

Committee Record

Skyway Governance Advisory Committee

July 27, 2018

Location: Conference Room B

Attendees:

Committee members: Andy Flamm, Peg Guilfoyle, Bill Hanley, Bill Huepenbecker, Jean Krueger.

Other attendees: Charles Barklind, Bill Bretzke, Heather Bunch, Wes Denning, Tom Dunnne, Jon Fure, Kathy Kapoun, John Mannillo, Bill Mantis, Crystal Meriwether, Akbar R. Muhammad, Patrick Ostrom, Jeremy Schimpf, Joseph Voyda.

1. Chair Andy Flamm called the meeting to order. Attendees introduced themselves.
2. Motion by Bill Hanley, seconded by Bill Huepenbecker, to approve the agenda. Motion passed.
3. Motion by Bill Hanley, seconded by Bill Huepenbecker, to approve the June 22 committee meeting notes, with the correction that Peg Guilfoyle attended the meeting. Motion passed.
4. Chair Report: Andy Flamm said he will be out of town on the 4th Friday in August, so the group could meet on a different day, or if there is a volunteer, another committee member could facilitate the meeting. The group decided to instead meet on the 5th Friday in August, so the meeting will be on August 31 at 9 a.m.
5. CRC Staff report: Jon Fure said the committee's requested change to the CRC bylaws was made at the Annual Meeting on June 27. The next CRC board meeting will be on Tuesday, July 31, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., which will include a presentation by the University of Minnesota students who have been developing recommendations for the CRC. New officers will be elected at the meeting. The officers' duties include appointing members to the Skyway Governance Advisory Committee.
6. Hours Exception reviews
 - a. Degree of Honor Building (325 Cedar): Bill Bratzke, Madison Equities, said the building has an unusually high concentration of asbestos, which will require more abatement than they had anticipated. Environmental regulations require a building to have at least one floor of separation between workers and the general public when this abatement work is being done. That means that the skyway will need to close when they are doing this work on the basement and on the first, second, third and fourth floors. This affects people going through the Degree of Honor building to and from the 345 Cedar Street (the former Pioneer Press building / bridge #33), to and from the InterContinental Hotel (bridge #46), and to and from Capital City parking ramp (bridge #43). Mr. Bratzke said their goal is to minimize risk to the public due to the potential exposure to asbestos in the air, and the company is requesting closure of all skyway easements through the building for the entire abatement and construction period, which would be from the anticipated start date, Sept. 15, 2018, through June 1, 2019. Committee members asked about the inconvenience to adjoining buildings, and asked if they have been contacted. The InterContinental Hotel, for example, would presumably be inconvenienced because guests would be cut off from the skyway system. Mr. Bratzke said he has been in contact with the InterContinental managers, and they would prefer to avoid having the skyway closed during the winter, but there doesn't seem to be another option (other than closing off skyway access) because of the health risks and regulations. The committee also discussed plans to clearly indicate a detour on street level that would meet ADA standards. The group felt that the Capital City Ramp should not be an issue, because people

who park there can also access the skyway system through the bridge near the Minnesota Building that goes to the Central Station vertical connection. The most important part of the building to keep open is the path from the InterContinental to the skyway bridge to 345 Cedar, and the group asked Mr. Bratzke to plan the project to minimize the amount of time that that area is closed. The group also discussed whether a path could be sealed with large plastic sheets, allowing people to go through the building, but Mr. Bratzke said the Health Department won't allow that.

Motion by Bill Hanley, seconded by Peg Guilfoyle, to recommend that the City explore all options to minimize the time of closure of the skyway easement through the Degree of Honor building that connects skyway bridges #46 and #33, and attempt to re-open before the winter months, and that there be clear detour signs, including ADA accessible routes. Motion passed.

b. Pioneer Apartments (345 Cedar): Jeremy Schimpf, representing Weis Builders, said construction is underway on the project to convert the building to apartments, but it is not yet known if there are hazardous materials in the ceiling about the second floor skyway level. They have not found any in other parts of the building, but he is seeking permission to close the skyway for a 30-day window of time just in case abatement is needed. He said the closure would only be required if hazardous material is found, and it is unlikely that the area would need to close for 30 days, but it is difficult to determine when that work could begin, which is why the request is for a 30-day window. Adjoining buildings that would be affected are the Athletic Club, Degree of Honor, and Victory Parking. Mr. Schimpf said he hopes that the work could be completed in one week, but it would depend on unknown factors.

