



MIDTOWN MUSEUM DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (MMDNA)

Notes of the seventh meeting held on 25 March 2009 at the Century Plaza Condominiums,
Lexington and N Central Avenue, 6.30pm to 8.30pm

1. Introduction and welcome

Margaret Dietrich welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Keynote Speaker: Vice Mayor Tom Simplot

The Vice Mayor talked about the many challenges facing the Arts and Culture communities, especially in the current national and global financial situation. Arts funding for both large and small groups in Phoenix had had to be reviewed, alongside reductions in services in many other areas of the city's work. The ability of corporate institutions to make grants in the current financial climate had also been affected, causing further funding problems for arts and culture providers. MMDNA residents were asked to keep supporting their local arts and culture institutions during these difficult times.

The Vice Mayor informed the group that the Mayor of Phoenix was in Washington with Congressional leaders to advise them of a range of "Shovel Ready" projects in Phoenix that would bring jobs to the City. These included the extension of the Light Rail, (including the sky train to the airport), the widening of the I-17, and the re-development of the Phoenix Theatre (adjacent to the current theatre). In response to a question from a resident, the Vice Mayor thought that the Third Street Promenade project may have an opportunity to be considered for stimulus funding as well. The further development of the ASU/UoA Biomedical Campus downtown (North of Van Buren) was a high priority but relied on State funding. However, it could be a good candidate for Stimulus funding.

The Vice Mayor took a range of questions from the group.

The fireworks bill, introduced by Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Gilbert, calls for the Arizona fire marshal to regulate fireworks sales through licensing and fees. The legislation, [House Bill 2258](#), introduced last month would permit merchants to sell nearly everything from Roman candles to more elaborate and colorful explosives. The bill has passed through a committee and faces a House vote soon. If passed, it would then go to the Senate. Its adoption in Arizona would depend on how the law was crafted.

Advertising on the Light Rail cars was a contentious issue, and not popular with many residents. The Vice Mayor advised that whilst the city were very sensitive to the views of residents, the advertising "wraps" brought essential revenue to the city during difficult financial times. The Board Members for the Light Rail had asked for a range of advertising options that could be used both inside and outside the cars, and also on the platforms, and to be given an estimate of the income this could bring. It was hoped that extra income could be used to extend the length of time the trains run (especially at night). He reported that the number of people riding the trains had already far-exceeded the original estimates by around 9,000 more people during the week.

Although it was still early days, ticket inspectors had found less than 1% of passengers not paying the fare. There are cameras at each door that are used to count passengers on and off the trains and this information will be used in the future to schedule trains based on demand.

The fares on the buses and the Light Rail will be increased to \$1.75 for a single journey (or reduced fare all day pass) and \$3.50 for a full all day pass. These passes can be used on both the Light Rail and the buses. There would be a strong incentive to purchase the tickets at the stations as buying an all day ticket on the bus will be \$5.25. More details of the fare increases can be found at

http://www.valleymetro.org/valley_metro/pressroom/press_releases/new_fares_approved_by_valley_metro_board/

St Joseph's Hospital is an important asset to the town and the neighborhood, and it was noted that the Hospital is considering expanding their facilities. One of the sites under consideration is at Park Central, where they currently have administrative offices and a training facility.

A number of residents were very interested in having the Midtown Museum District Neighborhood signed off the freeways to help people come to the area. Vice Mayor Simplot thought this was a great idea and suggested that this should be taken forward with the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Vice Mayor Simplot invited MMDNA members to his regular monthly meeting held on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30am at the Hometown Buffet on 15th Avenue and Bethany Home. These details will go on the MMDNA calendar. More details from the Vice Mayor's office can be found at <http://www.phoenix.gov/district4/index.html>

Margaret Dietrich thanked the Vice Mayor for coming to the MMDNA meeting and for answering all the questions from residents.

3. Blockwatch and community safety

The MMDNA had submitted a bid for \$4,945 to support Blockwatch projects in the neighborhood for the next 12 months. The outcome of the bids would be known in June. Meanwhile, two meetings had been held in the neighborhood to test support for Blockwatch schemes. The first was held on 18 March at Ville De Coronado, where the residents were interested in re-establishing a scheme for their community and (ideally) to extend it to neighboring homes. A follow-up Block Watch meeting was planned during April. On 24 March, the new Condo Association board at Tapestry agreed to support a new Block Watch scheme at Tapestry on Central. Officer Wiegert is the one of the main Block Watch Officers and she can be contacted on doreena.wiegert@phoenix.gov Telephone: (602) 495-5005.

