



DMI Leadership Report – September 2020

From Jason Ilstrup, DMI President

Creating Connections and Community:

- DMI continues to 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. The Group brainstormed dozens of ideas, prioritized the ideas via a survey and created separate task forces (economic development, equity, and activation/programming) to implement the ideas.
- The first meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee was held in August. The Committee changed their name to the Challenge Committee, named Winnie Karanja the Chair and decided on a scope of work: assist in setting goals for all DMI committees, find strategic relationships and partnerships between DMI member organizations (with a particular emphasis on Board member organizations) and hold the organization/committees accountable in their progress towards the set goals.
- DMI hosted our first ever virtual Annual "Dinner" on Monday, September 21. The keynote speaker this year was Heather McGhee from the think tank Demos and NBC News. Heather participated in a conversation with Angela Russell, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of CUNA Mutual and Vice President of the CUNA Mutual Foundation. We also hosted expanded networking opportunities through the Remo platform.
- DMI hosted several virtual events including New Faces, New Places with Tiffany and I live downtown, the Breakfast with ULI's Brad Binkowski and a Nosh at Noon with the Local Voices Network, who facilitated conversations with members on how to make downtown vibrant and equitable.
- DMI also hosted our first live event since the start of the pandemic. Along with our partners from NAMI Dane County, Rogers Behavioral Health, Journey Mental Health and Tellurian we hosted a drive-in theater showing of the PBS documentary film Bedlam, discussing the mental health crisis in America.
- DMI hosted several successful member meetups including a conversation with member non-profit development leaders.
- DMI continued to host meetings between Madison City leaders and downtown small business owners including during the last round of destruction. With the help of the BID, we have launched a new series of regularly scheduled discussions and trainings with MPD and business leaders.

Economic Development:

- The Economic Development Committee hosted a discussion with Amanda White from the Madison Public Market Foundation. Amanda gave an overview and an update on the project.

The Committee, the DMI Executive and Board of Directors unanimously voted to publicly support the Market, write a letter of support for the EDA grant, and discuss the importance of using TIF for projects like this.

- The Economic Development Committee also hosted a panel discussion on how companies are adapting to the needs of parents during COVID. The panelists included representatives from American Family Insurance, Exact Sciences and ULI.
- The Economic Development Committee's Housing Task Force will review the City's housing strategy recommendations and find ways to assist and/or advocate for certain specified actions items.
- The Committee is monitoring several City of Madison potential resolutions including electronic vehicle charging stations and setback for the urban forest.
- DMI continues to participate in the City/Chamber lead COVID Economic Impacts and Business Support group. There were several important updates including new funding and assistance from WWBIC and KIVA, and a new COVID resource guide from the Small Business Resource Development Center (SBDC).

Transportation:

- In September, the Committee met with the new Metro Transit General Manager Justin Stuehrenberg. Justin discussed Metro Transit during COVID, the recent expansion of service, the forthcoming route network study and BRT planning. He mentioned several small changes to the BRT route (none of the changes are in the center of downtown) and that the City's application for federal funding was submitted in September.
- DMI is working with the City of Madison and several other partners on a fall walking program throughout the City (including downtown) called Walkoctober.

Inclusiveness:

- The Inclusiveness Committee met to discuss recent DMI inclusiveness work updates (including the creation of the Challenge Committee and its intersection with this Committee) and host an open forum discussion of what other organizations are working on.
- DMI is partnering with Step Up: Equity Matters to facilitate and lead the DMI Board and staff diversity, equity, and inclusiveness development work. The work will begin in 2020 and continue for years to come (with several partner organizations).
- The Inclusiveness Committee is working with the Urban Community Arts Network and Destination Madison on Sound Diplomacy, a program to empower cities and places to achieve their social, cultural, and economic goals through music and the nighttime economy.
- The Beyond Compliance Task Force is creating an instructional and training manual for the City of Madison's new festival permit ADA regulations.
- DMI hosted the Madison Area Diversity Roundtable (MADR) again this month. Highlights included discussing the BAHRII methods and other best diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices from the member organizations.

Quality of Life:

- The Quality of Life Committee met to discuss how the Committee can work with the Downtown Group to help implement ideas to create a vibrant and inclusive downtown. The Committee also brainstormed ideas for downtown.

- I participated in the Homeless Steering Committee. The City of Madison gave an update on the City's work to create a new men's shelter. The City has a few sites in mind for the new shelter (all outside of downtown). The facility will most likely be a retrofit of an existing building and could be located anywhere throughout the City. The location and building fits many of the requirements set by the Steering Committee however there are no funds currently in either the City or County budgets for the project. The City made clear there is still a lot of work on this important project.

Membership:

- The Membership Committee met to discuss how to help DMI with the Annual Dinner, our New Faces, New Places program's attendance and to give out Ambassador assignments.

Government Relations:

- The Government Relations Committee met with City of Madison Alder Syed Abbas from the 12th district. The Alder discussed many topics including development in Madison, Oscar Meyer, the Public Market, and the importance of downtown.
- DMI advocated for the Small Business Equity and Recovery Program at the City's Finance Committee, Economic Development Committee, and the City Council. The Program passed. The Mayor also included additional funding for the program in her initial 2021 Capital Budget. Although DMI did not take a position on the latest Downtown Recovery Program, the Program did pass and will result in \$60,000 in funding for downtown businesses.
- DMI advocated for the successful extension of the City of Madison's Streatery Program until late April 2020.

For questions and more information, contact Jason Ilstrup, DMI President at 608-512-1330 or jilstrup@downtownmadison.org.