



**Golden Triangle Creative District  
July 9, 2020 Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
3PM – Video Conference**

**BOARD ATTENDEES:**

Kristy Bassuener, April Chase, Pete Dikeou, David Eichler, Rachel Fewell, Marlow Hoffman, Sydney Ilg, Stephanie Kroll, Eric Lazzari, Laura Liska, John Mosley, Liz Orr, Sonia Rae, Walter Simon, Brent Snyder, Byron Zick

**NOT PRESENT:**

Kate Barton, Jeannene Bragg, Aaron Coburn (resigned), Rhonda Knop (resigned), Tracy Kontrelos, Morgan Russo (resigned), Mark Shaker

**GTCD STAFF:**

Jennifer Larsen

**GUESTS:**

Kristofer Johnson (Denver Community Planning & Development), Aaron Bajorek (Interim General Manager, the ART hotel)

**Welcome/Call to Order (B. Synder)**

- B. Synder called the meeting to order at 3:05PM
- Welcome guests
- Approval of June 2020 Meeting Minutes
  - o MOTION: Approve minutes (B. Synder/B. Zick)
  - o Minutes approved unanimously

**Guest Speaker (Kristofer Johnson, Denver Community Planning & Development)**

- GTCD Note: Letter dated May 15, 2020 from the GTCD and Denver Downtown Partnership (DDP) requested a pause on zoning process due to the pandemic
- K. Johnson is Principal City Planner, tasked with leading effort for City for Golden Triangle (D-GT) zone district to update zoning and design guidelines
- D-GT zone district based on zoning from 1994. Design guidelines adopted in 2002.
- Project purpose: 1) Update to implement recommendations of the 2014 GT Neighborhood Plan, 2) Apply more current zoning/design approaches and procedures
- Four key objectives from 2014 GT Neighborhood Plan: Provide guidance on the future character and approach to ensure a Golden Triangle that is 1) Eclectic, 2) Connected, 3) Creative, 4) Livable. Included recommendations for regulatory changes (zoning and design guidelines) to achieve neighborhood goals.
- CPD did detailed combing of plan, and pulled 12 themes related to land use, building type/form and street level experience for guidance

- Advisory Committee formed in March 2019. Members include GT residents, business owners, property owners and design/development professionals.
- As of July 2020 there have been eight Advisory Committee meetings, three public meetings, three online surveys, two interim reports and a preliminary zoning framework posted.
- Have slowed process, revised project schedule proposed
- Goals of preliminary framework established: 1) Tailor zoning standards and design to scale of project, 2) Address bulky parking profiles, 3) Require most important priorities, and encourage others through incentives, 4) Want most projects to be using incentives to support priorities, 5) Allow modest increase in overall development potential to support vibrant neighborhood activity and city equity goals
- Feedback from March 2020 survey on preliminary zoning framework generally favorable for residents, slightly less for non-residents. Strong support for:
  - o Upper story massing shifts
  - o Non-residential uses across at least a portion of ground floor
  - o Street level open space
- Existing development incentives: residential use, residential support uses, arts, entertainment or cultural uses, rehabilitation of a landmark structure, affordable housing, design review of entire structure
- Proposed development incentives: housing affordability, promoting neighborhood character (landmarks & character buildings), public art, street level open space, street level non-residential uses
- Next steps: 1) small group meeting on base/incentive thresholds, 2) ongoing monthly Advisory Committee meetings, 3) revised framework report (TDB-August), 4) additional stakeholder outreach (online meeting and survey #4, virtual Q&A sessions with small groups as requested)
- For complete project information see project website: [www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle](http://www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle)
- Contact information: [kristofer.Johnson@denvergov.org](mailto:kristofer.Johnson@denvergov.org)

#### **Q&A Session (Kristofer Johnson, Denver Community Planning & Development)**

- Q: How does the amount of feedback compare to "normal" level of feedback?  
A: Overall, our zoning project meetings have been well attended, and more feedback than typical has been received. Zoning projects are often fairly technical, and the responses we typically receive are more specific to the development community. For this project, we have gotten more community input publicly and through surveys. We average 60-75 responses for most surveys – we have had double that with the Golden Triangle project.
- Q: Can the layperson really know how the zoning will work? I would be curious from a developer perspective if they think this zoning would actually get what people say they want.  
A: A challenge we have is translating this into language all people understand. I think we can keep doing a better job, but in all the public meetings and surveys we carefully avoided jargon and technical language and provide visuals and representations of what we have been talking about. We also just put together (and provided) a two-page cheat sheet that explains what the project is, what it means to you as an x, y, z, the basics of what exists today, and what we hope to change.
- Q: Can you share what parking requirements are being examined, including if above grade parking is to be screened?  
A: Our proposal is for larger projects with an above ground parking structure that the structure be wrapped by an active use. The parking would not be visible. It would have some sort of office space, or townhome unit, or an actual building use. For an area that is not wrapped by an active use there will be much stronger design required. Our goal is to either completely wrap the parking or better integrate it into the architecture of the building so it is not so in-your-face. Right now, there is a minimum requirement for the amount parking tied to developments in the Golden Triangle. Currently, this is the only neighborhood that requires that. We are looking to

change that and eliminate the minimum. We are not saying you can't build parking, we just won't require you to build a certain amount. The market will determine the amount that is needed. What we have seen in recent projects, more parking is being built than is required.

