



TRIANGLE
GOLDEN TRIANGLE
CREATIVE DISTRICT

**Golden Triangle Creative District
April 04, 2019 Board Meeting
MINUTES
3PM – Denver Public Library
(Conference Center – Lower Level, West Entrance)**

BOARD ATTENDEES:

Kate Barton, Kristy Bassuener, Jeannene Bragg, April Chase, Aaron Coburn, Olga Garcia, Gerald Horner, Sydney Ilg, Stephanie Kroll, Rhonda Knop, Eric Lazzari, Laura Liska, John Mosely, Sonia Rae, Brent Snyder, Byron Zick

PRESENT BY PHONE:

NA

NOT PRESENT:

Rachel Fewell, Pete Dikeou, CM Wayne New, Mark Shaker, Walter Simon, Tracy Kontrelos, Mickey Zeppelin

GTCD STAFF:

Jennifer Larsen

GUESTS:

Melissa Drazen-Smith, Denver City Attorney's Office
Raffi Mercuri, Campaign Manager for Initiative 300, Right To Survive
Roger Sherman, Campaign Manager for Together Denver
Neighborhood guests (captured on sign in sheets)

Welcome | Call to Order (K. Bassuener/B. Synder)

K Bassuener called the meeting to order at 3:02PM
Welcome to Board members and guests

MOTION: Approve March 2019 Board meeting minutes.
Passes unanimously.

GTCD Financial and Membership Update (A. Chase /R. Knop)

- Current financials – distributed in Board packet
- Current membership
 - o New membership brochures are printed and ready for distribution

Strategic Plan Update (K. Bassuener)

- Copies of draft Strategic Plan available for Board members, requesting feedback by April 18th
- The Strategic Planning Task Force is proposing a new Events committee. The Annual Fundraiser & Final Fridays events would fall under this committee.

Neighborhood Improvement Updates (S. Ilg)

- First public forum held on March 5. Comments received were positive, however, event space was too loud to do a group presentation.
- Next public forum scheduled for Tuesday, April 9th at Walker Fine Art, 6-7 pm.

- P.S. You Are Here grant: Moving forward, have another meeting scheduled with Denver Arts & Venue

Final Fridays (K. Bassuener/S. Ilg)

- ColorCon: June 28, 2019 kick off to Final Fridays. The intention is that this will become an annual event. The 2019 location is the alley behind Broadway at 11th Ave. Community project will be mural painting in the alley.
- **MOTION:** That the GTCD Board take action today to approve that the organization serve as the presenting sponsor and repository of donations for ColorCon 2019, and pledge up to \$2,000 in sponsorship dollars in support of this event, taking place at the kickoff of Golden Triangle Creative District's 2019 Final Fridays in June. Passes unanimously.
- Business owners at this location will be responsible for rest of money needed for the budget
- GTCD will be listed as a presenting sponsor

Committee Reports (Committee report document distributed in Board packet)

- Committee meetings to be included on website community calendar. Request that committee chairs include meeting dates/times along with next committee report information submitted.
- Dia del Nino – April 28 event in Golden Triangle with five stakeholders. Flyers available for distribution.
- Litter League starts April 6th, 9 am at Broadway Market. Repeats every Saturday through October.
- Golden Triangle Business Networking meeting tomorrow, April 5th, 8:30 am at The Spot Denver

SPECIAL SPEAKERS – Denver May 2019 Ballot Initiative 300

The GTCD Board invited speakers from the City and campaigns on both sides of the Initiative 300 topic. This was an opportunity for each campaign to share its perspective and for the Board and membership to learn and ask questions.

Melissa Drazen-Smith, Denver City Attorney's Office

- Presenting a legislation evaluation, including what the consequences of Initiative 300 passing might be for the City of Denver
- Only the short title of this initiative appears on the ballot: not all of the language, nor consequences, nor opinions are given
- The written legislation is what gets interpreted by others, not what is intended
- Definitions included in the language of the initiative:
 - o Definitions of "public space" is very inclusive: "public space" means any outdoor property that is owned or leased, in whole or in part, by the City and County of Denver and is accessible to the public, or any city property upon which there is an easement for public use.
 - o Definition of "rest" means the state of not moving, and holding certain postures including but not limited to sitting, standing, leaning, kneeling, squatting, sleeping or lying down.
 - o Definition of "non-obstructive manner" means a manner that does not render passageways impassable or hazardous.
- The list of rights include:
 - o The right to rest in a non-obstructive manner in public spaces.
 - o The right to shelter oneself from the elements in a non-obstructive manner in outdoor public spaces.
 - o The right to eat, share, accept, or give free food in any public space where food is not prohibited.
 - o The right to occupy one's own legally parked motor vehicle or occupy a legally parked motor vehicle belonging to another, with the owner's permission.
 - o The right and expectation of safety and privacy of or in one's person and belongings while occupying public spaces.
 - o The right to have the City and County government of Denver enforce and defend this law on the basis that a constitutional right of initiative, which is an expression of local community self-government, exists (abbreviated).
- Prohibitions and Obligations (2 of 3 included):
 - o It shall be unlawful for the City and County of Denver to enforce any ordinance, resolution, regulation, rule or policy that limits, prohibits or penalizes the rights secured by this ordinance.
 - o It shall be unlawful for an employee or agent of any government agency, corporation, business, or other entity to harass, terrorize, threaten, or intimidate any natural person exercising the rights secured by this ordinance.

