

Business Health Action Committee (BHAC)

***This document includes notes from all Appearance & Cleanliness Action Committee Meetings, with the most recent meeting at the top of the document.**

Next Meeting: 4/20/2021, via Zoom, 2-3 pm

Meeting 3/9/2021

Minutes from Zoom Meeting 2pm-3pm

Immediate Goal: To provide various resources for businesses in and around Market Center.

Short Term: To establish diverse business opportunities.

Long Term Goal: Formulate a safe thriving business district.

Participants: Alysha January, Ari Lewis, Kristen Mitchell, LieAnne Navarro, Bruce Panczner, Pickett Slater Harrington, Kristin Speaker, Kyree West

400 N. Howard Street

KW: No concrete update on 400 N. Howard St. but the process has been moving forward with receivership to get property to change hands to the Casey Group (will confirm whether information is accurate). Currently waiting for court to reopen on 3/15/21 so paperwork can be filed (has been working with law department and code enforcement).

Restaurant Grants

KW: Getting closer to distribution of funding from last restaurant grant. Review still in progress but should have some information of those who applied in the coming weeks.

BP: Inquired with KW as to whether any of his restaurateurs (e.g., Maiwand, Forno, and Red Boat) made application. KW would like BP to follow up via email to check status.

Lexington Market

PSH: Vendor applications for second round close as of 3/19/21, please inform various networks. Transformlexington.com has information about projects, application process, and support. Process is going well with over 240 applications started, 70 applications already completed, and probably 100-150 applicants by the end of the second round. Applicants are diverse with over 60% black owned businesses and 50% woman owned businesses. Hispanic/Latinx community are highly encouraged to apply. Kiosk opportunities will also be ongoing.

Currently thinking of how to share database of vendors that were not selected with MCMA. Sharing the database will give other partners access to businesses and provide other opportunities. Hopefully, database will be ready by the end of March. Seawall and MCMA will ultimately decide how information will be shared.

KM: MCMA is happy to serve as the keeper of vendor database. PSH informed KM that Seawall wants to make sure that the vendors will not be “spammed.” MCMA will be thoughtful with how information is dispersed.

Graffiti

KS: Mt. Vernon community has an inquiry regarding how to combat graffiti in the area. It seems to have picked up the pace recently. KS is open to ideas regarding what are best practices when dealing with this issue. Baltimore City may not be fining property owners currently, due to owners not being able to address concern(s) timely which seems as if owners are held liable from both ends. Graffiti has been found on historical structures, modern works of art, and high-quality murals.

PSH: A diverse group (e.g., police officers, artists, volunteers etc.) in the community may be needed to decipher graffiti and combat this issue. Community can create a graffiti response team. PSH will send literature to KS.

LN: Has interest in addressing concerns with graffiti. LN will reach out to art stores, organizations, and property owners, as well as informing owners of interest to help, along with seeing if they are open to funding this initiative.

KM: Baltimore City had a team that did address graffiti. However, those efforts have been redirected to trash collection. Maryland Center for History and Culture along with DPOB just dealt with graffiti on their building on the northwest corner of Park Ave. and Center St. KM will reach out to TA of DPOB for KS.

Events & Announcements

LN: LN has an idea of having Market Center sponsor Eddie Hybrick Jazz Quartet and having them perform in conjunction with community cleanup. LN also stated that Dear Globe will move toward opening Summer 2021.

AJ: Take Out Get Down are doing an event with restaurants for Earth Day. That weekend there will be a morning community cleanup and participants can take a picture with their bag of trash where they cleaned up (in or around their neighborhood) and choose a restaurant from a list that will be provided along with choosing a code to listen to a DJ later that night (more information to come on this event).

Information Sharing

AL: Would like to see information regarding Market Center/Lexington Market revitalization posted to [Md. Washington Minority Companies Association website](#) to spread the word and gain interest of other participants who are not aware of what changes are taking place in and around Market Center. MWMCA advertises a plethora of information for minority owned businesses. AL has not been hearing a lot about current changes happening around Market Center and inquired about a newsletter with upcoming events.

BP: Uniting with MWMCA per AL request sounds like an opportunity to connect with Behavioral Health component (e.g., BEAM, GROW Outreach) of Post 114 Coalition.