Officers Al Knecht and Larry Naranjo from the Phoenix Police reported that there had been a recent "sweep" of the neighborhood, and fifteen transients or homeless people had been apprehended and put in touch with relevant agencies.

There have been a number of burglaries outside the neighborhood, but nothing of significance in the MMDNA area. Officer Knecht informed the group that it was not uncommon for homes that had been burglarized to be hit a second time. He suggested residents should go through the

burglary prevention tips on the police web site, to make their homes as secure as possible. This can be found at <http://phoenix.gov/police/burgti1.html>

Officer Al Knecht is one of the Community Liaison Officers for the MMDNA. He can be contacted on (602) 534-0718, or by email on al.knecht@phoenix.gov

Residents were reminded that suspicious activity can be reported to Crime Stop on (602) 262-6151 and graffiti problems can be reported to Graffiti Busters on (602) 262 6441

4. Report on MMDNA funds

Margaret reported that the Association's funds stood at \$134.70 She also reported that she had put arrangements in place to register the MMDNA name with the Secretary of State. This registration would last for five years and cost \$10. There was no objection to spending \$10 from the MMDNA funds.

5. Social events

The social event held at Switch on Friday 20 March was a success and the meeting thanked the staff at Switch for a very enjoyable evening. Many people also went to the Heard Museum for the Third Friday entertainment that included Hawaiian music and dancing.

The next social event is planned for May. Suggestions for events included music at Alexis and an evening at the Clarendon Hotel on their roof-top cocktail bar. Residents were asked to email the MMDNA (info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org) with ideas for venues and entertainment.

5.1 Cinematheque de Langlois

Fred Linch, Director of Cinematheque di Langois and MMDNA resident, shows eclectic movies at the Tapestry on Central Clubhouse Theatre on either a Tuesday or Thursday evening, starting at 6.30pm. The April program will be "Italian Movies". There is no charge for the evening, but places are limited. Please contact Fred at cinemafred@gmail.com or 602 373 8323 for more details.

6. Business Issues

Margaret and Julia reported that they had met with Lisa Huggins-Hubbard (City of Phoenix Neighborhood Services Department), to get some ideas of how to get businesses together to help promote the Midtown Neighborhood, and to attract and retain businesses in the area. From experience in other neighborhoods, it was felt that many small businesses owners might not have the capacity to attend regular meetings. However, web-based "virtual" business alliances had been quite successful in helping small businesses promote themselves and their neighborhood.

There is an evolving "Business Link" on the current MMDNA website, but feedback had been received that it was not easy to use. It was also felt to be very important that the website should not try to be too complex and should not replicate lots of good and professional work done elsewhere. The time required to maintain websites should not be underestimated, as this can be significant and needs lots of dedication to keep up to date.

After discussion it was agreed that the Association needed a more attractive website that was easy to use and was visually more attractive. The current website was free, but a more “user-friendly” system could be purchased at around \$103 for two years.

Bob and Linda Russman gave the MMDNA \$103 to purchase the website for two years and were very warmly thanked by the group for their very generous donation.

Margaret thanked Edward Jensen and Mike Copeland for all their hard work in developing and supporting the technical aspects of the MMDNA’s work. All MMDNA members wanting to help with the development of the website were asked to email info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org

7. **Any other business**

7.1 **Diary Dates**

A lot of new events had been sent to the MMDNA for distribution and are summarized as follows:

Sunday March 29 noon to 5.00pm DOVES presents a free Community “Art in the Garden”
Features Mata Ortiz pottery. Event will be at Honey House, a 100 year old home. 5150 N 36 Street Phoenix.

Thursday April 2 10.00am Community meeting to discuss Voting Center proposal
Steele Indian School Park Memorial Hall 300 E Indian School Road. More details at www.phoenix.gov/ELECTION/elect6

Friday April 3 1.30 to 10.00pm Action Advocacy, Arts
Includes Urban Gallery Exhibition. ASU Downtown Campus. Register at www.asu.edu/aaa

Friday April 3 to Sunday April 5 Modern Phoenix week
Lectures, presentations and hometours around Phoenix, with a variety of free events.
www.modernphoenix.net/hometour

Wednesday April 22 4-8pm The many faces of small business festival
Local First Arizona in partnership with Downtown Phoenix Public Market. Bring you local business to this event – the only cost will be 10% of your sales (if you sell nothing you pay nothing) Spaces are limited. For more details contact russ@localfirstaz.com . It will also be a fun event to attend to sample food, drinks, local products and entertainment.

8. **Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday 29 April 2009 at 6.30 pm. **KEYNOTE SPEAKER PHILIP McNEELY** Phoenix Environmental Sustainability Program Manager. Philip will talk about the City of Phoenix Environmental Sustainability Program