- Additional comments:
 - o After 6 months the City Council can make rules that enable the ordinance to be implemented (work-arounds will be limited).
 - o Language loosely written. Words like “harass”, “terrorize”, “threaten” or “intimidate” are not clearly defined, inviting the potential for lawsuits.
 - o Park and other public space curfews may go away.
 - o The rights of individuals may supersede permitting of public spaces for community events.

Raffi Mercuri, Campaign Manager for Initiative 300, Right To Survive

- Homelessness is a huge issue. This initiative is not meant to be a solution to homelessness, it’s purpose is to establish basic rights for people living on the street.
- There is not enough accessible and affordable housing available. There are not enough “accessible” shelter spaces, and there is no place for people to go during the day. 60% of the homeless population are employed.
- Basic rights are criminalized. Under the current “Camping Ban” ordinance people aren’t allowed to cover themselves with sleeping bags or blankets. People are told to move on, and can’t get consistent sleep.
- Under the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in Boise, ID that city’s camping ban was ruled unconstitutional, as “cruel and unusual punishment”.
- People should be allowed to rest and survive. The camping ban was not in place before 2012. It won’t be as bad as people think.
- When the City breaks up encampments it’s a hardship for many, particularly for youth with no place to go.
- This ordinance won’t overturn park curfews – there is a clause, not an issue.
- There is an existing legal definition for “harassment”.
- People living on the street are freezing, assaulted, murdered, etc.

Roger Sherman, Campaign Manager for Together Denver

- This is a tough issue, agreed. Wages and affordable housing are challenges.
- This initiative is not a referendum on the camping ban, or homelessness. This is not a repeal of the camping ban; it’s a new policy about how public spaces are utilized.
- This includes “any person”, and not just the homeless population.
- Every part of the city would be affected.
- This initiative provides no money to address homelessness.
- It provides no direction for City Council
- A ¼ cent sales tax for mental health was just passed in 2018.
- This initiative would impact service providers. They might hesitate to approach people because of the risk of civil and criminal liability.
- On average it takes nine interventions before a person in need chooses to make a change.
- The initiative is poorly written and overly broad. No thought put into intended and unintended consequences.
- It would make our job at the Denver Rescue Mission more difficult. Trash, harassment concerns, health & safety, etc. It does nothing to address the homeless problem.
- Editorial reference – A high quality, civil society, doesn’t leave people in bad situations, it helps them.

Board questions

- Please confirm, is this initiative talking about *outdoor* “public spaces”, or any “public spaces”? Melissa Drazen-Smith: Yes, *outdoor*.
- Our park system is the core of who we are as a city. We host year round public events. Will permit holders producing events be allowed to ask an encampment to move along? Our ability to hold events is in jeopardy. How will this play out? Raffi Mercuri: This won’t overturn park curfews. Permits would supersede encampments. Melissa Drazen-Smith: You can’t move people via permit. Roger Sherman: Courts will interpret laws based on written language, not intent.
- Raffi, what is your next move if this gets passed? How are you helping the homeless problem? Raffi Mercuri: The homeless are asking for this. The solution is to provide housing, for free, if necessary. Roger Sherman: We are willing to work with the pro 300 group for solutions, and continue the discussion. Melissa Drazen-Smith: This is a complex issue, that requires a complex solution. Housing, is just part of the answer.

- Raffi, why not just repeal the camping ban? What is the hope? Raffi Mercuri: This is a statement of rights, we're looking at discrimination issues.

Member questions

- Do you think 300 would help Denver alleviate it's homeless problem. Raffi Mercuri: Yes, alleviate suffering: rest and protection from elements. It does not alleviate homelessness. We won't be criminalizing behavior. Roger Sherman: Allowing people to sleep outside produces new difficulties: trash, waste, sanitation. Raffi Mercuri: Residents have access to trash & sanitation, the City provides these basic services.
- How will sanitation be addressed? Residents already cleaning up after homeless. Melissa Drazen-Smith: This initiative would be effective immediately, there would be no time to figure out the how. Have to wait and see on sanitation and clean ups. Roger Sherman: Sweeps are heartbreaking, but are sometimes needed to clean up human waste, needles, trash, and require power washing. Raffi Mercuri: Where are people supposed to go?
- Would this initiative make Denver more habitable? Would we see an increase in the homeless population? Raffi Mercuri; This is about human rights. Would it attract more people? I don't know.
- Would this initiative make it less urgent for the homeless to get off streets? Roger Sherman: It would make it more difficult for service providers, because it would be unlawful to "harass" people in public spaces. Raffi Mercuri: It would be easier for service providers. Currently providing social services is more difficult because people get dispersed.
- Is the cultural center parking garage a "public space". Melissa Drazen-Smith: Yes, if it's owned by the City.
- Under this initiative how long could you keep a tent in a public space? Melissa Drazen-Smith: Indefinite.
- Raffi, if this doesn't pass, what is next with the homeless community? Raffi Mercuri: We will come together for better ways to provide housing and services. Call on elected officials to help solve problem.

Guest speaker contact email addresses provided for further information. The GTCD Board would like to hear from residents and members. Would you like us to take a position on Initiative 300? Please send your input to: admin@goldentriangleofdenver.com

Adjourn

K. Bassuener adjourned meeting at 4:19PM