

Niwot Local Improvement District Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 5, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Present: Laura Skaggs, Lisa Rivard, Cornelia Sawle, Mary Coonce, Biff Warren, Jim Eastman, Scott Firle, Eric Bergeson

Guests: Jocelyn Rowley, Deb Fowler, Chuck Klueber

Staff: Mark Ruzzin

Call to Order:

Laura called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The advisory committee considered the November 10, 2020 meeting minutes:

ACTION: On a motion from Lisa, seconded by Mary, the committee voted unanimously to approve the November 10, 2020 meeting minutes, as presented.

The advisory committee considered the December 1, 2020 meeting minutes:

ACTION: On a motion from Mary, seconded by Lisa, the committee voted unanimously to approve the December 1, 2020 meeting minutes, as amended to add Mary to the attendee list.

Treasurer's Report:

Jim presented the monthly Treasurer's Report to the committee, as Bruce was not able to attend. Jim walked through the various financial reports that Bruce had prepared for the meeting.

Jim noted that through October, LID revenue collections had reached \$173,000, a 4% increase from 2019 year-to-date collections. 51% of the collections came from the retail sector, and 25% from accommodations and food services. Retail sales tax collections are up nearly \$20,000 in 2019, with accommodations and food services collections down \$16,000 in 2019. Revenue collections to date have not suffered as much as one might expect given the pandemic, though Jim reminded the committee that the over-remittance issue raised by the Colorado Dept. of Revenue remains unresolved heading into the new year.

Regarding year-to-date funding requests and approvals, heading into 2021 the committee has approved \$35,000 in funding requests, leaving about \$114,000 remaining in the 2021 budget. If the committee approves all of the funding requests that are on the January meeting agenda, about one-third of the LID's 2021 budget will have been committed.

Jim noted that a significant number of 2020 reimbursement requests remain to be submitted. He asked that the sponsors of these events please work to get these requests submitted as soon as possible. In respect to the NBA, Mary noted that she is working hard with the NBA's accountant to submit their

requests as soon as possible; they will be meeting later in the week to finalize the reimbursement submissions. Mark noted for the committee that the deadline for submission of requests is January 20 or so, though submission by January 15 would provide additional time for the requests to be processed.

Jim pointed out that the LID's reserve beginning in 2020 was about \$220,000, and at minimum, will be about \$115,000 heading in to 2021, to be revised upwards dependent on total 2020 collections and expenses.

Funding Requests:

The advisory committee considered the following funding requests:

1. Niwot Business Association: Music for Holiday Events - \$1,025.00

Mary presented the funding request for the NBA. She reminded the committee that back in August when the NCAA received approval for its First Fridays Music event, the committee discussed the possibility of the NCAA sharing any unexpended funds from the event with the NBA to support music for the holiday events that the NBA was organizing. Of its \$2,500 approval, the NCAA utilized \$1,475 for First Fridays, and Mary explained that the NBA would like to use these remaining dollars for musicians for events like the Holiday Fayre. Biff noted for the record that the NCAA did indeed only expend \$1,475 for First Fridays music.

ACTION: Laura moved, seconded by Jim, to approve the funding request for \$1,025.00.

The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

2. Niwot Business Association: Electric Utilities - \$1,250.00

Chuck Klueber presented the funding request for the NBA, the first of four items that cover expenses related to ongoing operations and maintenance of the LID. Chuck noted that the LID pays the electricity bills for the Second Avenue lighting and the lighting associated with the Sculpture Park. This request is to cover these annual electricity costs. As total electricity costs in 2020 are expected to be about \$1,100, Chuck pointed out that he has reduced the 2020 request of \$1,900 to \$1,250 for 2021.

ACTION: Jim moved, seconded by Mary, to approve the funding request for \$1,250.00.

The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

3. Niwot Business Association: Snow Removal - \$1,800.00

Chuck Klueber presented the funding request for the NBA. This request is used to supplement the county's Second Avenue snow plowing, to ensure that the sidewalks and other areas of Old Town are safe for pedestrians. Chuck noted that like the Electric Utilities item considered earlier in the evening, snow removal expenses over the past few years have been significantly less than the funding request approval amount, so he is comfortable reducing the funding request amount from the proposed \$1,800.

