimum wage. There are different views and concerns coming from businesses in the neighborhood so the Whittier Alliance wants to hear from them. Tammy Wong of Rainbow chinese brought this issue to Ricardo's attention. A dynamic is in play with restaurants in the city- A lobbyist was hired for restaurant groups to get exemption from the rule. Joey shares his notes from the Listening Session held by the Minneapolis Business Advisory Group on January 25th and describes the city's process in listening to major stakeholders and collecting feedback in order to prepare a recommendation to the City Council in May.

Ricardo then discusses other resources/ research on minimum wage hikes from studies in New York State and from the University of Washington in Seattle. Below are the key points from the research presented and discussion that followed:

- In other cities there is a large versus small employer divide in terms of years of time to implement increase in the minimum wage
- Retail, health and social services, and restaurants most affected
- In many other places where \$15 minimum wage has been introduced, there are not sizable, competitive cities right next door (i.e. St. Paul)
- Many council members do support this increase
- Raising prices will be a way to make up for tiny margins in many businesses in industries affected, especially restaurants
- Fear of businesses leaving the city
- Do we want a city and neighborhood where only high-income people can come out to eat?
- If prices are going up 20-25%, you have a whole bunch of customers you're leaving behind
- This would Unintentionally create a huge class divide in social and public life of the city
- There is an organic rhythm to the way wages rise
- \$9.50 an hour is state minimum wage
- Creative solutions/ benefits and schedule flexibility in working with people is taken out of the equation if this is implemented
- The requirement would not allow businesses to use creative solutions to solve problems
- Separate category for tipped employees would be a good thing
- The increase would limit the creatives ideas you have for your own food business
- Tipping system is outdated and not equal but it is ingrained. A wash occurs in paying more for item but tipping less at the end. Tax consequences of including tips in your paycheck are discussed. Businesses are paying taxes on tips

- Businesses are already seeing a narrowing of customers in Uptown with Millennials and their consumer choices. Overall economic conditions changing what and how people buy
- Automation and job-loss could be an unintended consequence

### **\$15 Minimum Wage discussion continued**

- With a wage of \$15 an hour you can make it and support yourself
- National companies will not likely move if investment and business already located in Minneapolis (already used to higher minimum wage on the coasts)
- Consequences for Non-profits; 2 components: hiring coordinators/ people with bachelor's degree more difficult with wage compression. Other component is at Tasks Unlimited we work with people with disabilities, partnering with government and private businesses. This will change the dynamic of who we will hire. In theory you could be based elsewhere and have a competitive advantage to businesses in Minneapolis.
- Argument that state, not cities should decide. Federal allocations at \$10 when city is requiring \$15
- Whittier Alliance Internships- Could affect how many interns we bring in
- Contract-work could possibly be used to get around the rule
- Sentiment that certain exemptions could be harmful and unfair- for example, dishwashers working arduously while housekeepers slacking in the same hotel
- There are benefits of workers making more money- productivity increases, less sick time
- Looks like city council will support \$15 minimum wage but possibly no vote until May when recommendation from the Listening Sessions and Deputy City Coordinator are sent to the council
- At some point Whittier Alliance could come up with a formal stance if a motion is made at the BA meeting
- Candidate forums should address how people running in the 10th Ward and how candidates for mayor feel about this issue
- Recent direction of city council has been addressing social issues in a way that is idealistic and not realistic in terms of the needs of small businesses. Small businesses get taxed at same rate as Target. We're pushing for progressive values and policies without giving anything to small business
- Increase could be an extreme burden to small businesses especially restaurants: We are feeding people, supporting farmers, and we can't even make it.

### **Speaker- Alison McGuire, Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights**

Allison introduces the topic of the City's enforcement of public accommodations antidiscrimination laws and what the legal role/ responsibilities of businesses are in situations of discrimination. Her Colleague Brian Walsh is in charge of sick and safe time implementation and the City is being sued over its recent safe and sick time ordinance so he could not speak at the meeting today. July is when the sick and safe time ordinance would go into effect. Allison is a senior executive in the city's Dept. Of Civil Rights, representing people who feel they have been discriminated against. A few months ago CM Abdi Warsame put forth an ordinance stating that if people feel have been discriminated in public accommodations they have support from the city. She then describes the ordinance, its background, and several examples of its use:

- Responsibilities of employers and patrons in cases of discrimination are discussed (a handout is also passed out)
- The ordinance essentially "underlines" the existing city laws concerning discrimination
- There's been a couple visceral news stories recently- In Twin Cities suburb, a beer bottle was smashed in the face of Ethiopian women. If this had happened in Minneapolis with this city law what would the employer or owner have to do? Toss them out. There is responsibility of employers to stop racism, nationalism, etc.
- US bank stadium one of the Vikings games- white patron said to person of Indian descent go back to your own country. Person was punched by racist and taken to security but they said they couldn't do anything
- There are liabilities for employers that don't comply- an investigation occurs if discrimination case is reported within a year, the business has 30 days to respond and then decision made by Department of Civil Rights

- Another example is recent dress code enforcements by clubs that are different for people of different races
- As a business owner my responsibility is to make it safe and welcoming. If something occurs that changes that status, is business owner liable? Yes
- 95% of cases rule on the side of business because burden of proof on complainant
- TCF shut down all accounts of Muslim clientele recently and the department brought a case against them
- Settlement agreement usually equals money + training
- Walgreens case where employees mistook the wrong person as a shoplifter
- We're in "Nice Minnesota" not in deep south so it is harder to prove discrimination intent

### **Old and New Business**

- Dining Guides and additional advertising opportunities
  - Coming out next week/ City Pages solicitation
- Eat Street Oral History Project / 20th Anniversary
  - Interviews are scheduled, we need to raise money, a kickstarter type campaign is in the works- 200 eat street cookbooks have been purchased to give out as incentives
  - WA is still looking for more incentives- video, book, museum exhibit
  - June 3rd rough date for Eat Street Anniversary Event
- Whittier Farmer's Market-Seeking Sponsors
  - Calvary Church started- averaging 300 people, 9:30-1. We are supporting them this year to continue experiment and to invest in the community. If interested in sponsoring, contact the Whittier Alliance office

### **Other Announcements:**

- Andy is stepping down as BA chair- we are seeking new chair
- In April we elect board members that represent the BA as well as a BA chair

Meeting adjourns at 5:46 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joey Whitesman.