A question was asked if a fee could be imposed, such as \$500 per day to close off access to skyways during construction projects like these, which would encourage developers to work as quickly as possible to re-open access to the skyways.

Motion by Bill Hanley, seconded by Bill Huepenbecker, to recommend that the City explore all options to minimize the time of closure of the skyway easement through 345 Cedar Street, Pioneer Apartments, and attempt to re-open before the winter months, and that there be clear detour signs, including ADA accessible routes. Motion passed.

7. Skyway Community Updates: Bill Hanley said a potential date for the next Downtown Live event is Monday, Oct. 15. No other groups had updates.

8. Project Team Updates

a. Skyway Mission – has not yet met.

b. Wayfinding – the group is waiting for the Downtown Alliance to meet again, which has a committee that is addressing wayfinding, primarily on the street level.

c. Access Doors – Jean Krueger was a project lead for this project. The group created a map that showed areas where access into the skyway system is lacking outside of weekday business hours. The group also found some doors that were open on evenings and weekends that they didn't expect to be open. Not all of those entry points are ADA accessible. The map should be incorporated into the signage review / wayfinding group's work. There are different styles of signs indicating skyway access, and it is unclear if they were created by building managers or the City. The group will continue looking at follow-up questions, including how should we communicate which doors provide access, how should we work toward getting more doors open, and then how to keep maps and related information current.

d. Arts & Events – Peg Guilfoyle is the group leader and the group members are Sanna Towns, Ann Idzik and Bill Hanley. They have interviewed people who tried to do events in the skyways, found out what the challenges were, and has developed the following set of recommendations:

The Task Force (on encouraging arts and other events in the skyways) has followed a process of interviewing community stakeholders, particularly those who have tried to place events in the skyways in the last several years, plus several city staff. It is our stance that encouraging lively and dynamic activity in the skyways is a priority for enhancing our downtown life, for illuminating the unique and wonderful qualities of our skyway system, and for bringing together our downtown community of residents, businesses, and workers. A livelier skyway may also lead to an enhanced sense of security for users.

The task force makes these recommendations to the Skyway Governance Advisory Committee:

1) The process for obtaining necessary approvals for any arts event in the skyway is complex and can be circuitous, involving many different city departments and entities, and sometimes discouraging creatives from carrying through. We recommend that the process be streamlined and simplified where possible, and that a simple How-To handbook be created for idea originators, which would include a step by step description of the process. We are willing to act as volunteer advisers to the simplification process, which should be accomplished by an entity familiar with city strictures.

2) We see several functions that could be created and amplified to encourage events.

a) Originators could be provided with some background about what has happened in the skyway in the past, and how those projects were created and run.

b) We recommend that a timeline calendar be created, for an overall skyway events overlook, and that a method be developed for announcing and publicizing skyway events to the downtown community.

c) We feel that ideas brought forward should be actively encouraged and that there should be an opportunity for direct listening to ideas and encouragement of them.

d) We feel that ideas should also be sought out in the community, and originators encouraged to apply.

3) We would like to see a process that could be completed in no more than 90 days from start (receipt of application) to finish (approval), including all review and meeting times. We feel that, in order to make the process as simple as possible for the applicant, there should be a single point of initial contact which would provide the handbook, and also provide some guidance through its steps. The point of contact could be a small team of volunteer advisors, who would act as resources on the actions listed in 2 above. However...

4) Navigating, in a timely manner, the complex waters of a pool of interested creatives and a system of necessary city regulation and building owners is not suited for a group of rotating volunteers, however dedicated. We recommend that a grant be sought to support a short-term, experimental appointment, a Skyway Events Manager. This position would, with a volunteer group, provide Handbooks and initial consultations, keep a calendar, advise idea originators through their process, network to encourage applications, and encourage applicants throughout the process. This recommendation is based on the idea that an initiative like this, since it will involve a group of stakeholders in the process, can get lost. We feel that it should be at the top of someone's priority list.

Bill Hanley said he will convey these recommendations to the Downtown Alliance.

9. SPPD/Metro Transit Police Update/Q&A – Commander Wes Denning said there is nothing to report, as most of the recent concerns have been outside of skyways.

10. DSI Update/Q&A – Joe Voyda provides updates, informed the committee that the resolution to extend the Speaking of Home public art project was approved, and other project updates.

11. Public discussion. No additional discussion.

12. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

The next Skyway Governance Advisory Committee Meeting is August 31, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in Conference Room B, 180 East 5th.

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