



MIDTOWN MUSEUM DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (MMDNA)

**Notes of the eleventh meeting held on Wednesday 23 September 2009.
Fairfield Inn and Suites, 2520 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.**

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Margaret Dietrich welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mellors Miranda and the staff at the Fairfield Inn and Suites for their generosity in hosting the meeting.

2. KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CITY MANAGER FRANK FAIRBANKS

Frank Fairbanks was welcomed to the meeting and gave a brief summary of some of the major changes he had seen in Phoenix as a native Phoenician, and a City of Phoenix employee for 37 years. The City of Phoenix was facing major financial challenges due to the economic recession, but was also starting to experience growth in a number of areas. A significant number of jobs were moving to Phoenix from California, and the City was pursuing a number of initiatives to encourage more businesses to come to Phoenix. ASU and the Biomedical Campus Downtown had made a huge positive impact on the City, bringing revenue and investment to the area.

The actions of the City were focused on improving the quality of life in communities, and were increasingly focused on stopping blight and downward deterioration of neighborhoods. These actions were most successful when developed in partnership with local communities.

Mr. Fairbanks responded to a number of questions from residents:

Policy on infill developments

The City was supportive of infill developments and had proposed to change the current arrangements to make the process simpler for adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The parcel of land at the NW corner of McDowell and Central Ave. was privately owned and in the current economic climate, it was unlikely to be developed in the near future. The land at NE corner of Indian School Road, owned by the Collier Corporation may be developed in the future for hotel/leisure purposes, but again this would be dependent on an improvement in the economy. It was noted that central Phoenix is well placed in the housing market and has suffered far less than outlying areas, where there is a substantial over-supply of single-family homes.

3rd Street Promenade

The City had applied to as many places as possible for funding to take this project forward. Mr. Fairbanks encouraged residents to keep mentioning this project (and others important to the neighborhood) to City Officials and elected representatives.

Budget cuts in Parks and Recreation Services

The Mayor and the City Council had responded to community priorities when proposing budget cuts for the City, and the priority areas were the Police, Fire Service, and the Courts. These areas account for 2/3 of the City's budget. These services had a 7% cut. All other Departments, including the Parks and Recreation service had a 22% budget cut. The City had held 13 consultation meetings where 1,500 people spoke in support of the Parks and Recreation Services. The outcome was a \$5 charge to use some of the facilities. Whilst this had protected some services, attendance in some areas was down. The City was now considering reducing the fees to attract more people to the facilities. Residents were strongly encouraged to let their Councilmen know how important Parks and Recreation facilities are to the community.

Background Checks for volunteers working with Children

Mr. Fairbanks agreed to check on how much it currently cost for these checks. He hoped the City might be able to reduce these costs for volunteers. *(Post meeting note: Officer Al Knecht called to say that at present there is no cost for checks at present but this is under consideration)*

To volunteer go to www.phoenix.gov/PARKS/volunteer.html

How the current recession has impacted on Phoenix

The current economic recession had affected those areas of the country where there had been rapid growth. Arizona was the fourth fastest-growing state in the Nation. The recession has therefore hit Arizona faster and deeper than the majority of the rest of the country. Property tax in Phoenix is used predominantly for education. The City of Phoenix gets less than 10% of property tax, and most of its money comes from sales tax.

Margaret thanked Mr. Fairbanks for a very interesting presentation and for an excellent discussion of local issues. She thanked him on behalf of the MMDNA for his long and distinguished service to the City of Phoenix and wished him every happiness for his retirement.

3. BLOCKWATCH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Officer Doreen Wiegert was welcomed to the meeting and informed the group about the following:

Planned Implosion of building 3rd Street and Earll

This was planned for 10.00am on Sunday 27 September 2009. A “Reverse 911” call would be made to residents to warn them of the implosion noise and dust. The building (3033 N 3rd St) had to be demolished because of safety reasons.

New Police Precincts summer 2010

Two new precincts were needed due to development in the northeast and south west of the city. A lot of research had been done on new boundaries to try to balance out the police workload across the city. Public consultation exercises on the proposals were taking place. The changes to affect the MMDNA would be to move the neighborhood entirely into the Squaw Peak precinct (The MMDNA is in two precincts Central City and Squaw Peak). The neighborhood would have a new Police Commander and may have new Community Action Officers. There should be plenty of opportunities to meet new staff and to give our neighborhood’s views and priorities to them.

Please contact Officer Wiegert for more information about the proposed boundary changes

doreena.wiegert@phoenix.gov or telephone 602-534-6313

G.A.I.N. Event Saturday 17 October 2009

Officer Wiegert encouraged everyone to come to the MMDNA G.A.I.N event. G.A.I.N. is Arizona's answer to National Night Out. G.A.I.N. is a day of celebration for the successes of crime prevention through community involvement. Residents and businesses across Phoenix participate in block parties to show support for the efforts of those involved in the fight against crime.

