

# RAILROAD ISLAND TASK FORCE AGENDA

Recognized by District 5, Railroad Island Task Force is neighbors working together to revitalize Railroad Island.

## DRAFT MINUTES

**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, August 25, 2016

**TIME:** 6:00 PM

**LOCATION:** Hope Community Academy (720 Payne Avenue)

The meeting was convened by: **Don Lorr**

(   11   # in Attendance)

**Task force members (Residents & Businesses):**

Don Lorr, Mary Brauer, Gary Bobb, Mike Pennig, Andy Twedt

**D5 Planning Council Staff & Board:**

Bill Zajicek

**Presenters & Friends of RRITF:**

Kim O'Brien (Amy Brendmoen's office), Stephanie Harr (Jane Prince's office), Joe Yannarely (City of St. Paul DSI), Sage Holben (Dayton's Bluff), Adam Arling (East Side Resident and Presenter)

**Topic #1\_\_ New Business**

Topics for future meetings:

- Fall social event, perhaps at Rivoli Bluff, perhaps in conjunction with Art Crawl on October 6-7
- Parking problems in area of Desoto and Otsego
- Increase in vandalism and abandoned cars (tagging on Burr and Beaumont). [Call it in, keep it under control. Call Police non-emergency for abandoned cars; call code enforcement for private property (266-8989)]

**Topic #2\_\_ Traffic Signal Utility Box Art Wraps \_\_\_\_\_Adam Arling (East Side resident)**

Adam has lived on the East Side for 2.5 years and would like to beautify the neighborhood through a program to install visual art on traffic signal utility boxes that are owned by the city. There are 19 possible sites in the Payne-Phalen area, including 2 in Railroad Island (Payne and Minnehaha and Tedesco and Burr). His idea would be to involve the community by asking them to submit photos, paintings, etc. along with a story about the submission. Then the submissions would be vetted through a neighborhood group. Adam is looking to 1) Gauge interest in the project; 2) Get input on the process he is proposing; and 3) Get ideas on fundraising.

It costs \$500-\$700 per wrap (including installation). He is checking into possible funding from the Minnesota Regional Arts Council (MRAC) [requires a 4-1 match] and a cultural star grant.

Suggestions from participants:

- City public art money could be used at the Payne/Bedford intersection.
- Who does graphics? BT Design in West St. Paul and Vomilla in St. Paul
- 3M might donate the material.
- Incorporate Italian history (perhaps pictures of old Morellis's or pictures of Swede Hollow)
- How long do these last? 6-7 years
- Could they get graffitied? Yes, but design criteria are intended to discourage it.
  - Invest youth in the process – rec centers
  - 3M makes an anti-graffiti film – perhaps they would donate?
- Design criteria:
  - Not distracting to drivers
  - Not offensive
  - No ads
  - Intricate design to discourage graffiti
  - Image should tell a story
- Attendees were excited about the project and encouraged Adam to continue with it.

### **Topic #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Overlook Update \_\_\_\_\_ Don Lorr**

The Railroad Island Small Area Plan and the Payne Avenue Design document both include the concept of a Swede Hollow overlook. The overlook project was chosen as the Commercial Vitality Zone project for Railroad Island, and have \$337,000 to use for it. The City has been working on feasibility of engineering, design, and maintenance. Hopefully, construction will begin in 2017. Don shared the preliminary designs which were developed by the City. Decision needs to be made on which City Department will be responsible for ongoing maintenance & care of the overlook: Public Works or Parks & Rec.

### **Topic #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Coffee Shop/Deli Status Report \_\_\_\_\_ Stephanie Harr (Ward 7)**

The soil at the site at Payne and Minnehaha was tested by MPCA. There is some contamination, but it is relatively minor. They hope to break ground in the fall. They did receive a STAR grant, and the funding is mostly in place.

### **Topic #5 \_\_\_\_\_ Rivoli Bluff**

Foundations are going in!

### **Topic #6 \_\_\_\_\_ Review of RRITF Guiding Principles (Attached) \_\_\_\_\_ Mary Brauer**

Attendees reviewed the Guiding Principles, along with some suggested changes. The Guiding Principles include a provision that the Principles be reviewed annually, in the month of August. This was considered a first review, with the intent of bringing them back for further discussion and a vote either in September or October. Several areas need further discussion:

- What should the name of the group be?
- Some language is confusing, particularly in the Duties and Authority section;
- Who should be able to vote?
- Change the term of office under election to coincide with when the election is held.

There was quite a bit of discussion on how the group can increase active participation and diversity of members. Also, how can the group do things differently that might encourage more participation and diversity? We need more social activities – people want to be involved in things that are fun.

The Small Area Plan should be updated in 2017, incorporating the Payne Avenue Design recommendations, as well as fresh ideas. In the past, District 5 and PED helped facilitate the process. We could ask the D5 Interim Director to contact PED and ask for a facilitator. It was also suggested that we post the Small Area Plan on the District 5 website where it is easily accessed; also use other electronic media for communication and input when possible (but not exclusively). It's possible that we could get some assistance from the U of M for a facilitator for the Small Area Plan planning process. When we update the plan, we should include visuals as it helps "sell" projects.

**Topic #7 \_\_\_\_\_ Discussion of Upcoming RRITF Board Elections \_\_\_\_\_ Don Lorr**

The Task Force needs to elect officers. An election should be held in the fall when attendance at meetings is higher, perhaps October? Would also like to have committee chairs:

- Gardens
- Events
- Outreach
- Nominations/Elections
- Marketing/Signs

**Adjournment (TIME): 7:52 p.m.**

**Next Meeting Date – Thursday, September 22, 2016**

**Do you have questions about the minutes? Contact Don Lorr 651.283.1682.**