

NLBID BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 11, 2020 11:00 AM
VIRTUAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Matt Bell, Gwendolyn Carry, Mark Charry, Dorothea Gamble, Courtney Haverkamp, Owen Kamihira, Richard Maimon, William Reed, Ira Upin, Matt Ruben, John Pack . Gwendolyn Carry joined late.

NLBID Staff: Kris Kennedy, Pam Simpson

Guests: Tom and Dave from Urban Villiage

Meeting commenced at 11:10 am

Review of prior month's minutes.

Approved as written.

ASSESSMENT COLLECTION

Status: Continue to receive payments and businesses are reaching out. We have exceeded prior year's collection and are at a 76% collection rate. To increase collection rates, BID hopes to find appropriate ACH avenue that can make online payments easier. Will need to find emails for property owners as addresses is sometimes the only contact info we have.

CRIME REPORT

Overall, the neighborhood didn't see much damage in the nights following the protests. There were property owners who decided to board windows. There were some commercial break ins but neighbors stepped up to call in the police. The 26th is asking businesses to report damage.

RETAIL RECRUITER

- This month has been about getting back to recruitment
- Spent a lot of time getting data ready for our new CRM which will help us keep track of businesses property owners, tasks and projects. Will be ready next week.
- Moving forward with a new look for the Available Spaces page which will include a new directory and an interactive map. Reviewing marketing materials
- Updated vacant property list with physical tour and talked along the way with business owners when something was open.

- New businesses – working with a foot doctor and a gym to find space. Also the wellness business going into Penn Herb not signed yet but getting closer – has a backup in the neighborhood if it doesn't happen and Penn Herb.
- Toured the site at 806 n 2nd – they are at a point where they will complete when they have tenant. 2400 sq ft and basement storage perfect for a restaurant – opportunity there to talk with owners about sidewalk before they complete the project.
- Have reports that 809 N 2nd has sold and the owner will put his business on first floor – has been pending since before shut down.
- There is a report that another restaurant will close. Pam is tracking down property owner and will call restaurant to ensure rumors are true.
- Have another report that there is a deal close to signing at Wahlburgers in the Rialto. National chain but still confidential.
- Focusing efforts now on recruiting a hardware store. Reached out to four in the area where the businesses were recommended.
- Reports that 2 new restaurants are opening: A West African restaurant Suya Suya at the corner of 4th and Fairmount and a Puerto Rican restaurant Café at 3rd and Cambridge.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Working on SEO optimization of the website. Has created landing pages and other content to raise our ranking. Cocktails to go and Black owned businesses now have new landing pages. Working on a FAQ page with the hope new content will deliver increased traffic to the site. Working on social media and optimizing it. Need to work with J2 to develop a plugin that will help with social media integration.

Starting a back link program and partnering with NLNA to have our link on their site and work with them on content overlap. Would like to work with businesses to have them also include a link to our site to improve our overall ranking and domain authority.

EVENTS

Draft City applications for Temporary Street Closures to benefit restaurants are out. Applications are much like event applications and BID will be the applicant and will shepherd the effort and complete the application probably block by block to ensure we get participation by businesses who want to be included. Will most likely start with one day or one weekend and see how it progresses and then can extend depending on how businesses feel. There will be a checklist for restaurants and an agreement for them to sign and BID will work to ensure restaurants understand the process.

BID is working on Audio tours to provide another experience to visitors. Without other events, this is something additional for visitors to do while in NL and adds to our media portfolio.

Commerce Department will be the funnel for Open Streets and have proved guidelines and a checklist for restaurants to follow for outside seating, cafe seating, streeterys, open lots seating and parklets. BID is looking into rentals for barricades, cones or what will be necessary. Draft guidelines are not currently strict about the barriers.

MARKETING

Concentration is on the website and the SEO optimization project. The committee is also looking at ways to communicate to visitors how to get around especially during the upcoming street closure water project. Signage with maps and things to do maybe starting at the subway station that leads people down the street “breadcrumbing” them into and through NL. Possibly infilling with interactive decals or stencils that lead the way through the street closure route.

CLEANING AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Parklet application is submitted. Asking for \$30,000 for a location near Just Cravings. Money will help with some landscaping and with the first one completed; the hope is to do more of them. Hoping to use unemployed or underemployed architects in the neighborhood to help.
- With shut down, Tree plan is delayed until fall.
- BID hopes that Banners can be funded internally and with working with contractors at the moment.
- Bike Racks are ready and BID is lining up installation.
- 4 more Big Bellies are soon to be ordered, 2 from 2019 FY and 2 from 2020 FY budget
- The committee has appointed a Subcommittee to look at creating guidelines for street furniture.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Committee has been focused on security for the last few weeks. There have been two break ins in the 800 block at Liberty Parcel and at Christini motorbikes where neighbors were alerted and called police. Arrests were made but incidents have caused the committee to recommend and hire a private security team for a week to patrol the area.

The security team did a risk assessment and reported the committee who said they are considering both short term and long-term solutions. Short term solutions, which

could also be used in the long term included walking, bike or car patrols. The committee felt that while the patrol worked for this situation it is probably financially unsustainable for the BID. Neighborhood watch programs were offered but discussion from Board members felt these were problematic and episodic. Volunteers tend to leave and these too are unsustainable and less effective. The committee recommended cameras with recorded footage as the most efficient and effective method for protection. It was pointed out that the goal of cameras is less of a deterrent or to catch something in progress but more of a way to catch the offender later. There was discussion around camera and their effectiveness. Not all board members felt this was a good use of the BID's finances. There was discussion about whether or not the businesses might contribute to a camera program or should there be a microgrant set up for businesses who want cameras. Committee members felt strongly that cameras should be considered and would like to continue the conversation.

The Water Department Project timeline was discussed. While the BID thought the project was due to start soon, the timing looks like it is delayed. Permits have not yet been obtained so highly doubt street closure will start soon. Pedestrian safety is the major concern of the BID and surrounding businesses. The current plan does not take into consideration the construction currently affecting the intersections at 2nd and Germantown. The BID would like to see safer pedestrian walkways than what is currently proposed. It was recommended that Kris reach out the Water Department and let them know specifically that our concern is safe passage for pedestrians that is clearly marked with signage and let them come up with the plan. It was suggested Kris reach out the Rep. Squilla's office to also voice concerns with the lack of communication. Kris will also coordinate with Post Brothers, ACME, Streamline and other stakeholders to ensure they are involved in the process and their concerns are heard and relayed to the Water Department. Kris will draft a letter.

Kris invited the restaurateurs to stay after the meeting to discuss and give input into the draft guidelines for outdoor dining.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45.