Julia Tourville reported that the MMDNA is holding its first G.A.I.N. Block Party in the small park on the northwest corner of Thomas Road and Central Avenue, thanks to the support of Pederson Group, Inc and Clear Channel. A group of five MMDNA residents were planning the event. There will be entertainment throughout the morning, and plenty of information to help people stay healthy and be safe. Participants

include St. Joseph's Hospital, ASU School of Nursing and Healthcare Innovation students and TMG Identity Theft Specialists. A number of local restaurants may well provide food, and tables were available for local businesses to rent, and to get to know their neighbors.

2,500 postcards would be sent out to local businesses and residents to advertise the G.A.I.N. Block Party and two (free) safety seminars in the neighborhood on Thursday 12 November at 5:30pm and on Tuesday 1 December at 12:30pm. Two more safety seminars are planned for 2010. The postcards are intended to encourage community involvement in the neighborhood, increase the email list so people can know what's going on in the neighborhood and to promote the G.A.I.N. and safety events.

Funding for the events was being provided from a City of Phoenix Block Watch grant. More details on the grant and how the money is being spent is available on request, info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org

Neighbors were asked to sign up to help with the Block Party (1 hour) (Please contact info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org) and everyone was urged to come along and enjoy the fun – and bring friends and family.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Block Watch grant of \$4,954 had to be kept in a separate account and administered separately. Details of expenditure against the grant will be made available on request and reported at the next meeting. A detailed report of the MMDNA finances, including donations, would be made at the next meeting. Please contact Margaret (602) 758-3129 or info@midtownmuseumdistrict.org for more information before the next meeting.

5. METRO LIGHT RAIL HILLARY FOOSE

Hillary updated the group on the Light Rail. Ridership was 30% higher than anticipated, and 40% of people rode the Light Rail for leisure activities (not commuting). A recent survey showed that 70% of riders had access to a car but chose to ride the rail.

Light Rail had entered into a pilot program with the US Airways Center, whereby an event ticket could also be used for travel on the Light Rail up to 4 hours before the event and through the end of the days service. It was hoped this could be extended to other venues downtown. 37 miles of extensions to the High Capacity Transit were being planned and due for completion by 2030. This would include extensions to the Light Rail.

The new "Adopt-A-Station" program had attracted a lot of attention. Some of the stations in the neighborhood had received more than one bid. All bids would be reviewed by the Transport Department in the near future. Hillary said that the sponsorship did not take away any of the responsibilities of METRO Light Rail for the routine maintenance or cleaning of the station.

Hillary answered the following questions:

- There were more inspectors on the Light Rail and the goal was to inspect 20% of all passengers.
- Drivers would be reminded to follow the protocol for use of the bells and horns, especially during the early hours of the morning.
- If residents noticed maintenance issues on the platform they should call METRO Light Rail Customer Service on (602) 253 5000. The call will get logged and passed on to the Maintenance Team.
- METRO Light Rail try to make sure there are sufficient trains for high use events such as PF Chang Marathon. Their estimation of demand will improve as they get more information on Ridership.

Hillary can be contacted on (602) 322 4468.

Julia thanked Hillary for coming to the meeting and for the opportunity to raise issues about METRO Light Rail.

6. CULTURE AND EDUCATION

6.1 *OSHER Lifelong Learning*

Fred Linch outlined some of the courses available at the OSHER Lifelong Institute (Copies of the fall semester were delivered to residents). The courses offered excellent value for money and many were intellectually-challenging. He informed the group that discussions about establishing a number of courses in Midtown were on-going, and asked that as many people as possible should email him to support establishment of local courses. Fred's email is cinemafred@gmail.com

Information about the OSHER courses can be found on: <http://lifelonglearning.asu.edu/>

6.2 *Scottsdale Film Festival October 2 –6, 2009*

The festival has a wide range of international films. For more information go to www.scottsdaleFilmFestival.com

6.3 *The Big Read (Post meeting note)*

This was taking place from September 25 to October 31. The book this year is "Fahrenheit 451". More details about the event can be found on <http://bigreadaz.webs.com/>

7. ADAM KLAWONN "CITYCIRCLES"

Adam is a Phoenix native who has worked for The Arizona Republic and The San Diego Union-Tribune newspapers. He launched ZonieReport.com in May 2006 to cover statewide and multimedia news that garnered journalism awards from the Arizona Press Club. Adam has taught online journalism at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University. He is the content coordinator for CityCircles.

CityCircles is a collaborative platform where users and journalists work together to create and share information around each light-rail stop. That includes news, events, promotions, classifieds and social networking. There's even a community improvement tool that helps our users create, join and accomplish projects that make the city a better place for everyone. The "Soft Launch" of City Circles will take place on October 8, 2009.

More information about CityCircles can be found on <http://citycircles.com/index.php/about/>. Please contact Adam at adam.klawonn@gmail.com. Margaret thanked Adam for his interesting presentation and looked forward to hearing more about CityCircles in the future.

8. MMDNA NEW WEBSITE

Margaret announced that the new website (www.midtownmuseumdistrict.org) was up and running, and encouraged everyone to visit it. Mike Copeland was thanked for all his hard work in setting it up and maintaining it.

9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on:

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21 6:30 PM TO 8:30 PM HILTON GARDEN INN 4000 N CENTRAL AVENUE and the Keynote speaker will be Councilman Michael Nowakowski.

There will be a Happy Hour from 5.30 to 6.30