

Downtown Neighborhood Association Meeting
Wednesday, March 5, 2025 | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
via Zoom due to weather

Call to Order 6pm

In attendance: board members Deb Madison-Levi, Julie Feirer, Jennifer Bright, Christine Comito, David Jennings, Jordan Locke, Luke Ifland, speakers Sgt Mark McKinney, Chief Michael McTaggart, DMPD Ted Stroope, Councilman Josh Mandelbaum, Councilman Voss, 16 community members

Community Presentations

- Sgt. Mark McKinney | Downtown Patrol Update
Incidents up a bit because of a bit of warm weather, 2 more cases and 1 more arrest, feels like they're making contact with people but not necessarily leading to cases or arrests. Doing well with officers in Skywalk. They'll go out to street as needed. Please engage with the officers when you see them. Weather dependent on when the officers are primarily outside duty for higher visibility. Meeting coming up to discuss Cowles Commons issues. Question from member about police presence at Civic Center.
- Community Updates | Councilman Mandelbaum: review of Sociable City recommendations
 - Foundations for Social Economy. 1. To hire a Night Manager, is a resource question and the current budget does not support that. 2. Create a business registry/business license has a substantial financial effect therefore not being pursued. 3. Improve Systems of review for alcohol services business--not within city purview
 - Assure Safety in Social Economy. 1. Create multidisciplinary team approach to public safety at night. 2. Collaboration between Iowa ABD and municipal stakeholders is ongoing and will continue. 3. Establish security standards for venues with alcohol licenses. Scanners can be used. 4. Sexual Violence prevention program for social venues -- partnered with Polk County and it is up and running. [Safe Bars program]
 - Enhance Vibrancy in social economy. 1. Revive a nightlife assn with broadened scope. Haven't found any entity willing to take leadership at this point. [Hoping Teehee's gets financing figured out to take on Spaghetti Works space and they're interested in this assn]. 2. Activate Riverwalk Hub for Outdoor Recreation and Events. Working with Parks & Rec to take the lead on that, many rentals already last year
 - Plan for People in the Social Economy. 1. Enhance advocacy of the DNA. Working hard to include DNA in conversations, connecting board

members, council members and police regularly attend DNA meetings. 2. Connect diverse creative class with funding for DEI initiatives. Mainframe and other options available, not ideal time for DEI funding in this current climate. 3. Create rideshare hub for closing time pickup. Productive ongoing conversations with uber and lyft and DMPD and City Traffic and Transportation 4. Address nighttime challenges associated with parking lots. 121 3rd has improvements with new ownership and mgmt. County great partner, updating 111 Court Ave usage, as well as 208 Court Ave (Mural from Op. Downtown and Partnership) Op Downtown also purchased a large mobile light that can be used downtown for enhanced safety in partnership with DMPD. 5. Enhance Skywalk between Court Ave and Iowa Events Center, a lot of work has been done on this-- new HVACs , interior paint, LED lights, painting and designs (mural at 4th and Grand got a new touch up) in many areas of Skywalk. New wayfinding and signage system is being worked on and nearing completion.

- Theme: want Court Ave to be more than a place to go drink/get drunk quickly. Need diverse options for entertainment. Positive movement in CC Building by putting Stuffed Olive on ground floor. Hopeful that Teehee's will work out getting into Spag Works spot. New neighbors coming with new apartments being built. More people living downtown will be helpful for more improvements.
- Councilman Voss added kudos to Capt'n Bagby for working out parking/towing issues. Voss doubtful that any staff have been trained on Safe Bars, only some managers at Johnny's and Annie's. Jon Cahill of Polk County added details on Safe Bars Initiative, other bars were included. Managers are meant to go back to their bars and train their staff. Mandelbaum noted that downtown residents can let bars know they are paying attention, thanking bars who participate and encouraging others to do it too.
- Chief McTaggart: working with ABD (Alcoholic Beverages Division), they are doing some audits on troubling businesses on liquor licenses, unfortunately slow process. RHI Study, Polk County has been good to work with as people move from Court Ave no-parking spaces. Downtown traffic enforcement team starting up again late April. Good accomplishment in Western Gateway. Would like to expand to East Village as well. Met with Principal and other bigger businesses downtown who are bringing more workers downtown more days and this will lower crime, less perception of unsafe areas.
- Question about closing off Court Ave with yellow barricades: safety measure against the about one a month car that comes crashing into the barricade.

Business | Standing Reports

- Approval of December 4, 2024 Minutes and January 29 annual meeting minutes moved by David 2nd by Jordan, all approved
- Treasurer's Report (December 2024, January 2025 & February 2025)--Jordan (new treasurer) shared updated money on hand and expenses
- Membership Committee Report--Luke: steady membership since end of November. Will re-start soliciting members and businesses. Current membership at 160 (households, not individuals)
- Socials Report - David: Upcoming Events, working on an April event about festivals, partnering with Momentum DSM on a "transit 101" workshop. Tuesday Together March 18 at 5:30 location TBD

OLD BUSINESS

Luke shared 2025 planning survey link in zoom chat:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScaGOsDhtvnRZTHm43VwBueH7z_6u4GynavRyJCuWDuW-uVyA/viewform?usp=header

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members, guests, and Board Members are welcome to share upcoming neighborhood events, news, or other items of interest wished to be shared with all neighbors.

Member question about DSM Mobile app reporting on clean up needs in alleys. Julie Hempel of Parks & Rec suggested calling Public Works at (515) 283-4950 instead of reporting on app

Julie Hempel shared some Parks & Rec events including yoga at Pioneer Columbus, pickleball, volleyball, Spring Break staycation for kids, adaptive programming for basketball soccer and adding baseball, learn to use GPS, birding sessions every Wednesday at 11 at Gray's Lake, clean up trails Saturday before Easter including cached hidden prizes, Earth Day pickup, Celebration planning their festival at Western Gateway, as well as Arts Festival.

Steevo Andrews invited folks to Hessen Haus and Royal Mile for holiday events. DNA membership discount at Fong's East Village through May 31. New concept opening in Fong's 4th St space.

ADJOURN 7:25 pm