- Q: Due to the neighborhood being such a unique place with multiple attractions, can you share what the plans are to incentivize public parking?

A: We are thinking of that, yes. The city government is looking at ways to broaden mobility options for individuals and support other modes of travel. It's challenging to incentivize that for a developer to build more parking. We also recognize this area is unique – there is a greater need because the regional draw of this area. Additional public parking is going to be necessary.

- Q: If the incentives are not being used for things like public art and others that are important, what can be done to strongly encourage them so they are used? And could these incentives be requirements?

A: The biggest challenge creating these development incentives and bonuses is calibrating them correctly so one does not become the default, which is what happened with existing zoning of building residential. That's one of the things we are working through so you can balance an incentive for public art with an incentive for affordable housing so they are complimentary, and multiple incentives are used in one project.

The other point in that question, which of those are incentives and encouraged and which are required? The primary one is street-level activity. It's the thing we have heard about most during this process. Things like requiring retail space and small open space for gathering in the neighborhood – there are places we feel those should be required as part of a larger development. There are also opportunities with a smaller property where these could be encouraged.

- Q: Can you share some of the feedback you are getting from developers and the DDP?

A: Generally with the development community and the DDP – as a business organization with a wide range of membership – the comments we receive from them have been that the initial proposed framework we put forward established a relatively low base threshold. The general feedback was “oh my god it's too much, it's too expensive.” There was potential to put this neighborhood at a competitive disadvantage. That is very good feedback that is valid in a lot of ways. We have to work to recognize and understand the decisions made at a zoning level have impacts financially, and on the ability to provide a return to the neighborhood (more than building residential units).

- Q: What is the most common piece/s of feedback you've received from GT residents in this process?

A: Most of the residents concerns focus on street-level activity and the general experience in the neighborhood. There were a lot of concerns about the over-scale and bulkiness of building and their relationship to the street. From a design perspective, we are doing a lot to improve the massing and design quality of those building so as a resident it is a much more comfortable place to be. Now we are working through the mechanics of how we do that, specifically so it's feasible for developers.

- Q: Given the problems with dogs in the neighborhood, is there any requirement that new residential buildings have a provision for accommodating dogs and their needs?

A: Yes, that will find its way into the design guidelines and standards. It's project-by-project specific. Zoning is heavy handed and needs to be enforceable. The design guidelines can be more subjective.

- GTCD Follow up:

- o Internal conversations with development community included these concerns: connectivity of the Civic Center with the rest of the Golden Triangle, not enough out of

the box incentives for making the neighborhood special, housing affordability, and the need for slowing the zoning update process.

- A lobbyist has been hired to connect with the Mayor's office & City Council.
- Developers want the GTCD to take a lead, develop strategy to propose

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### **GTCD Budget and Membership Update (A. Chase)**

- Current financials:
  - At the end of May there was \$148K in operating account
  - In 2019 we received \$10K in sponsorships, and \$15K from the fundraiser. Concerned about the lack of these anticipated revenues
  - Grants are coming in, and committee spending is down
- Current membership:
  - We are about \$18K shy of meeting our membership goals for this year
  - Membership renewals are trickling in – received a total of \$3,400 in memberships in June
  - Have exceeded goal for Backstage Boss level, Innovator level under goal
  - Rolling memberships will help attract members

### **Temporary Safe Outdoor Spaces for People Experiencing Homelessness (B. Snyder)**

- Mayor Hancock is supporting temporary Safe Outdoor Spaces to be located in various sites throughout Denver – site locations TBD
- Gerald Horner (former GTCD Board member) sent letters to GTCD from Curtis Park Neighbors and Five Points Housing Options Team in support of Denver temporary Safe Outdoor Spaces
- Funding and management TBD
- Councilperson Chris Hinds hosted a Town Hall yesterday to discuss the City's homelessness response. Additional Town Hall meetings to come.
- These will not happen in any Denver park (E. Lazzari)

### **Events (A. Chase)**

- Committee is working on content for COLORCON, including a conference experience and virtual events

