

## Niwot Local Improvement District Advisory Committee

### MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, May 3, 2022**

**Niwot Inn/Virtual Meeting**

**Present:** Scott Firle, Heidi Storz, Bruce Rabeler, Lisa Rivard, Cornelia Sawle, Keith Waters, Jeff Knight

**Guests:** Kathy Koehler, Leonard Sitongia, David Limbach, Catherine McHale, Biff Warren

**Staff:** Mark Ruzzin

#### **Call to Order:**

Scott called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

The advisory committee considered the April 5, 2022 meeting minutes:

**ACTION:** On a motion from Heidi, seconded by Lisa, the committee voted unanimously to approve the April 5, 2022 meeting minutes, as presented.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Bruce provided the monthly Treasurer's Report, walking the committee through the materials he prepared for the meeting. Bruce noted that through February 2022, the LID is up 7.6% over 2021 collections year-to-date, having collected nearly \$40,000 over the first two months of the year. Collections from the Retail sector account for 44% of total collections. Bruce has been closely tracking remote sales – collections from purchases made from vendors located outside the LID but delivered into the LID – and these sales are down slightly from the same point last year.

Year-to-date, the committee has approved nearly \$101,000 in funding requests, or about 60% of the annual budget of \$170,000; Bruce noted that this approval amount, as a percentage of budget, tracks very closely with where the committee was in May 2021. Spending has been about evenly split between the funding categories of maintenance, events, and marketing, with no money committed to infrastructure projects through April. If the five funding requests under consideration at tonight's meeting are approved, 72% of the 2022 budget will have been committed.

In respect to reimbursement requests, Bruce pointed out that about \$18,500 in reimbursements has been processed so far this year. Bruce reminded the committee that, assuming that the 2021 Supplemental Parking Lot funding request approval of \$30,000 is spent as expected, the LID's reserve sits at about \$277,000.

#### **Funding Requests:**

The advisory committee considered the following funding requests:

##### **1. Niwot Community Association: Road Signage - \$1,026.00**

David Limbach presented the funding request on behalf of the NCA. David noted that this request is to purchase additional road signage and other supplies to support road closures and other safety efforts that are employed when staging community parades and other activities. If approved, the funding request will be spent on both additional signage and orange pylons/cones. David added that the funding request is to cover the cost of the signs, cones, and associated hardware, with the NCA committing to pay for shipping and taxes.

The NCA stores a variety of signs in the Grange firehouse, and needs additional signage to provide increased flexibility for the staging of community events. Specifically, the Fourth of July Parade has grown to the point

that it has become difficult to stage the parade in Cottonwood Square; the additional signage and pylons will enable the staging area to be moved to Meadowdale Drive. This move will both increase the safety of the event and free up parking in Cottonwood Square. While owned and stored by the NCA, the road signage is made available to all community groups that are hosting events in and around Old Town and Cottonwood Square.

Heidi noted that the signage is important both to the NCA and the other community groups that utilize the equipment. Before the NCA invested in the equipment, community organizations would have to rent the equipment on an event-by-event basis, which was much more costly.

**ACTION:** Bruce moved, seconded by Cornelia, to approve the funding request for \$1,026.00. **The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.**

**2. Niwot Community Association: Fourth of July Festivities - \$3,125.00**

Kathy Koehler presented the funding request on behalf of the NCA. The request is approximately \$1,200 more than the 2020 request, which reflects the increase in costs over the past two years since the parade was last held, the need to replace some of the materials used for the parade (e.g., flags), and the decision to rent port-a-potties this year to support both the Fourth of July festivities and the morning Pancake Breakfast.

The committee expressed their thanks for the return of the parade and festivities, as it is a signature event for Niwot and one that is well-loved.

**ACTION:** Heidi moved, seconded by Jeff, to approve the funding request for \$3,125.00. **The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.**

**3. Niwot Historical Society: Website Upgrades - \$2,250.00**

Leonard Sitongia presented the funding request on behalf of the Niwot Historical Society. Leonard serves as the NHS webmaster, and noted that the current software system that the NHS website is built upon is nearly 30 years old. He walked through the Society's interest in transitioning to WordPress, which is an industry-standard website management software system; Leonard also serves as the webmaster for both the Grange and the NCA, and both sites use WordPress.

Leonard noted that the NHS hosts lectures at the Grange, leads historical tours of Old Town, and utilizes the website to sell historical photos. A new website will enable the NHS to reproduce in digital form its logo, prepare and post NHS newsletters more easily and quickly, and help the NHS better promote the Niwot community.

Lisa noted that she believes the proposal is very reasonably priced. Scott pointed out that for him the proposal aligns with the committee's goal of preserving Niwot's historic and authentic character and with the goal of supporting community information sharing networks. Catherine explained the integration between the niwot.com website (also built on WordPress) and the websites of community organizations like NHS. Kathy explained that the NHS also intends to use the new web platform to offer historical photos for sale, which they currently cannot do.

Bruce noted for the committee that committing money to an organization for website upgrades raises some concerns for him in respect to aligning with committee goals and objectives, and he is also concerned about the precedent that may be set if the committee approves the request. In the case of NHS, the organization has a marketable product, historical photos, that could be used to raise money for the website upgrade, and if not used for the upgrade, for future website improvements.

