

Skyway Governance Advisory Committee Notes

January 25, 2019, 9-10:30 a.m. Location: 180 East 5th Street Conference Room B

Attendees: Andy Flamm, Peg Guilfoyle, Bill Hanley, Bill Huepenbecker, Mark Jones, Linda McBrayer, Sanna Towns, Will Travis, Jean Krueger, Rod Halvorson, Thomas Dunne, Peg Ganey, John Ganey, Ron Anderson, Nancy Kehmeier, Jay Severance, Sheveh McKee, Helen Wagner, Denise Sevlie, Heather Bunch, Ann Idzik, Kathy Kapoun, Crystal Meriwether, John Wuorinen-Saint Paul PD, Charles Barklind, Jawad Towns Jr., Tara Monack, Mischa Kegan, Joseph Voyda, Thomas Ferrara, Joel Franklin, Tim Simmons, Rick Grates-Metro Transit Police, Jon Fure.

Motion by Will Travis, seconded by Linda McBrayer, to approve the agenda. Motion passed.

Motion by Jean Krueger, seconded by Linda McBrayer, to approve the revised November 30, 2018 meeting notes, adding Sanna Towns to the list of attendees. Motion passed.

Chair report: Andy Flamm said he has attended two Skyway Work Group meetings. In the future he will write a summary of those meetings and post on Facebook. He said he has also been to a couple of Downtown Alliance committee meetings.

Peg Guilfoyle said she has asked at the Winter Safe Space what is helpful, and they said they always need socks, so she encouraged meeting attendees to consider donating socks for people who are in need of shelter. Andy Flamm has been collecting them at Cedar Printing, so people can drop them off there, and residents can also collect socks in their buildings and donate them to Catholic Charities. She said the Double Tree hotel in Town Square has donated a lot of items, too.

Project updates

- Wayfinding: Attendees discussed the fact that people can often be seen who are apparently lost. Adam Johnson, Visit Saint Paul has shown an interest in improving this.
- Access: This has been a frequent topic – the Skyway hours of 6 a.m. to midnight refer to the skyway bridges between buildings, and not to the street-level doors that allow people to get into the skyways. Andy Flamm said the best thing we can do is make sure that any building who is supposed to keep their doors open does so. Treasure Island Center, for example, only needs to keep the entrance open as long as one its tenants is open. Tom Ferrara said the brewery, Stacked Deck, close at 10 pm, so currently the building is in compliance. A question was asked about people waiting for transit in the skyway system. Metro Transit needs to be engaged to make sure heaters are working, otherwise it's understandable for people to want to wait inside. A question was asked if the hours should be reviewed – when the the ordinance was changed, there was a strong indication that this would be reviewed after the hours had been in place for a period of time.
- Arts and events: The subcommittee has continued working to try to simplify the process for artist exhibitions or other events, in an effort to encourage more frequency of events. She said there is universal enthusiasm for ideas like allowing Christmas carolers to be in different buildings on the skyway level, but sometimes there is an application requirement that holds up the process. Tom Ferrara suggested continuing to try to get building owners and artists / event coordinators together to discuss these challenges and develop solutions.
- Skyway Closed signs – Andy Flamm created a template that indicates when there is a skyway bridge that will be closed, which can be used to indicate an alternate route(s). He will include a map with other ways to get where people are going, and who to contact with questions about the temporary closure. When a developer asks the committee for a temporary hours exception, the committee could request them to put up a sign. A committee member said the sign should include the start and end dates of the closure (and be placed in skyway bridges before the closure starts).
- The group discussed pros and cons of communicating problems to building owners versus recognizing building owners for doing something well. The developer of the former Pioneer Press building, in contrast to other buildings, has been working hard to keep the skyway open as much as possible, and keep the skyway bridges

heated.

Motion by Bill Hanley, seconded by Peg Guilfoyle, that the committee commend the developer (Weiss Builders / Real Estate Equities) for the positive way they have managed the building renovation with minimal disruption to the skyway system. Motion passed.

- DSI updates / Q and A: A question was asked if anything is happening in Town Square, the area that used to be a park one level above skyway level. Tom Ferrara said it is his understanding that the building owner is looking to sell that space.
- Public Safety – Sgt John Wuorinen, Saint Paul Police Dept. provided an update on public safety issues. A question was asked about a plan to create a coordinated security system for downtown. Mark Jones said phase one included a survey that was conducted, and they received more than 1,000 responses. The number one response to questions about what could be improved had to deal with homelessness. The responses weren't one-sided, as some were concerned about safety for homeless people, whereas others were concerned that there are so many homeless people. The second and third phases will focus on identifying and implementing specific solutions. Joel Franklin and Tim Simmons attended the meeting, representing the Community Ambassador program. Mr. Franklin described their work, and they have workers who are focused on downtown and in other parts of Saint Paul. They have been asked to spend more time lately on light rail trains, which has taken some of their focus away from the Skyway system. Like other nonprofits, they are seeking to raise money to increase their capacity. Representatives of the recently opened Teen Tech Center at 4th and Cedar said the facility is equipped with a small recording studio, 3d printer, and other technology that is available as a resource.
- Motion by Linda McBrayer, seconded by Will Travis, to indicate support for the Community Ambassador program. Jon Fure said he will connect with Joel Franklin and identify ways that the CapitolRiver Council can provide meaningful support to that organization. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

- end -