### **COLORCON 2020 (S. Ilg)**

- Adding virtual events to program. Will host live 20-minute artist interviews. Content following event to help promote neighborhood, use as marketing tools.
- All artists contracted, except one
- No alcohol or food at event
- Working on firm permit with city
- Public event guidelines released – can host up to 175 people in the alley
- Q: Is COLORCON a GTCD hosted event? If so, when was this decided? (W. Simon)  
A: Yes. The EC and Board has supported the hosting of COLORCON as a signature event in discussions multiple times in the past year (S. Ilg)
- Q: How were the artists chosen? (W. Simon)  
A: Artists were chosen based on who was in touch last year that fit within our theme (S. Ilg)
- Q: Was artist diversity and inclusion considered? (W. Simon)  
A: Yes, there is diversity in the group, though all artists are women. Denver Art Museum was contacted for artist suggestions. (S. Ilg)
- Q: Was Board included in budgeting decisions? (W. Simon)  
A: COLORCON budget was requested and included in 2020 GTCD proposed budget. (S. Ilg)

### **CCI Grant (S. Ilg)**

- Contract grant writer is Lisa Thomason. She has been researching and applying for grants since mid-June.

- Neighborhood Improvements Committee oversees this work – the committee is requesting additional help to oversee grant work
- Applied for Mabel Hughes grant, \$15K for capital improvements
- Applied for COVID Arts & Culture Relief Fund, could replace lost funds (fundraiser) and cover staffing expenses
- Other grants being pursued
- CCI grant already received covers \$5K for trash receptacles, \$3K for ad campaign (in collaboration with Westword, including Facebook and Instagram national and local campaigns), and \$2K for COLORCON (to cover artist supplies)

### **Committee Reports (All)**

- Executive Committee
  - o A number of Board member terms are expiring Jan 2021. See the list if needed. Let S. Rae and W. Simon know if your term can be extended. If so, how long? Be in touch in next couple weeks.
  - o Are there new Board member suggestions? We will be getting financial help. Need lawyer assistance. What committees need additional help?
  - o Need to get bylaws on website with address change. Original Cherokee St address still in bylaws. Can we change to P.O. Box? Address may need to be physical address, possibly CNDC address?
  - o Bylaws overall are dated, need to be revised
- Community Affairs
  - o See committee report
- Events Liaison
  - o Still no events
- Golden Triangle Business Network
  - o M. Russo resigned from the Board today (need new Board contact to GTBN)
- Governance
  - o See Executive Committee
- Membership
  - o Members include: Jeannene Bragg, Nancy Cole, Christina Fiflis, Sharon Rowe, Brent Snyder
  - o Have developed a phased approach to membership outreach, beginning with email blast sent this morning
- Neighborhood Improvements
  - o No updates
- Public/External Events
  - o Addressed previously
- Urban Design
  - o Proposal for former Art Institute site on Lincoln (Art Studios at 1200 Lincoln) reviewed in June, 990 Bannock St project to be reviewed in August
  - o Lennar is moving forward with for sale product, condos/mixed use on the north side of the Evans School

### **New/Old Business**

- Nomination of new board GTCD member, Aaron Bajorek
  - o Interim General Manager at the ART hotel. Former GM, A. Coburn, recently resigned GM position and GTCD Board position.
  - o Experience includes hotel management in Colorado for 23 years, including 7 years at Brown Palace, also special events experience. At the ART hotel for 3 years.
  - o MOTION: Approve GTCD Board appointment (B. Synder/W. Simon)
  - o Approved unanimously
- J. Larsen priority tasks following performance review (K. Bassuener)

- Communications management – email, phone, internal/external basics, Prism Newsletter, and Board connections
- Maintaining the GTCD website
- Social media platforms
- Bank/Mail basics
- Monthly and annual Board meeting coordination
- Membership fulfillment
- Attending GTCD Committees to maintain connections w/ residents, businesses, and members. (Committee assistance upon EC/staff discretion.)
- CCI Quarterly and annual reporting
- R. Knop is stepping down from the Board due to declining health (S. Ilg)
- Civic Center Park officially reopening tomorrow, July 10. The River Yoga will restart activities outside in about 2 weeks. (E. Lazzari)
- Black Mural Festival in Civic Center Park extended until August 7<sup>th</sup> and the Conservancy will continue to promote. All black artist mural festival. (S. Rae/E. Lazzari)
- Denver Public Library now doing curbside pickup for holds. Technology loans will start up next week. Library probably will not reopen in 2020. (R. Fewell)
- The Denver Art Museum (DAM) and the Clyfford Still Museum have reopened with dated and timed tickets. DAM staff at home through Labor Day. Good response so far, quiet, not crowded. (K. Bassuener/S. Rae)
- Farmers Market through September every Sunday at Evans School (S. Ilg)

**Adjourn (B. Snyder)**

Motion to adjourn (B. Snyder/S. Rae)

Meeting adjourned at 5:05PM