

# **Business Owners & Organizations Meeting**

## **Notes – Meeting 4 - July 2, 2015**

### **Introductions**

During the introductions, the group brought up the fact that parking enforcement has just started across the boulevard and that could cause concerns going forward.

Corrections from previous meeting notes: SWOT City, not SWAT City.

### **Discussion Questions:**

#### **What is it that would drive someone to recommend your business?**

The meeting began with a discussion of Stephen Colbert doing a public access show in Monroe and about how word of mouth led him to Larsons for a hamburger. The group was asked “What is it that would drive someone to name off your business?” The group discussed ideas like being nice to their customers and producing a quality product. The group further discussed the point of who the way finders would be within the neighborhood – the people most likely to be asked for recommendations. Common answers included the gas stations and the Welcome Center. It is important that relationships are built with these institutions in order to drive business.

The group then began to discuss areas within the community that would be classified more as “neighborhood chasers” or areas that drive people away from the community. The common areas we see this are on street corners with loiterers and people in apartments that are unknown to the community. The spillover affects everyone around these areas. To be solutions based, the group was then prompted on what they would do to change this? A debate between city enforcement and engagement encouraged ideas about working with the people to understand their situation better. An idea for adopting a similar approach as that of the Alternative for Girls street outreach program was proposed, but adapted to included men and women.

## **Do pocket parks increase customer satisfaction?**

Pocket parks finally became the focal point of the discussion and whether or not they can help fulfill the need for driving customer satisfaction. The group would like to see some sort of community bulletin board that was managed/maintained in order to promote events within the community, as well as businesses. All in all, most of what was reiterated in this work group was mirrored across many other work groups and a joint meeting is planned to be held in order to address the issues of signage.

## **Property ownership and use - vacant land and buildings**

Property ownership and upkeep has also been an important issue for the work group. Service Tire continues to be a bane for the community. The city has begun painting random properties and billing them after the fact, which is a start, but more enforcement is needed in order to keep properties in line. It should be the responsibility of the city to make sure owners are responsible for their property.

## **Vista Partnership Updates**

- a. June 6<sup>th</sup>, Neighborhood Beautification Day – More than 400 people participated
- b. July 18<sup>th</sup> – Grand Opening of pocket park at 17<sup>th</sup> and Bagley
- c. July 19<sup>th</sup> – Concert series at the Mercado – Noon to 5 pm
- d. July 23<sup>rd</sup> – Next Vista Community gathering 5:30 to 8:00pm at St. Anthony's Church site and pocket park next to St. Anthony's (24<sup>th</sup> and Bagley)
- e. Vista Wall Installation move to south wall – Avoid the tree
- f. Lighting updated
- g. Vista Web Site [www.vistapartnership.org](http://www.vistapartnership.org)

## **Signage Discussion**

The group discussed the conversation of signage. A joint meeting will be held after the business meeting to discuss the issues. Questions that needed to be answered before were based on whether or not to include businesses that don't buy in to the signage concept. Smaller businesses could use the additional marketing, but the larger businesses that aren't at the table might not, so how does the group approach this?

While no concrete answer was accepted, the general consensus would be to include all businesses, but reward those that buy in by adding additional information to the signage in order to better promote their businesses. The funds from the businesses buying in would go towards the sustainability of the project in order to put it more into the community's hands. To end the conversation, the Arts & Culture group shared their comments on what their idea was on branding the signage into one concept.

## **Ending Takeaway**

The group was asked at the end of the meeting to provide a highlight from the meeting, something they were unsure of, or something they felt was impactful.

Here are a list of the responses:

- Wanted to be clearer on the signage/wayfinding topic and getting more information on connecting to BSC/LISC project in the same area.
  - BSC/LISC people might be interested to attend some Vista meetings
- Wish meetings were an hour and a half. Signage is great/important. Big sign to welcome to the community.
- Excited everyone is here. Until people see some movement they won't come on board. Continue to be inclusive and we will get through it.

- These conversations are helpful for our work. For entrepreneurs to get into the neighborhood being clean and safe are most important factors. Strategies provided from these meetings about clean and safe can be taken away to help new businesses be profitable.
- Excited by all of this. More conversations/keep talking to people. Reach out to more people who don't use email.
- Like the idea that a map is being worked on. Branding will be important. A lot of questions to be answered and how big will the map be?
- Some put in and some don't, but everyone should be included in some way. Those that pay get more advertising. What makes this area is everyone, even if they aren't engaged.

### **Next Meeting**

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015. 8:30 at St. Anthony's Building – 3553 W. Vernor – Across from Lithuanian Hall