Meeting 2/9/2021- Alysha January, Ari Lewis, Kristen Mitchell, LieAnne Navarro, Bruce Panczner, Pickett Slater Harrington, Sam Storey, Kyree West

Updates

- Lexington Market – PSH – Looking for additional reviewers for next round of vendor applications. Each reviewer reads 10-15 applications. If interested, reach out via hello@transformlexington.com.
- BOOST – SS – DPOB's Black-Owned and Operated Storefront Tenancy program launched in early February. They are hosting two information sessions.
- Façade Improvements – SS working with 501 W. Lexington (submitted for reimbursement), 503 W. Lexington, MD Art Place (approved), and Planned Parenthood (temporarily on hold).
- Resources – KS – important to continue to get information to businesses regarding PPP loans. M&T Bank willing to help businesses apply. BDC has a technical assistance network, and a one-pager.
- Resources – PSH – There is a special loan fund to support Lexington Market tenants.

Metrics

- What are we using the metrics for? To track progress re: health of the business district.
- Agreed to focus on Post 114 first.
- # Jobs (FT/PT)
- Access to capital
- Business Longevity

Meeting 1/12/2021 – Alysha January, Kristen Mitchell, LieAnne Navarro, Bruce Panczner, Pickett Slater Harrington, Sam Storey, Kyree West

Updates

- Lexington Market – PSH – Project is on schedule to open January 2022. Next community meeting is 1/13/2021, 6:30-7:30, on brand identity. They have identified the first 50% of vendors for Lexington Market. Second vendor application opens in mid-January. We should receive the database of vendors not selected for Lexington Market by the end of January.
- BOOST – SS – DPOB's Black-Owned and Operated Storefront Tenancy program will launch in late January or early February.
- Four Ten Lofts – LN – Now leasing the three-bedroom units in building B (on Mulberry Street).
- Covid Grants/Loans – KW – There is no new information on city/state grants. BGE has a new grant program that launches January 20.

Resource Guide – The group reviewed the draft resource guide and agreed that is useful. KW stressed the importance of keeping it updated. AJ suggested using Google Spreadsheets instead of Excel.

New Business

- Communication – LN said that the community needs a way to communicate with us, instead of us just sharing with them, and with each other. The group discussed the possibility of hosting a group FB page, but AJ cautioned that social media pages can turn negative quickly. If we host a social media page, we need to have multiple people monitor the page, have rules for the group, and multiple responders who use the same language/tone. PSH noted that Seawall has a

continually open community survey with a generic email address. KM asked who would be responsible for responding to all this input.

- Marathon Gas Incident – LN described an incident that she and others witnessed take place at Marathon Gas, in which the BPD restrained (not sure if this is the correct term) a young teen for shoplifting. The witnesses state that the officers involved were mistreating him (my term, not theirs), and that they tried to assist the teen. The teen noted that the clerk sold him cigarettes, but the police officers did not appear to follow this up. The witnesses were upset by the way the officers treated the teen. (As a follow up, KM told one of the witnesses who followed up with her personally, that she could file a police misconduct report).
- Safari Yangu Cultural Empowerment Center – KM noted that she has been helping Nick Ogutu find space for this business, an artisan market, in Market Center.

Meeting 12/16/2020 – Alysha January, Lianne Navarro, Bruce Panczner, Pickett Slater Harrington, Kristin Speaker, Sam Storey, Kyree West, Kristen Mitchell

Mission

- The group reviewed its **mission**: The Business Health Action Committee aims to support, retain, attract, expand, and diversify businesses, attract investment, promote an economically, socially, and culturally integrated community, build community wealth, with minimal or no commercial displacement and using Lexington Market as an anchor and catalyst.

Lexington Market Vendor Recruitment

- PSH reported on the **Lexington Market vendor recruitment process**. After community reviews and interviews, Seawall is submitting recommendations regarding which vendors to accept into the new market to the Baltimore Public Markets Corporation later this week.
- The recruitment process will continue with Round 2 from January through March 2021.
 - Seawall will add additional reviewers and interviewers and wants to engage more residents in the process. KM and BP agreed to email residents about the opportunity to participate.
 - There is a need to recruit more Latino/Hispanic businesses and fresh food businesses.

Support for and Recruitment of Businesses not Selected for Lexington Market

- The BHAC will support applicants that do not make it into the new Lexington Market with information on technical assistance, financial resources, and available space. We will try to recruit them to other locations in and near Market Center.
- In early 2021, Seawall will share a database of applicants not selected with MCMA and the BHAC (applicants were invited to opt out of being included in this database).
 - We will share information about **financial and technical assistance** with them.
 - KM will prepare a preliminary list of technical assistance providers, and the group will help identify which organizations are the “go-to” organizations for specific issues.

