



**Golden Triangle Creative District
June 4, 2020 Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
3PM – Video Conference**

BOARD ATTENDEES:

Kate Barton, Kristy Bassuener, Jeannene Bragg, April Chase, Aaron Coburn, David Eichler, Rachel Fewell, Marlow Hoffman, Sydney Ilg, Tracy Kontrelos, Stephanie Kroll, Eric Lazzari, Laura Liska, John Mosley, Liz Orr, Sonia Rae, Walter Simon, Brent Snyder, Byron Zick

NOT PRESENT:

Pete Dikeou, Rhonda Knop, Morgan Russo, Mark Shaker

GTCD STAFF:

Jennifer Larsen

GUESTS:

Councilman Chris Hinds and Liz Zukowski (Aide to Councilman Hinds)

Also, Gerri Baron, Jordan Clark, Nancy Ewing, Jennifer Gance, Sandra Phillips, Shannon Robb, Aaron Schneider, Veronica Smith, Christopher Volgenau, Vanessa Ortiz, Bobbi Walker, Elizabeth, Rudy, AB, RR (Several attendees not fully identified during meeting due to video conference format.)

Welcome/Call to Order (B. Zick)

- B. Zick called the meeting to order at 3:04PM
- Approval of May 2020 Meeting Minutes
 - o MOTION: Approve minutes (W. Simon/B. Snyder)
 - o Minutes approved unanimously

Guest Speaker (Councilman Chris Hinds)

- Just gave testimony in support of state legislature police accountability bill.
- State capital grounds are still officially closed, however, 10K+ protesters have made it logistically impossible to keep these areas closed.
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless asked to people experiencing homelessness in this area to relocate. People refused, and have been gassed along with protesters in the vicinity.
- Pandemic still ongoing, not sure how protest activities will affect numbers.
- CM has been present for protests since Thursday, May 28. See Councilman Hinds' statement on protests and the BLM movement: <https://www.denverperfect10.com/2020/06/02/black-lives-matter/>
- Is sorry about the destruction to businesses in the Golden Triangle. Doesn't know full extent of damage – probably in the millions.
- CW Gilmore and CW Cdebaca have both called for defunding the police.
- Denver's budget has weathered better than the state during the economic downturn. The city cut 12% of its budget vs 18% cut to state budget.

Q&A Session

- Q: How do businesses message to customers it's safe to be in the Golden Triangle and welcome folks to support our businesses?
A: Our office will share information via social media and our newsletter letting constituents know there are businesses up and running in the GT. A big draw for many people will be the Farmers Market, and we will continue to advertise for that from our office. We will also continue to promote the GTC website.
- Q: What can you tell us about defunding police proposals? Is there any discussion around not defunding police, but reducing funding and reallocating it towards culture, education, or other activations?
A: The concept of totally defunding police is beyond my scope of understanding. We have traffic, domestic violence, and other areas that need to be managed. Police and Sheriff departments need to be doing public safety, not dealing with mental health, drug issues and other social work concerns. I can't speak to this in detail now. The question about minimizing funding as opposed to defunding is tricky.
- Q: Can police gather away from public parking lots and areas to reduce impact and emotional stress on residents? My 7-year old son has been having nightmares since protesting started. The show of force has been making residents uncomfortable.
A: Yes, it has been uncomfortable, traumatic even. With all rubber bullets, tear gas, military vehicles, armored vehicles, it would be traumatizing. I am not a technician and cannot change where the police stage. I am a politician and I don't want to say something that would reduce anyone's credibility.
- Q: Once the protests are over, will the city be enforcing the camping ban? At the start of COVID, it was not being enforced.
A: CDC guidance during pandemic was to leave people in place. The city is still technically not enforcing the camping ban due to a pending lawsuit, and existing public health crisis. No decision has been made.
- Q: Anything on the horizon to move mental health issues to clinics? It seems the police have been the default group dealing with mental health issues among the homeless.
A: The *Caring 4 Denver* initiative was passed a year ago by the people of Denver to provide \$40M/year in funding for healthcare for those dealing with mental health and addiction. It is funded with sales tax, which has been down due to COVID-19.
- Q: Are you aware of any organized fundraisers to support damage to vandalized businesses that aren't covered by insurance.
A: There is a COVID emergency relief fund, which has been replenished twice – \$3M at start, with more added. Those are only COVID funds, not protest funds. We are stretched very thin financially right now. We have not had a chance to meet and strategize on this.
- Q: Do you have any insight on when State or local health officials will release guidance on how special event venues will reopen for events and gatherings of more than 10 people?
A: Denver Public Health doesn't report to me, they report to the mayor. We have to coordinate with the state on all of these things.
- Q: Are police or other armed forces working together with elected officials to strategize the best way to show use of force? Can this be considered?
A: Yes, this is a consideration. I don't want us to overreact to a horrible situation in the opposite direction. We make good policy when we are measured, not when we are reckless. I know that could be disheartening, but I think the quickest way for action right now is the bill introduced at the state legislature.