ACTION: Jim moved, seconded by Scott, to approve the funding request for \$1,000.00.

The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

4. Niwot Business Association: Tree Maintenance - \$2,220.00

Chuck Klueber presented the funding request for the NBA. This item covers maintenance for the five pear trees located on Second Avenue and the evergreen tree in the Sculpture Park. Chuck noted

that the NBA contracts with We Love Trees, a Niwot-based business, for this work. So far in 2020 expenses have been just \$900, of the \$2,000 approval amount. For 2021 We Love Trees would like to complete some structural pruning of the pear trees, to keep the shape of the trees and to also ensure that they are not an obstacle for pedestrians walking up and down Second Avenue and that they are not bumping up against buildings. This has added \$220 to the 2020 approval amount.

ACTION: Jim moved, seconded by Mary, to approve the funding request for \$2,220.00.
The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

5. Niwot Business Association: Maintenance and Repairs - \$3,500.00

Chuck Klueber presented the funding request for the NBA. Chuck noted that this is an annual budget request to cover general expenses accrued by the LID. Examples include supporting tree carvings maintenance, maintaining the street lights, and weeding and painting. Chuck informed the committee that the Second Avenue street lighting now uses sodium halide light bulbs, and these bulbs are no longer available. While the LID has a couple more bulbs in storage, at some point in the future it is likely that street lighting will need to be changed to LED lighting. Scott asked about the maintenance that is being done on the tree carvings. Chuck updated the committee on the maintenance efforts that are conducted annually to preserve the tree carvings. He also reminded the committee that back in August they had approved \$4,000 toward restoration of the tree carvings. Chuck is working with an elder from the local tribes to ensure that this work is done in a culturally sensitive way; the work will commence with a formal blessing of the carvings later in January. Laura noted for the committee that the NCA is interested in assisting financially with the tree carving restoration effort. Biff also noted that the NCAA would like to be involved with this effort as well.

ACTION: Jim moved, seconded by Lisa, to approve the funding request for \$3,500.00.
The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

6. Niwot Business Association: Après Ski Niwot - \$2,000.00

Deb Fowler presented the funding request for the NBA. Deb noted that Apres Ski Niwot is designed as a mixture of events such as the sidewalk sales and holiday events, with a goal of encouraging people to visit the retailers on both Second Avenue and in Cottonwood Square. The event will include music, activities for children, carriage rides, ice sculptures, and other activities to draw people throughout the district. Retail stores will be encouraged to have in-store promotions.

Committee members spent some time discussing the new, creative events like this one that the community is developing as a response to the pandemic, which are all proving to be successful and appreciated by the community.

ACTION: Jim moved, seconded by Scott, to approve the funding request for \$2,000.00.
The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

7. Niwot Business Association: Love Niwot Walk - \$2,800.00

Deb Fowler presented the funding request for the NBA. Deb noted that the event is built on the same model as the Pumpkin Walk from the fall. The feedback Deb received from the Pumpkin Walk suggests that the event created a real buzz and generated a lot of foot traffic across the district. The Love Niwot Walk will replicate the Pumpkin Walk model: Shoppers will pick up a passport and tour the retail businesses on both Second Avenue and in Cottonwood Square throughout the month of

February. At each store, they will get their passport stamped and receive a small gift. If they make purchases at four or more stores and provide the receipts, they will be entered into a drawing.

Deb explained that she hopes to include a new component to the event, an “Instagram-able moment” flower wall – a reusable wall of flowers which will be used as a photo background. To enter the drawing participants will be required to take a photo in front of the photo wall and post it, as a strategy for promoting Niwot.

The committee spent some time discussing the work that the NBA will be doing in 2021 to support economic development and community events.

ACTION: Mary moved, seconded by Eric, to approve the funding request for \$2,800.00.
The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.

As part of her presentation, Deb also provided a short update on the results of the Pumpkin Walk. 54% of the participants were from Niwot, with the rest of the participants coming from out of town. These out-of-town participants heard about the event through the newspaper advertisements, social media, signs about town, and word of mouth. The committee spent some time discussing the impact of the events and the anecdotal evidence that the retail stores are doing very well on the days with sponsored events.

New Business:

Laura opened a conversation with the committee on possible topics for the NLIDAC’s annual meeting with the Board of County Commissioners, which is scheduled for Thursday, February 4.