- We can host small business resource days, using Charles Street Development's model in which business owners can sign up for a Zoom call with specific technical assistance providers.
 - SBRC – Tells business owners what they need to do to prepare to request funding
 - Financial Assistance – PNC, Truist, BB&T, BBL, MCE, Crowdfunding
- We will connect the vendors to the **DPOB BOOST (Black Owned and Operated Storefront Tenants)** program, launching in early 2021). SS asked PSH to share the database directly with him, too. BOOST will address both space and technical/financial assistance needs to recruit businesses to specific properties downtown.
- We will share our spreadsheet of **available spaces** with the vendors and try to **recruit** specific businesses to specific locations.
 - KM shared the spreadsheet with the group. We need to refine it with additional information about which property owners are most likely to be supportive of working with small business owners and being flexible on rent; also need additional information on utilities and access to bathrooms.
 - KM is working with Equalyze, a student-run technical assistance provider from Loyola University, to make the available space list on Market Center's website searchable by type of space and whether the space is for lease or for sale.
 - KW and BP offered to help reach out to property owners. Ask property owners if they are willing to provide financial assistance to recruit tenants. Flexibility is key.
 - We will prioritize the available spaces and then consider creating marketing sheets, as necessary.

New Business

- BP said that the Post 114/MC Coalition Baltimore Police Department Task Force is making progress. They want to work with the BHAC on educating businesses about how they can help make Market Center safer and more welcoming. We discussed the possibility of hosting a Zoom call for businesses to discuss.
- LN suggested that we need to have an **online hub of information for small businesses**, which businesses can use to offer opportunities for collaborations, spinoffs, shared space, etc. KM noted that Candace Chance with The VPI firm is creating a virtual resource table as part of her work on the Market Center Strategic Revitalization Plan. KM hopes this will serve as a virtual hub of information.
- We also may want to consider creating opportunities for business owners to meet up and collaborate through **virtual networking**.

Meeting 11/18/2020 – LieAnne Navarro, Bruce Panczner, Pickett Slater-Harrington, Sam Storey, Kristen Mitchell

1. Immediate focus: The group asked Kristen to focus her available space research on spaces that might appeal to Lexington Market vendor applicants. The Lexington Market vendor application

process is a unique opportunity to engage with business owners who have expressed interest in the area, and we need to jump on it.

2. We are looking to connect vendors that do not make it into Lexington Market with other opportunities in Market Center. To the extent agreed to by the vendors, Seawall will share information with us. We expect to receive this information in mid-December. Committee members will review the information and identify those vendors for whom we can identify other relevant opportunities in Market Center.
3. Secondary focus: Update our available properties listings on our website to make it searchable by type of tenant (ie., food service, retail, office, collaborations), condition of space, size. Include a map and filters.
4. Kristen asked committee to review action steps and metrics and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

Meeting 10/27/2020 – Bruce Panczner, Pickett Slater-Harrington, Sam Storey, Kyree West, Kristen Mitchell

1. Bruce will create a draft mission statement based on group's input. Recommendations include: Support, retain, attract, expand, diversify business; attract investment; Lexington Market as an anchor and catalyst; promote an economically, socially, culturally integrated community; build community wealth; no displacement.
2. Bruce will ask Don Fry (GBC) to recommend a participant; Sam will ask Emily Breiter for a recommendation from the arts community; Kristen will invite Charles Street Development.
3. Group will work with Seawall to identify locations and financial resources for businesses that applied to become vendors in the new Lexington Market but weren't chosen.
4. Kristen will prepare materials for five potential sites, including photos, size, utilities, estimates of cost to get space habitable, contact information.
5. Seawall will ask the businesses that weren't selected if they can share their information with Market Center. We will know by late 2020 which businesses weren't selected during the first round of vendor applications.
6. DPOB's Downtown Black-Owned Retail Initiative will launch in January with a call for applications. DPOB is working with approximately five landlords to offer rents that are favorable to tenants and preparing a package of resources to help cover tenant improvement costs and set the businesses up for success.
7. Kristen will add this to the work plan but make clear that this is a DPOB initiative.

Next meeting: November 18, 2 pm

Focus on metrics