

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes Draft
July 22, 2021 6:00-8:30 PM
Zoom Meeting

Present: Cyndi Hovey, Daniel Perez, Deja' Jendro, George Rishmawi, Kami Brodie, Nate Rastetter, Nick Hutchinson, Shinjan Sengupta, Stephanie Brown, Sydney Burroughs

Absent: Nate Broadbridge

Non-board Community Members:

Staff: Kaley Brown, Robb Larson

Call to Order at 6:05pm by Cyndi Hovey

-The agenda is reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda. Seconded. Motion passes.

-The Standard of Conduct policy with a note on conflicts of interest.

-The community agreements are shared and read aloud.

A round of introductions is done.

Discussion question: How are you today emotionally and/or energy-wise on a scale from 1-10 (1 = struggling/totally depleted, 10 = grounded/fully rested)

Review Strategic Plan. Identify two bullet points, each under a different pillar (Community Engagement, Biz/Institution/Orgs, Housing, Org Sustainability), that you are excited to help influence through being on the board this year.

- Community engagement:
 - Bring in more community members to our mission and spread awareness of WA's work
 - Eliminate barriers between WA and other organizations
 - Community engagement has suffered a lot over the last year, and there's a lot we could do to bring it back
 - Make our meetings more welcoming
 - Pursue more opportunities for leadership
- Housing:
 - Promote a clear vision for Whittier's built environment
 - Use the developer scorecard to bring in more community input
- Businesses, institutions and other organizations:
 - Connect businesses with the community and loop everybody in to WA's work
 - Promote Whittier as a destination for people who live outside the neighborhood, because we have a lot to offer
 - Partner with co-ops in the area
- Organizational sustainability:
 - Increase awareness of Whittier Alliance and build partnerships with other organizations
 - Dig into documents and policies and review for sustainability working with YWCA
 - Create processes for passing on institutional and neighborhood knowledge

Survey Report Back

- Shinjan will lead the effort to put together a hybrid model for future board meetings.
 - MCAD and Calvary Church have been put forward as potential in-person meeting locations.

- Board experience survey: Time is precious, and the time we give to WA is appreciated. We can save time by not repeating information that is already in the cover memo, so it is to everyone's benefit to come prepared by reading the cover memo and holding each other accountable to make meetings as effective as possible.
 - The hope is that by not repeating what's in the cover memo, we can shorten the length of meetings.

2022 Grant Priorities Discussion

- Grants we have/are applying for have fall/winter deadlines and will fund 2022 projects. RFPs will be released soon that will guide our funding priorities for next year.
- Eat Street Festival (2018, 2019) was before K-mart development, and before we acquired a vacant lot to develop. We are trying to be proactive about the commercial displacement piece as well. We have a lot of competing priorities at the moment and limited staff capacity to execute projects and apply for grants.
- What kind of grants should we be going after and prioritizing?
- Eat Street Festival pros and cons:
- PROS:
 - An opportunity to engage and build relationships with a large portion of Whittier businesses and nonprofit orgs all in one event
 - A good, visible vehicle to market WA and let people know about the organization/get involved
 - Volunteer recruitment opportunity - variety of tasks/commitment levels
 - It's fun!
- CONS:
 - It takes an enormous amount of staff time and energy
 - It's expensive at the scale we've done so far (about \$40k not including staff time/costs)
 - Funding sources are unreliable year to year - has been funded largely by grants that are not guaranteed each year
 - Limits what other project work, grants, opportunities we can pursue
- Eat Street Festival is an important part of our strategic plan.
- Q: Have community members offered input in the absence of the festival? Are there other smaller events we can do? What would it take to do Open Streets here? Community gatherings are important. Is it easier to do now that we've done it twice?
 - Community members were disappointed but understand that it's a pandemic. Main business partners have always been the most interested parties, which is 4-5 people. We haven't received a massive blowback to not having the festival. There are a lot of variables every year and it's always a challenge to put it together.
- Q: It's in the city's best interest that we put this on. Are there tourism dollars or other city sources of funding that would be large enough to offset the staff commitment?
 - In 2018 and 2019 we were funded in large part by the city through their Great Streets program. That's why we were able to do it in the first place, it didn't cover everything but a lot of the expenses. We applied last year for a modified version of the festival that was responsive to COVID but would still allow us to do something - we didn't get the funding. That's why we're trying to repurpose the MRAC arts access grant. There's a broad benefit to the city but the funding has not been consistent. There were a lot of other priorities for the city this year to fund.
- We should look for alternatives that are smaller-scale but still engage the community. We can do better, but we're also all working at a reduced capacity because of COVID.
- Would it be possible/cost-effective/desirable to do something in the parks (Whittier/Washburn Fair Oaks)? It's difficult and costly to close the streets and we have great parks that could lend themselves to events.
- Any event we put together could be focused on the 2116 Nicollet and increase engagement with that project. Can we host a fundraiser there for ESF? Maybe it's possible to merge ESF with small-scale events at the lot.
- All our efforts should be focused on the lot, and it's a better use of our resources. Hosting ESF sounds like a daunting task. We can host a block-party reveal for the lot.