- Q: Have retail plans and permits for PARQ or Evan’s School been delayed by COVID?
A: I don’t know. We have more than 60 developments in our district. We have \$9 billion of infrastructure projects in the neighborhood moving forward. A couple projects have been halted, like the project on Pena Blvd, 50 South Steele... The mayor feels allowing development to continue will help us recover from recession, much like what happened in 2008.
- Q: Who is empowered to enforce the camping ban, and will city council or the city work to make enforcement a reality?
A: DOTI is to enforce the camping ban. There are national homeless attorneys who want Denver to enforce the camping ban so they can sue, since the CDC guidance says we should not enforce the camping ban. As far as full enforcement of the camping ban, it is for sure the most difficult issue I faced as a candidate, outside of COVID and the protests.
- Q: What about extra shelters built for those people to shelter safely and avoid infection? Does that still make the camping ban enforcement null?
A: The National Western Complex and Coliseum can serve 700 men and 200 women. At day one, the Western Complex was at capacity. They have pretty much been at capacity since being open. Homeless advocates say people are camping because of COVID, and shelters are a cesspool of COVID, but there is a larger issue. We opened those shelters thanks to federal funding (specifically FEMA). In talking with Denver grant writers, they have said that FEMA has no interest in ending homelessness, and funding is temporary. The way the FEMA dollars are allocated does not help us actually solve the problem, it provides a band-aid. It’s really frustrating. There was hope, before the protests, that there would be an additional stimulus, and it would include funds for state and local governments. The thought was those funds would not have the same handcuffs around homelessness so we could provide longer solutions than FEMA funds. If you’re interested in helping with those camping near you, I am one of 8 council members who wrote the mayor asking for a designated, sanctioned open space for people to camp. The city of Boston uses a space under an overpass, and there are other models throughout the nation where there are wash stations and restrooms, and it is set up for those who want to remain outside. Colorado Village Collaborative is the nonprofit leading that effort. We haven’t received a response from the mayor’s office. Let me know if you are interested in supporting this proposal, I can give people addresses of where to send comments.
- Denver is a beautiful place... some pent up energy is getting released. We will get back to a good place and recovery.

Civic Center Conservancy Update (E. Lazzari)

- Civic Center Park is resilient, damage and stress is a small concern. Thousands have been peacefully protesting, a handful of people have been expressing themselves in other ways. The park can be fixed, and repairs will continue. Graffiti is difficult to remove and requires a specialized team at substantial cost.
- Kyle Clark (9News) called yesterday wanting to help raise money for the park’s repair. Over 4000 donations received in the last 24 hrs. Money will go towards immediate needs and further programming. Community loves this space – there are a lot of good things happening.
- CC Park has been closed per health order since mid-April. The closure continues due to high infection rate in Denver, which is 5 times higher than any other area in state. Not able to create social distancing in park. No plan in place for reopening – though the park has been “open” during protests in past week.
- The Conservancy wants the neighborhood to be able to use the park, as access to outdoor spaces is critical. Health & safety remains the priority.
- Daily tagging slows progress. There was a fire at the McNichols Building – this repair will take a while. State is lacking resources for repairs to their property.

