

# **THE CWE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION**

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. at the Chase Park Plaza.

**PRESENT** were Commissioners Peter Cassel (by phone), Jim Dwyer, Ken Fowler, Derek Gamlin, Chris Sommers and Trip Straub; Kate Haher, Executive Director of the CWE North Community Improvement District; Elisa Essner, Marketing & Communications Coordinator for the CID; and Maggie McCarthy, Marketing Intern for the CID.

Chris Sommers moved to approve the Aug. 15, 2017, minutes; Ken Fowler seconded; the minutes were approved.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Trip Straub began by reviewing the August 2017 financials, stating that revenue was up \$11,000 YTD, and that August had been a relatively quiet month in terms of expenses. He said expenditures related to events were expected to pick up Sept. 1 (as reflected in the approved budget).

Trip said that he had been approached by an officer at Enterprise Bank and Trust (formerly Eagle Bank) regarding the current repurchase agreement. He suggested the CID consider a Money Market account which would yield a higher return. Trip asked Kate Haher to follow up.

### **IMPACT OF PROTESTS IN THE CWE**

Kate Haher provided an update on physical and economic impacts of recent protests following the Stockley verdict, noting that eight businesses within the CID had boarded up windows due to damage or as a precautionary measure. She said the CID had also lost approximately 12 of its American flags.

Kate advised she is working closely with the police and the NSI to stay ahead of any possible threat of additional unrest in the area, and would be communicating with CID businesses as she had information to share. She said she would focus on making sure the businesses had the information they needed to prepare, based on security recommendations from the NSI.

Kate said that artists had been out in the neighborhood the previous day to beautify the boards at Culpeppers; she said she spoke with other affected businesses to see if they were open to having their boarded windows painted, and that she and Elisa would do a call out through the CID's marketing channels to invite other artists to the neighborhood. Chris Sommers suggested reaching out to the galleries to see if there was an opportunity to auction off some of the painted boards once the windows were replaced as a neighborhood/community fundraiser.

Kate said she had also spoken with the head of the Urban League, which was offering \$15,000 to the CWE, downtown St. Louis and The Loop for repairs, and would have more information about that funding soon.

Chris Sommers asked about the CID's level of influence with the police and/or the NSI to communicate its ideas for effective protection of the business district during protests or similar events.

Derek Gamlin questioned whether a curfew would be appropriate for a business district with so many late-night restaurants; he said he felt one of the most important actions business owners could take to avoid being targeted is to be in their business with the lights on. He said he also thinks the CID needs a uniformed police officer at each intersection every night.

Trip Straub said the CID should focus on communicating its security needs to Jim Whyte and the NSI, which could then use its influence at the police department. Derek asked if there were opportunities to join forces with Wash U or St. Louis County to tap into their officer resources. Kate said that the NSI had been working on the possibility of St. Louis County officers being able to work in the CWE for a while but that there were unresolved issues such as insurance that needed to be worked out.

Derek said he would also like to see kiosks on the corner that could be used jointly by security officers, police and valet parking to act as an information booth and communications center for the neighborhood. He said that he had spoken in the past to Anheuser Busch about the possibility of sponsoring such a project.

Chris Sommers asked what short-term options the CID and NSI had. Jim said he thought the CID should put together three or four specific bullet points, with input from property owners and the NSI, to present to the police department. Peter Cassel asked whether there were opportunities to reallocate parts of the CID's budget to put some of the CID's security ideas into place; Trip said there was room to move money around if the board felt strongly about measures.

The board put together a list of priorities, which Jim Dwyer said he would communicate to the NSI, including (1) a neighborhood curfew triggered by specific security threats; (2) an on-duty police officer in the neighborhood at all times throughout the evening hours; (3) strategic placement of police officers in front of storefront windows during protests; (4) more efforts by police to protect businesses and diffuse situation, such as avoiding use of tactical gear until a window is broken in the commercial district; and (5) opportunities to offer rewards for relevant video through Crime Stoppers. The board also wondered if there was any legal standing to ban masked individuals in the neighborhood during periods of protest. Trip said the board should also request five different recommendations from Jim Whyte of the NSI.

