

**MIDTOWN MUSEUM DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
(MMDNA)**



**Notes of the ninth meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2009 at the Holiday Inn Phoenix
from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm.**

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Margaret Dietrich welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Darrell Surhigh and the staff at the Holiday Inn for their generous hospitality. Darrell informed the group that the Holiday Inn was offering MMDNA residents preferential rates on hotel rooms and reminded them that even though they are not hotel guests, they can come to the hotel's restaurant for breakfast and dinner, and could enjoy drinks in the bar and lounge area.

2. KEYNOTE SPEAKER SENATOR KEN CHEUVRONT

Senator Chevront spoke about the challenges facing small businesses in the current financial climate. As an owner of two small businesses he has found that people are limiting their spending to essential items and looking for best value across the board. The tough economic times were forcing businesses to be even more efficient, and this would put them in a stronger position when the economy improves. There appeared to be more people staying in Phoenix rather than going on vacations outside the State and this meant that a little more money was being spent in the Valley. Metro Light Rail was having a positive effect on the local economy. People were beginning to realize the benefits of the Light Rail, especially in the evenings, and were using it to avoid problems associated with drinking and driving. He told the group that advertising on the Light Rail has been approved and the revenue arising from this would be used to extend the running times of the trains on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Senator Chevront spoke about the challenges facing the State legislators to reduce the budget deficits. Major cuts were being made as the State's revenue had been severely reduced as a consequence of, for example, reduced construction and problems in the automobile industry. Strenuous efforts were being made to protect education, health and services to disadvantaged people, but it was impossible to keep services at their current levels. Plans to change "sales" tax (transaction privilege tax) were being considered. A lower rate of taxation but applied to a much wider range of goods and services were currently under review. Different accounting mechanisms were also being used to ameliorate some of the budget cuts in the short term. He advised against some of the budget cuts in education for example, where these would lose associated federal funding, thus compounding the problem. As Arizona has one of the lowest amounts spent per pupil (48th among the States), further cuts in education would be extremely detrimental. He was working hard to support initiatives that would use funds more efficiently, reduce waste and invest prudently for the future.

In response to a question he informed the group that the Arts and Culture communities were being especially badly hit with the budget cuts, and a number of arts organizations were seeking other ways to raise money. There had also be major reductions in organizations such as the Arts Commission, and funding had been taken from the Arts Endowment fund to support other services. The group deplored the loss of funding for arts and culture, as they are a major asset and employer in the neighborhood.

Senator Chevront was thanked for his very interesting presentation and for answering questions from the group.

3. BLOCKWATCH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Officer Valenzuela was welcomed to the meeting and he updated the group on a number of issues. There had been an increase in the amount of graffiti in the area. Officer Valenzuela asked residents to report this to Graffiti Busters or to Officers Smith or Knecht. Over the summer months, there was going to be an intensive program to remove graffiti so it was important to report it to the Community Liaison Officer Al Knecht on (602) 534-0718, or by email on al.knecht@phoenix.gov. Graffiti problems can be reported to Graffiti Busters hotline (602) 495-7014 or emailed to graffiti.busters.nsd@phoenix.gov. Residents were reminded that suspicious activity can be reported to Crime Stop on (602) 262-6151 or to report graffiti in progress call 911.

The Willo Block Watch had just issued an alert about a man who offers window washing, and then becomes aggressive if told that the service is not required. It seems that the person may be approaching older people. Residents were advised to contact Crime Stop at (602)-262-6151 if they feel threatened, or 911 if appropriate.

Residents were also advised to keep their eyes open for suspicious behavior relating to homes in their street or condos, such as large numbers of people visiting the property at all times of the day or night. It was very important to contact Crime Stop (602)-262-6151 to report untoward events. A recent example was given of a serious drugs arrest in the neighborhood, where drugs and guns were found on the premises. Residents were reminded that “desirable/high end” properties could be used for illegal activity, on the basis that this activity may go unnoticed.

Margaret reported that an introduction to Block Watch meeting was held at Tapestry on Central, earlier in May. Officer Doreena Wiegert gave a very interesting presentation, and showed the group some effective home security devices. Villa Del Coronado was looking for a Block Watch Captain to take forward the scheme in their areas and Hoover was also looking to set up a Block Watch scheme.

The City of Phoenix web site has useful information about home security and this can be found at <http://phoenix.gov/menu/safehome.html>. This includes a vacation checklist if the home is going to be unoccupied for a while. http://phoenix.gov/police/crime_and_safety_education.html Provides good information about summer safety tips for parents looking after younger children at home and safety tips for children home alone. This web page also links to other information about rental property scams on Craig’s List and give good advice on how to avoid them.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

Margaret reported that the Association’s funds stood at \$134.70.

5. SOCIAL EVENTS

5.1 OSHER Lifelong Learning Program

It was reported that ASU OSHER Lifelong Learning Program was very interested in extending their programs into the Midtown Museum Neighborhood. There had been a lot of planning to take this exciting proposal forward and an interesting range of programs were being considered including Film Studies, Creative Writing, and Arizona Law. More details would be announced in due course and the Program Director will attend the next MMDNA meeting to describe in detail what’s planned.

5.2 Salsa Dancing at Tapestry on Central

The Association had received a suggestion about a Salsa dancing evening, held at Tapestry on Central Clubhouse. Up to 20 people could attend, and a professional dance teacher would take the class. The cost of the evening would be less than \$10. We need at least 12 people signed up to make it a go. Anyone interested was asked to email info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org

6. NEW MMDNA WEB SITE

Edward Jensen introduced the new web site for the MMDNA, generously funded by Bob and Linda Russman. The group thanked Edward for his hard work establishing the new site. Residents and businesses were asked to send photos to Edward for the MMDNA photo gallery and some of these could be shown on the Home page. All news items and events for the calendar should be sent to info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17 June 2009 at 6.30 pm at the Hilton Inn and Suites, 10 West Thomas

KEYNOTE SPEAKER CYD WEST Director of Research and Economic development for Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture

There would be no MMDNA meetings in July and August.

Check out our website for last month's **Meeting Notes** and other items of interest to the neighborhood www.midtownmuseumdistrict.org