



DOWNTOWN
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

DNA Board of Directors Meeting Notes

6 pm, May 6th, 2019

Covo, 401 Pine Street, St Louis, MO 63102

Attendees: Mike Willis (chair), LaShana Lewis (vice chair), James Page (Treasurer), Dan Pistor (Secretary), Alex Hurst, and Melanie Fries.

Guest Attendees: Robert Gibson

Presentation on Development Efforts:

Rob Gibson gave a rundown on the efforts of the development committee and what's needed to be successful. The goal is to see DNA be sustainable financially to cover its expenses to meet its goals.

What is it that DNA needs to run its organization?

What are the costs to fulfill its mission? James said he has exact costs.

They have also been asking for a prospectus for 2 years but haven't been able to get one. Dan assisted it getting a group together and getting a donor list. They also need to a prospect list. They need to know what the mission is and the costs to fulfill the mission. Mike said the board has to define what our mission is. Are we going to be solely an events organization or are we going to do community building and quality of life. Melanie said this effort needs to ramp up soon. They want the mission by June meeting. Mike said we are working on a budget during Thursday office hours. The annual fund will happen toward end of year. In short term, they need a budget, baseline expenses, a prospectus, and a vision/plan from the board. The committee will then take it and run with the rest creating a strategy, setting up annual fund, approaching donors, and determining potential donors. This can also include project fundraising if people want to donate for more specific causes or events. James expressed the values of having a member of the development committee on the board.

Minutes:

No edits or changes from anyone. Melanie moved to approve the minutes, LaShana 2nd, all approved. Mike asked if we are still going to post minutes on the website. Dan said it is a good practice if we are going to be transparent. The old minutes will be scrubbed to ensure everything is appropriate to post.

Treasurer's Report:

We went over the bank statement and expenses. Only 2 expenses. \$100 for Slaco and for bank checks. James is working on downloading information into quicken since we are not farming out accounting. There will be a treasures report update at the Town Hall. Mike asked what we are going to share. James said he isn't a big fan of presenting bank balances. Dan asked what the benefit and harm is. James said he is not sure there is a benefit. Melanie asked what our obligation is and what we are required to do as a 501c3. Alex isn't aware of anything in Missouri law that requires us to present financial info. The board decided to present the expenses but not bank balances at the Town Hall. We can provide more information to someone if they provide a written request. Alex made a motion to approve the treasures report, Melanie 2nd. All approved.



Board Vacancy:

Board Member Bob Ray resigned due to a job that requires a lot of travel. We posted the vacancy and have more candidates than expected. Candidates are Ray Alexander, Cachet Currie, Taylor Jackson, and Katherine Austin. Mike will share the answers to the questions with the rest of the Board. Mike would like to announce the new board member at the Town Hall. He wants to meet with them face to face this week to meet them and ask questions. We went around the room to see availability. Decided on Thursday. Only one unavailable is Dan. Mike said the 3 main questions are how long they lived downtown, what's the motivation to be a part of DNA, and what they bring to the table as a board member.

Mike wanted to make sure the board members are aware of their terms.

Up for re-election in 2020: Alex, LaShana, Mike, and open seat.

Up for re-election in 2021: James, Dan, Melanie.

Dan asked if there are any new stipulations in the bylaws for open seats. Mike said they have contacted Zach and are following everything in the Bylaws.

Summer Foodie Festival:

The purpose of the conversation was to determine what we want to do since Bob has resigned. Alex asked if Bob will be involved in the event. Mike said Bob won't since he sent all the information back to James. There hasn't been any movement in getting the event off the ground. A few restaurant applications and the application to reserve Kiener were the only items done thus far. The committee only met twice and it wasn't well attended. James presented pros and cons. Pros - some vendors have reached out to see if we are doing the event; a few artists, AT&T, Ruth's Chris, and PW Pizza. Melanie asked what obligation we have for our vendors and she would hate to let them down. Cons - it's a tremendous amount of work. Been there done that. He was nervous taking this on as a volunteer organization. Dan said he voted to not do the event at the last board meeting and his stance hasn't changed. He said the main reason most Board Members voted for the event was because Bob was spearheading and told people he had a committee. We can refund the vendors and do something else to support them so we don't damage any relationships. LaShana said DNA could sponsor a Taste of STL preview party and invite the vendors the night before. Mike said if we are going to do the event someone has to spearhead it. Dan said he doesn't see a lot of enthusiasm from members to put on the event. Desiree wants to get events back together and come up with other ideas for events. Alex said the main reason was that Bob was gung ho and he no longer sees a reason to do the event. Mike said he is in agreement with Dan and Alex. We could revisit next year or in the future and put on the event. This year we can back out gracefully since nothing has been done. Melanie said we can frame our decision that we are still doing something for our businesses. James said if we don't do the event we should double down on our core missions like other events, development, building captains, and safety. He will also present the Quality of Life letter and request a meeting with the mayor. James thinks it will be difficult to restart the event if we skip a year. Mike said by not doing the event it allows us to focus on our mission and vision. It will also allow us to put on our other events better. Mike motioned that we vote to not put on the summer foodie festival and replace with other events. Melanie 2nd. All approved. James added he wants to push for us to become a more inclusive organization regardless of socioeconomic status.

Survey Updates:

LaShana went over the survey results at a high level. The survey went out to everyone on our email list and was posted on Facebook. We had 69 total responses. There were quite a few that answered but didn't attend. For future surveys, it will only be shared with members on the email list. Some results were...

16 dollar membership fee.

50 dollar fee for prop owners.

80% don't want proxy voting.

We went over comments. It was commented there was too much of a focus on personalities.

There is no way to track who answered the survey since IP tracking was turned off. 23% response rate based on email list. Multiple choice is better than having people comment on each question.

Plus we would have to read and review every comment.

Town Hall Agenda:

Better together may not give their presentation since they pulled their petition. Even if they don't attend, we have enough to fill the agenda. Airport privatization may be on the agenda for July.

Quality of Life and Safety:

We received quite a few responses from members on Quality of Life issues during Cinco de Mayo weekend. Mike said it's time to revisit the Quality of Life Letter. James will review the letter on Thursday and schedule the meeting. The mayor could accept since she came to the last happy hour. Dan said most of the issues were loosely covered across the meeting. He added that a lot of the bad activity was along the perimeter of the festival such as ATV's and drag racing. Dan said that people are trying to portray DNA as the bag guy so they can benefit and get a liquor license. It happened at the House of Soul hearing. Dan said that we are not responsible for how members sign. All of DNA's stances are listed on the website. Members have the right to send emails to elected officials or protest a liquor license. James said that there were a few events that were held illegally without a liquor license. The police issued citations and arrested Nichol for the second illegal event House of Soul had. The owner of the building said they were supposed to have been expunged. They also fraudulently answered a question on their application. Melanie said what else can the board do. Dan said it takes an army so DNA can direct members to contact elected officials and leaders. We could leverage building captains but that's difficult since most people are not in tune with downtown issues. Many things are happening with growth but also with residential turnover. Melanie's asked if DSI can help. Dan mentioned that they seem more concerned with large office tenants and things at a high level, not residential issues even though residential is driving the growth downtown. Dan mentioned that we've spent 80% of our time on Taste of Downtown and need to refocus on committees and nuts and bolts type things. James moved to move forward. Melanie 2nd. All approved.

Open discussion:

LaShana emailed the survey results to board members.

Dan said he has to leave early at the Town Hall and apologizes. He will still be able to give his committee report.

Mike said he will let everyone know if Better Together can make it. He will also send the candidates emails on if they can meet at Covo on Thursday.