Kathy noted that currently the NHS is only able to produce and sell a small number of historical photos each year, and the funds from those sales are directed back to support organizational expenses. It is hoped that with the website upgrade the NHS can be more active in making sales and raising money for the organization.

The committee suggested that the request should be considered a marketing expense that supports the branding of Niwot. The committee spent some time discussing the distinction between supporting a request like this from a local nonprofit organization and a similar request that might be submitted by a local business.

Leonard clarified for the committee that the WordPress software is free, and is expected to have longevity in the industry. The request will pay for the design and coding work that will be necessary to build the new website.

The committee asked Leonard to return to the committee after the website has been up and running and provide a report on how the project went and how the new website has increased visitation to the site.

**ACTION:** Heidi moved, seconded by Lisa, to approve the funding request for \$2,625.00. **The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.**

**4. Niwot Cultural Arts Association: Rock and Rails - \$10,000.00**

Biff Warren presented the funding request on behalf of the NCAA. Rock and Rails was started in 2006, and is now managed jointly by the NCAA and the Niwot Business Association. Any profit made over the course of the summer concert series is split evenly between the two organizations. The NCAA utilizes its portion of the proceeds to fund maintenance of Niwot Children's Park, which costs about \$12-14,000 per year. Biff noted that, given the cancellation of the 2020 Rock and Rails, the NCAA funded Children's Park maintenance from the organization's reserve.

The series typically runs for 13 weeks, every Thursday through the months of June, July, and August. Attendees come from all over the metro area. Many Niwot businesses are sponsors of the event. The NCAA and NBA sponsors a tip jar at the event – in 2021, the tip jar raised an average of \$2,400 per concert. These funds go to local nonprofits that work in a variety of ways to serve the community.

**ACTION:** Heidi moved, seconded by Bruce, to approve the funding request for \$10,000.00. **The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.**

**5. Niwot Business Association: Dancing Under the Stars - \$5,065.00**

Catherine McHale presented the funding request for the NBA. DUTS was a long-time Boulder standard that ended its run in 2018, and which the NBA revived in 2019 and hosted in Cottonwood Square. The event is free for the public, and includes a 60-minute dance lesson followed by several hours of dancing under the stars. Upwards of 220 people attend each event. Over its two years (2019 and 2021), local businesses and restaurants reported that the event increased activity at their shops and restaurants, with dancers coming early for dinner and window shopping and even some stores and restaurants staying open late to accommodate the crowds after the event ended.

As in past years, the event will alternate between salsa and swing dancing, the two dance styles with the largest local following, with a few other dance styles thrown in for fun. The dances will take place on Friday nights throughout the summer, with fourteen events scheduled beginning June 24.

Catherine noted that the funding request is larger than in past years, both because she has a better understanding of how much it costs to sponsor the dance nights, and in preparation for a likely need to replace some of the portable linoleum dance floor which is rolled out for the event. The NBA is contributing \$1,000 to the dance series, and sponsors will also contribute \$1,000.

Scott noted that he and his family attend to dance and people watch, and he has observed that attendees are a distinctly different and younger crowd than the crowds that attend the more traditional Niwot events.

The committee discussed various strategies for tracking attendance and other metrics to demonstrate the success of the event. Catherine noted several anecdotes based on the experiences of Cottonwood Square businesses, and agreed to look into ideas for measures of success.

**ACTION:** Cornelia moved, seconded by Bruce, to approve the funding request for \$2,625.00. **The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.**

**Old Business:**

**Strategic Plan Update:**

The committee took final actions to adopt its updated 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. After some discussion, the committee renamed the Executive Summary section Forward, and the Background section Historical Background.

**ACTION:** Heidi moved, seconded by Bruce, to approve the 2022-2026 Niwot Local Improvement Advisory Committee Strategic Plan, as amended. **The advisory committee unanimously APPROVED the motion.**

The committee spent some time discussing the 2012 Niwot Transportation and Connectivity Plan. Mark suggested that it may be helpful for the committee to receive a presentation from Boulder County transportation staff, to learn more about what aspects of the plan have been completed, what plans are in motion to construct future transportation and connectivity improvements in the Niwot area (e.g., the 79 Street and Niwot Road intersection and the Diagonal Highway improvements), and discuss options for updating the 2021 plan.

The committee took a few moments to discuss components of the 2012 plan that have not been completed and which they see as priorities for the community. Ideas that surfaced included wayfinding and informational signage, e.g. along the LoBo Trail; programmable signage that can be changed to advertise the variety of events that are happening in Niwot; and bulletin boards or other similar tools to share information and details about activities and events.

The committee discussed various opportunities to make connections across the community, e.g. efforts that may be able to be included in the upcoming Diagonal Highway project. The committee also discussed engaging with the various planning processes that are already in motion as a strategy to stay informed of how these efforts can support NLIDAC connectivity goals.

Mark agreed to reach out to county transportation staff to schedule a presentation at an upcoming NLIDAC meeting.

**Public Comment:**

No members of the public spoke during public comment.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.