



Carson City Downtown Consortium  
**Board Meeting Summary, Steve Neighbors President**  
Carson City Office of Business Development  
March 25, 2009  
12:30 p.m.  
Carson City Library

Attendance

Chris MacKenzie, Karen Abowd, Jim Phalan, Jed Block, Steve Neighbors, Joe McCarthy  
Tammy Westergard and Sara Jones

*Meeting was called to order at 12:45 p.m.*

Joe welcomed all in attendance.

Steve began by giving the group a general update regarding the Nugget and addressed his hope and the Nugget's commitment to help as best it can to empower the Carson City Downtown Consortium (CCDC) with the following guidelines:

- All stakeholders be involved – to the very best of the CCDC's ability reach out to the stakeholders. (stakeholders are defined as all downtown businesses, all downtown property owners, downtown residents, residents at large, the City, downtown suppliers, downtown employees, downtown champions (ie; community institutions, community wide membership organizations)
- Commitment to long term success via balanced support of stakeholders
- Commitment to downtown's core competencies/core offerings ie: downtown is the hub and can launch the entire region

Steve noted that he is concentrating on finding a buyer for the Nugget who wants to buy a hub, not just a casino. "I'm trying to find that person," he said. Steve noted that he could just keep it status quo but he doesn't see that as a balanced stakeholder decision, and he noted that to date there are many downtown stakeholders who are out of balance and have served all stakeholders. Regarding a purchaser, he noted that normally a developer would be looking at this kind of a "hub" concept in communities with a ½ million people, or more. However he believes the vision is worth a lot, which is why he is committed to the CCDC because they can help facilitate the vision.

Joe folded in on Steve's population threshold and noted that many times over the years at ICSC Carson City has pitched various retailers and developers to no avail because we lack the population base. But he also pointed to communities that too lack the population base but still manage to attract sustainable development because the mix is correct. The way you get the right mix is to have the right vision, which Carson City has.

Steve talked about the current market demand study underway by Applied Analysis on behalf of the Nugget. The analysis is in service, however, of the entire downtown. Steve talked about the active discovery the Nugget is currently in, with the City, in determining

a master business plan for the Nugget and it's property's – which total about 8 ½ acres in downtown. Steve is working with the City to collect a complete list of who all of the civic stakeholders are in downtown. Joe gave the group a background on the law suit settlement on the abandonment of a street and noted that the resources from that awarded to the Nugget are what are forwarding the market demand study efforts.

Chris, Jed and others discussed with the group and updated Steve regarding the Roger Brooks branding study.

Much additional discussion ensued regarding:

- 1) Our current local market/downtown businesses – Jed talked about the efforts of the Downtown Business Association and to their credit they have a successful wine walk and beer crawl, he noted however that the group gets stuck often, is prone to arguing and many of the business operators seem to lack an ability to be successful at some very important things: unified hours of operation, extended hours of operation, merchandising, signage, and other simple best – business practices. Jed also reminded the group he is a Carson City Chamber Board member and the downtown liaison to the Chamber – and eager to take information to the Chamber board and the Downtown Business Association.
- 2) Tourism – Joe spoke about the CCCVB's efforts and the status of the V&T project and the need to keep focused on downtown because the stronger downtown is the better that will be for the V&T project and the better that will be to leverage those tourists' dollars to Carson City.
- 3) Entrepreneurial opportunities – Steve talked about the issue with start-ups and how they need initial support in an entrepreneurial cluster where support and back office type resources can be shared.
- 4) Sara noted that the library can be the spoke of the hub concept in that the library is the 75 hour a week “place” as it is open after hours and on weekends. She spoke about libraries throughout the country effectively playing that role and the development and growth spurred because of it.
- 5) The group talked about what can be done to continue to support downtown. Discussion of a Business Improvement District evolved. All understands the notion of creating a business improvement district, and that is vital to keep things up just like a homeowners association is. The group also recognizes the City cannot continue to support many of the “extras” for downtown, but that it is good they are setting a model to follow. The group thought it too early to talk about trying to get a B.I.D. passed and wondered how that would be organized.

Joe explained how a Business Improvement District is formed and said he believes the B.O.S are all very supportive of helping the area form such an assessment district. The group thought small, step-by-step, projects for now will be the best way to help downtown businesses be successful but not alarm them too much with talking about forming a B.I.D. Karen talked about the flower basket program and green house project.

Sara offered an opportunity to connect the library with the downtown in a “business center resource” way by explaining a guest speaker opportunity that the CCDC could sponsor. Steve offered the Nugget as the venue. Karen noted the CCDC could use the proceeds to help fund the flower baskets, but talked about timing being of the essence.

#### NEXT STEPS:

The group wanted to continue to explore, quickly, a way to present an in-service business type training to do 3 things:

- a) show a face to the community of who makes up the CCDC and invite others, the Chamber, NNDA, Downtown Business Association and Nevada Business Connections to join the Consortium in the customer service speaking event that ties to the flower basket program – giving everyone the chance to jump on the band wagon and join in on the positive energy
- b) model good business practices – and offer this training to help with business
- c) raise money for the flower baskets – which they feel is a very important “show me” example of continued success and is imperative to getting the businesses to understand how things can work., if we work together, much like what we’ll be able to accomplish once there is a B.I.D.

The group all agreed to help promote the above if we could secure all of the details. Tammy agreed to help flesh out the details and let everyone know.

*Get the right thing done right.*

Meeting adjourned: 2:15 p.m.

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