



## DMI Leadership Report – August 2020

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

I hope this report finds everyone doing well and staying healthy. With all the challenges throughout our community, Downtown Madison, Inc. remains firmly committed to creating a vibrant regional economic engine where everyone has meaningful opportunities to fully participate in life downtown. I am excited to share many of the programs, projects, and activities of DMI over the last month. I hope you can join us as we continue to build a strong downtown Madison for everyone.

### **Creating Connections and Community:**

- DMI is co-facilitating, with the City's Economic Development Division, a private-public partnership group tasked with finding and implementing ideas to improve the short and long-term goals of creating a more robust, inclusive, and equitable downtown Madison.
- DMI created a more robust membership communications program to ensure our members understand all the working projects and activities of the organization. The program includes weekly emails with video updates, advocacy highlights and current programming. A new DMI Leadership Report will allow members to better understand the work of the organization.
- The Challenge Committee was created by the Board of Directors to assist the organization with our diversity, equity, and inclusiveness work. The Committee will help our standing committees set goals, find strategic relationships/partnerships within the Board, and help hold the organization accountable towards our set goals. Winnie Karanja, Executive Director of Maydm Inc., is the Chair of the Committee.
- DMI advocated for the Downtown Recovery Program and the Small Business Equity and Recovery Program at the City Council and Finance Committee.
- The first virtual Behind the Scenes event, a tour of the UW Athletic Field House renovation project, was hosted.
- We are very excited to announce Heather McGhee will be DMI Annual "Dinner" speaker this year. Heather is a Distinguished Senior Fellow and immediate past President at Demos, a nonpartisan think tank. She is an advocate, author and speaker who promotes solutions to inequity in America and is a regular contributor to NBC News. The Annual "Dinner" will be virtual and held over the lunch hour from 11am-1pm on Monday, September 21.
- DMI continues to facilitate and host meetings between City officials and small business owners downtown. We held a conversation with MPD Captain Kelly Donahue and a Downtown Town Hall with Mayor Rhodes-Conway.

### **Economic Development:**

- The Economic Development Committee hosted a presentation and discussion with Jesus Villa, the Equal Right Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

- DMI is hosted a member meet up panel discussion regarding the future of downtown commercial real estate.

**Transportation:**

- DMI wrote a letter of support for Federal Funding for BRT.

**Inclusiveness:**

- The Inclusiveness Committee met twice this month. First, the Committee hosted a discussion and presentation on the Movement Fund with Eric Upchurch of Opportunity Inc. The Committee also held a working meeting, generating ideas for the committee to act on. Several of the ideas have moved into the action phase including helping support businesses in the Black Chamber of Commerce and early work on UCAN's Sound Diplomacy project.
- The Beyond Compliance Task Force is restarting their work on outdoor festivals.

**Quality of Life:**

- The Quality of Life Committee met with and held a discussion with Linda Ketcham, the Executive Director of Just Dane.
- DMI is assisting with several potential downtown public space art programs through our work with MadLab.

**Membership:**

- The Membership Committee met and discussed the new DMI communications policy, DMI programming and potential ways of assisting in keeping members with new financial concerns.

**Government Relations:**

- The Government Relations Committee met with City of Madison 8<sup>th</sup> District Alder Max Prestigiacomo and discussed a myriad of issues including building a campus area neighborhood association, getting more students involved in city issues/process, fines and fees disproportionately affecting people of color, potential ban on facial recognition program, third party delivery fee limits, the Alders climate focus and equity work.

For questions and more information, contact Jason Ilstrup, DMI President at 608-512-1330 or [jilstrup@downtownmadison.org](mailto:jilstrup@downtownmadison.org).