

## **UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

### **October Meeting**

**10/25/16 6:00 PM**

**Present:** Darren Cotton, Mickey Vertino, David Mack, Matt Kopalek, Dan Domino, Sr. Jeremy, Comptroller Schroeder, Adele Egu

Meeting commenced at 6:10

August Meeting Minutes approved unanimously

### **Mark Schroeder, City Comptroller**

- Vacancy on South Park Avenue and Seneca Street in 2001 - things looked bleak, business association was inactive
- Business Associations are unsustainable - cannot rely on business people to carry out action points
- As Erie County Legislator, Schroeder dedicated one of his staff members to running the South Buffalo Chamber of Commerce - ran for 12 years
- South Buffalo Chamber of Commerce had an executive director who came from the Kenmore-Tonawanda Chamber of Commerce
  - Took directive from the board of businesses
- There is a need for a City of Buffalo Chamber of Commerce
  - Buffalo Niagara Partnership is not focused on Main Streets in the city, their focus is regional
    - Developed out of the original city of chamber of commerce
- BERCC - Defunct for over 5 years. Meant to help businesses in the city
- Question: What role did the Executive Director play for the Chamber?
  - A: Board of Directors was assembled from entrepreneurs, block clubs, faith-based organizations
  - Trying to bring neighborhoods together to work toward common goals
  - Started South Buffalo Education Center
    - GED, training, partnership with ECC
- Two VISTAs working in neighborhood thanks to partnership with City of Buffalo and UB
  - One can focus on business development
- \$6 million from the state invested in major streetscape along Seneca Street
- Developers are looking for cheap property and opportunities to expand

### **Business Association Elections**

- Mickey nominates Annmarie Ranger (Parkside Candy) as President
- Mickey nominates Paul Neubecker (Nickel City Ventures) as Vice President
- Group would like Jonathon Welch (Talking Leaves) to stay on as Treasurer
- Secretary role will be filled by Darren Cotton (Tool Library) until replacement can be found

## **Bike Rack Update**

- Talked to Sarah Fonzi from the Foundry about creating the bike racks in house using vocational students.
- Racks would cost \$200-\$300/piece

## **Small Business Saturday - November 26th**

- Opportunity to encourage “Black Friday” shoppers to visit locally-owned stores and invest in the local economy instead of national chains
- Businesses will usually offer some sort of discount on that day to attract additional shoppers

## **Planning for the Holidays**

- Still no word from the city on how we can get the GFI outlets working on the street lights along Main Street
- Possibility of mounting a Christmas tree on top of the Just Pizza building at the corner of Main Street and West Northrup
- Tool Library has lights available for those businesses who are interested in decorating.

## **Business District Website**

- Potentially something to look into for the new year
- A searchable database of businesses in University Heights that could be sorted by category (e.g. all restaurants, clothing stores, retail, etc.)

## **Other Business**

- Vacancy is in issue for Main Street, does not encourage people to get out and walk
- Catalician Center - Status?
  - Originally was planning on student housing, but success of Bethune Lofts had Affinity (owner) thinking something upscale could work here
- Issues with aggressive pandhandlers along Main Street
  - Need to bring these issues up at the E-District police meeting which is held every month
  - Need more police on the beat

Meeting adjourned at 7:54PM

The next meeting will be **Tuesday, November 22nd, 2016** at the CoLab (9 W. Northrup Place). Please visit <http://ourheights.org/mainstreetbiz/> for meeting minutes and to learn more about the University Heights Business Association