- We can use this year's grant money to put together a block-party event and create a stage next door for live music, and use the lot for an art space.
- Calvary is hosting a second block party on August 11. The first one was really cool and costed 100s of dollars, not 1000s. We could host a smaller-scale event - could we pick two orgs in the neighborhood per event to sponsor and build those relationships? We can do it if we all work together.
- We can get in touch with the Open Streets organizers. How do we pay for closing the street? We could use the lot and just close the street for the block that it's on.
- A full-scale ESF isn't feasible this year, and we aren't obligated to have any sort of festival. It would be cool to have a smaller-scale event. We can use the MRAC grant for a mural or a dance performance.

Policy Review & Anti-Racism Work

- We've partnered with YWCA to pursue both strategic planning and policy review for Neighborhoods 2020, and internal staff/board training
 - Cyndi shared the Strategic Planning with YWCA timeline
 - We want to have a full board before we do the Intercultural Development Inventory as a board, so the nominations committee will be an important priority. Kami and Daniel have volunteered; we still need two non-board WA members.
- Q: Are these trainings engaging and interactive and fun? If we do them on weekends can we do something to make them more enticing?
 - The sessions will be engaging with heavy and complex topics but are positive for relationship building.
 - We can plan social events after the sessions since we'll be gathering anyway.
 - We will need to have the trainings either once per month for two hours or on weekends. Cyndi asked board members to indicate interest in monthly weekend sessions with a meal following.
 - We will have to take staff time into account as different priorities come up throughout the year.

Secretary's Report: All information is in the cover memo.

The June board meeting minutes are reviewed. **A motion is made to approve June minutes. Seconded. Unanimous approval.**

Treasurer's Report: In May we spent down the PPP loan by \$12,800. We also received ~\$49K from the CPP Contract. There was an issue with Robb's first paycheck that was resolved retroactively as you can see in the June financials on the employee advance line. We also distributed \$3,000 in emergency aide to neighbors.

In June we made the executive decision to close the Sunrise checking account x0252. It was costing us a monthly fee to keep it open and moving it to our money market account at least means we will be making money off of it. Kaley should be doing this transfer sometime in July. We also decided to move all but \$90,000 from our general checking to the money market because of the surplus of funds. We received \$7,500 from the CPP Contract. The PPP funds were completely spent and we need to work with our accountant and Kaley to remember to file for forgiveness. July rent was paid early which should balance out next month in the financials.

Motion to accept May financials. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

Motion to accept June financials. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

WA Board Google Folder

- Cyndi will email information about the shared Google Drive folder for the board

Anonymous Board Demographics Survey

- Completely anonymous, Kaley will be the only person who uses this for grant applications. There will be another opportunity to share elements of your identity that you want to be known to the board and community.

Acting Committees

- **Housing and Land Use**
 - Discussed ongoing projects, including a lot of transportation-related projects: Lyndale 4-3 lane conversion pilot program, Soo Line Garden ADA ramp, 112/106 Lake development and mural, 102 Lake St predevelopment grant, Common Bond addition/renovation project, Whittier/Lyndale bikeway
- **Community Engagement**
 - We brainstormed ideas around public safety, community building, sustainability, etc. We talked about what the committee will do this year. Minutes are in the board packet.

Announcements, next steps

- Lyn-Lake Street Art Festival August 7-8
- Calvary barbecue and blues Friday 7/23 at 7
- Calvary block party August 11

Ongoing Projects, Board Projects List

- Add your name to the Board Project Sign-Up by highlighting the blank line under the project(s) you're interested in and adding a comment with your name.

Closing question: What is one thing you're looking forward to for the second half of summer?

Motion to adjourn at 7:59 pm. | Minutes respectfully submitted by Robb Larson.