- E. Lazzari thanked for his leadership and dedication to keeping Civic Center a place for citizens to share their voices and use for the community.

Letter of Support for CO Clubs (B. Zick)

- CO Clubs has submitted a proposal to the city for temporary event(s). Outdoor movie with socially distanced tables.
- At CO Clubs request, Board members drafted a GTCD proposed letter of support
- Received Board member and resident emails expressing concern
- One of the GTCD's goals is to support its members. Proposed letter revised to capture a middle ground.
- MOTION: Approve GTCD revised letter in support of CO Clubs outdoor event (S. Ilg/T. Kontrelos)
- Discussion:
 - o Time frame? Dates/hours? Time frame is 7-11 pm, events to start as early as two weeks from now.
 - o Programming – Screens installed for outdoor movie experiences. This will expand indoor footprint for programming. Won't interfere with residents. Guests will use noise-curling headsets for audio. Melita's Greek Café will provide meal service with hands free option.
 - o Location – Three parking lots from 1045 Lincoln Street to former Sir Speedy at 11th Avenue. Full closure of alley. Vinyl nightclub will provide restrooms with flow of traffic.
 - o Nightclub impact during COVID-19 – 300 employees have not been able to work for last two months. Many receive only tips. Timing is important.
 - o Attendance – below 300, closer to 250
 - o More eyes on the alley may be a positive thing. Marches are becoming less destructive. Will have club security personnel.
 - o Meeting with City. Restaurant/bars restrictions have been addressed thus far – this is stand-alone event. Waiting to hear back on safety concerns. Zoning, health, fire, other.
- 18 approve, 1 oppose. Motion passes.

GTCD Budget and Membership Update (A. Chase)

- Current financials:
 - o \$141K in operating account at end of April
 - o Admin paid from Paycheck Protection Plan funds, so balance is increasing
 - o Received CCI grant funding for \$10K
 - o Grant writer will be paid with grant from Denver Arts & Venues
 - o Biggest recent expenditure has been for pet stations signs
- Current membership:
 - o Slow membership, but not halted. Need to follow up on a few invoices.
 - o Membership committee to regroup in June

Events (A. Chase / S. Kroll)

- June 5th *A Taste of the Triangle* event
 - o Postponed given current circumstances
 - o People still want to connect, share comments/information, so perhaps we reschedule a community meeting.
- Planning will continue to move forward on virtual Final Friday events, June through August or September.
- Fall fundraiser will likely also be a virtual event

COLORCON 2020 (S. Ilg)

- COLORCON is scheduled for August 28. Planning is moving forward – 5 artists of 12 have completed all their paperwork. Can create murals without an outdoor event around it.

Grant Writer Update (S. Rae)

- Hired a grant writer, Lisa Thomason. She is very experienced and has worked with governments and nonprofits. June 7th start date. Lisa lives 3-4 hours away.
- MOTION: Board to pay travel expenses from operating budget for at least one visit for Lisa to the Golden Triangle (W. Simon/B. Snyder).
- All in favor. Motion passes.

Staff Report (J. Larsen)

- K. Bassuener and J. Larsen recently spoke about changing the focus of the website COVID-19 support page to reopening of the Golden Triangle. Would like to keep people up to date on what's open in the neighborhood. Request for neighborhood business owners or employees, and cultural organization employees to send links and information to include on this page and in future communications. Admin will continue to reach out to GTCD members.

New/Old Business

- S. Rae – Sonia contacted CCI Executive Director Margaret Hunt regarding proposed cuts to CCI funding, wanting to know how we could offer support. \$1.3M of the projected \$2M in funding has been allocated from the state general fund. No further support needed from the community at this time.
- K. Barton – On Wednesday, 1000 volunteers showed up to assist Denver Downtown Partnership with community clean up following recent riot damage. Some groups went to GT. Clean up continues on Friday at 7am, starting at Skyline Park. Activities to include trash pick up, graffiti removal, passing out water, and hanging donated art on plywood. Some groups will go to GT. City will be broken into quadrants, and volunteers sent out with supplies.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn (B. Snyder/B. Zick)

Meeting adjourned at 4:42PM