Laura suggested that Biff and Jim, as the longest-serving members of the committee, provide the commissioners with a thumbnail description of the LID, covering such topics as how it got started, its charge and what it does, and high points from over the years. She suggested that Eric, as NBA president, provide a “state of the business community” presentation, focusing on the comings and goings, strengths and challenges, and the general climate facing Niwot businesses. Laura also mentioned the Murray Street parking lot as a potential topic of conversation, and closed by asking Mark get input from the commissioners themselves on discussion items that they would like to hear about from the committee itself – for example, issues that they may be curious about, the partnership role between the committee and the commissioners, and other items. Mark noted that he will be meeting with the commissioners before the February 4 joint meeting, and thus will have an opportunity to gather feedback from the board.

Biff mentioned that he would like to discuss the relationship between the commissioners, the advisory committee, and the broader Niwot community, by touching on cooperative projects from the past, such as the Children’s Park, the 2012 Connectivity Study, and the Murray Street parking lot. Given that none of the three current commissioners were serving back in 2017 and 2018, he also believes it will be important to address the history of the recent moratorium, as an opportunity to educate the commissioners and help ensure that that kind of outcome doesn’t happen again. Specifically, it will be important to discuss how the moratorium came about, the lack of consideration given to the NLIDAC’s advice regarding the moratorium, and the results and outcomes of the moratorium itself (e.g., the alley upgrade requirements).

The committee supported the moratorium as a meeting topic, and Laura suggested that Biff would be the best messenger from the committee to share that perspective.

Eric agreed with an approach that both emphasizes what has gone well, but doesn't shy away from touching on the areas where there have been struggles. Laura agreed that the goal should be a conversational, cordial, collegial meeting, with genuine and personal dialogue that clearly tells the Niwot story.

Biff reminded the committee that for past joint meetings, the NBA has prepared a written "State of the Union," and shared the presentation with community members before the annual meeting in order to get perspectives and opinions. Eric agreed to prepare a similar document for the BOCC meeting.

Laura suggested that the committee can look to "tag team" the presentation to the BOCC, with each committee member bringing forward their particular perspective as a Niwotian and a committee member. Committee members supported this approach, and agreed to discuss it in more detail at the February NLIDAC meeting, which will take place two days before the joint meeting.

Cornelia mentioned that she has had numerous conversations with business owners about the impact of the moratorium, and she agreed to share these perspectives at the meeting.

The committee talked in detail about the alleys and their lack of maintenance, the challenges presented by the code changes that came out of the moratorium, and other issues relating to the moratorium and the process that led to the current design and code requirements. Laura referenced the frustration that committee members and the community still feel about the moratorium process, including the county staff role and lack of consideration of the committee's perspective, and ultimately the land use code changes that were made as a result of the process. Others shared that perspective, and Laura agreed to raise the point at the BOCC meeting.

Laura suggested offering to take the BOCC on a tour of the alleys and of Old Town in general. Other board members liked the idea of providing the commissioners with an opportunity to see the town and the alleys. Scott agreed to prepare a map of the alleys for the meeting. The committee also discussed inviting the commissioners to community events.

The committee ended the discussion by agreeing that while the moratorium does need to be a component of the meeting, as the community will be coming back to the county to solve the problems that the moratorium has created, it will also be important to stress with the commissioners that the county and the committee have a long history of collaborative problem solving and that the committee will approach this work with that history in mind.

Old Business:

Biff provided the committee with a short update on the parking lot project, noting that planning is on track for construction to begin in March.

Mark noted that he has secured help to create the online funding request form, and is hopeful that the form will be completed in the next few weeks.

Mark reminded the committee that the deadline for applying for county boards and commissions, including NLIDAC, is January 15. He noted that he will share the applications with the committee

members after the application period closes. If committee members would like to provide feedback to the county commissioners on the applications, they can email him with their thoughts, and he will be sure to get the feedback to the commissioners.

Scott informed the committee that the county commissioners and the city councils and town boards are in the process of approving a Five Star Certification program for the county and its cities and towns. The program will provide flexibility for restaurants and personal services business to reopen.

Mark informed the committee that the General Assembly in its special session in December also passed legislation to provide local business assistance grants.

Public Comment:

No members of the public spoke during public comment.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 p.m.