Ken Fowler asked what preemptive steps the board could take to promote security in the neighborhood, instead of waiting for the next round of violence. Chris asked if the CID had standing with landlords in the neighborhood to require businesses to lock up their patio furniture. Trip said the CID should also promote that the CWE has a robust security camera system and that these cameras are effective in identifying criminals and making arrests.

Peter asked about the CID's budget and financial commitments, and whether adjustments are feasible. He said he thought it could be interesting to hear from each commissioner about their thoughts on what aspects of the CID's spending they feel are most and least effective to determine where funding for additional security measures could come from. He said he liked the idea of a uniformed officer in the neighborhood and felt that was the most actionable of the ideas discussed.

Jim said there were some impediments to the request for a permanent on-duty officer in what's perceived as a wealthy, privileged area. He said the CID needed to find ways to accomplish its security objectives without seeming like it was buying special services.

Kate asked the board for input on ways to get people back into the neighborhood, following a slow week of sales post-protest. Derek said he felt The Loop had done an excellent job of managing the situation, with music and artists on the street. Kate said she was working on getting artists into the neighborhood to paint over the boarded-up windows, and could also schedule more music in addition to what was already planned for Friday night and the book festival.

The board discussed the idea of a pop-up pub crawl or local social type event; Chris said he felt music needed to be a big enough name to draw a diverse crowd, with music that many people would recognize and enjoy. He suggested the idea of a rolling concert, similar to a New Orleans parade. Kate said she would reach out to Alexis Tucci for ideas about how to pull this off in a short time frame.

## **MARKETING & EVENTS**

Kate Haher provided an update on the CID's upcoming events, including BookFest St. Louis (Sept. 21-23), Halloween (Oct. 28) and various holiday activities throughout December.

She said that the inaugural BookFest St. Louis would feature a full day of programming with more than 40 authors and two dozen booths/tables within the festival zone. She said a strong turnout is expected for a first-year event.

Kate said that planning for Halloween was also going well, and that she is continuing to work on securing sponsors for the event. She noted that Creative Entourage is wrapping up the creative design and signage would be going up soon, and that she had a meeting scheduled the following week with neighborhood bars/restaurants interested in having a booth at the event and that she expected strong participation from CID businesses again in 2017.

Kate provided an update on Window Walk and holiday décor. She said she was pushing for 100 percent participation, and is working to pair interested businesses with window designers.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Kate Haher reported that Brian Phillips of Wash U Redevelopment Corp has arranged for his interns to do an inventory and analysis of all available parking in the CID. Derek Gamlin said he was very anxious to get moving on a parking project that would enhance parking in the neighborhood; Jim Dwyer said the first step is to know how many spots are available, where they are and how many cars come in/out of the neighborhood each day.

Derek said he would like to see a centralized valet system put in place; Chris Sommers asked what was preventing such a system at the neighborhood's main intersections. Kate said the board had opted not to allocate funding to such a project (with Clayton Valet) in 2015.

Jim said he felt one of the most pressing problems was employee use of public parking, which diminishes turnover of available spots. Chris suggested the top level of the Schlafly Garage or the Bank of America parking lot as an alternative for people working in the neighborhood and/or as a centralized lot for valet.

Kate said she was planning to speak with T2 Transportation and hoped to bring in a consultant who could help the CID analyze its parking issues and develop strategies and policies that could be proposed to the city. Chris suggested befriending Jamie of the Streets Department. Derek suggested working with the Treasurer's Office to update the garage's payment technology to make after-hours exiting easier, and added that perhaps if the CID offered to help fund the update, the city might agree to discounted parking for employees. Chris asked about the garage's annual revenue and whether the CID could work out a plan to pay it in exchange for free parking. Jim said that previous efforts to obtain that information had been unsuccessful, and that a Freedom of Information request would probably be required.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

J. DWYER, SECRETARY