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**Freedom Wall Stakeholder’s Meeting**

**January 21, 2020 at 4:30 PM**

**Meeting Notes**

**In Attendance:** Audrey Clark, Terry Alford, Samantha White, Lynn King, Erin Grajek, Barbara Bono, Hunter Spitzer, Madelaine Hamilton, Sydney Collins, Sharon Holley, Mavis Goss, Lilliey Wiley-Upshaw, Melissa Weiksnar, Michael Finn, Constance Strother, Hunter Spitzer, Woody Brown, Shaunna Rospierski, Jody Covington, Juweria Dahir, Ada Hopson-Clemons.

1. **Intro of the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission Terry Alford, ED of the Commission.** 
   1. MISSION: As an advocate for the community, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission endeavors to integrate the African American cultural significance and impact on Buffalo’s history through public engagement, community education that will encourage cultural appreciation, preservation, and community development.
   2. VISION: The Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission (MSAAHCC) will serve as the connector of the past, present and the future for the historic neighborhoods within the Corridor.
   3. Introductions of chairs and board of MSAAHCC: George Scott (Chair of the MSAAHCC and board member of the Historic Colored Musicians’ Club), Lillie Wiley-Upshaw (Co-chair of the MSAAHCC & Chair of the Buffalo Niagara Freedom Station Collation), Sharon Holley (Commissioner & Chair of the Michigan Street Preservation Board)
   4. The commission and its anchors are about to embark on capital improvement projects. Announced strategic action plan to act as an economic revitalization plan for the corridor.
2. **Intro of East Side Garden Walk by Samantha White.** 
   1. MISSION: The East Side Garden Walk is an annual self-guided garden tour that aims to create a more vibrant and beautiful community by sharing gardens, stories, and the spirit of perseverance with those from within and outside the east side community and neighborhoods. The ESGW is one way for East Side residents to take control of the narrative that proving -community activism can also begin with a garden. This is why the ESGW works with other organizations to raise the neighborhoods up from within.
   2. Garden Walk Buffalo has a $4.5 million impact, the ESGW hopes to do the same by finishing the Freedom Wall Project.
   3. Samantha speaks about how the area surrounding the freedom wall is not up to the standards of the icons represented and introduces Lynn King, local attorney and mediator who will facilitate the meeting.
3. **Community Input Section** (formatted with theme followed by name of suggester and their idea with similar ideas nestled underneath.
   1. **Bricks & Paving Suggestions**
      1. Mavis Goss – bricks in front of the freedom wall, benches on side of freedom wall.
      2. Terry Alford – suggests fundraising with paying for bricks.
   2. **Performing Arts Participation**
      1. Barbara Bono – local to the freedom wall. Wants to note how close it is to the main street intersection and its proximity to performing arts. Representing the Tool Library
      2. Jodi Covington – Performing Arts rep would love to see her students participate.
      3. Sam White – wants students from Performing Arts to work to help create art for the area.
      4. Constance Strother – VP for WNY Urban Art Collective artists want to move forward with the students.
   3. **Safety Concerns**
      1. Melissa Weiksnar – Want to note that benches might encourage loitering and block the views.
   4. **Block Clubs**
      1. Ms Ada – block clubs, wants to see block clubs included. Woodlawn and Heat Club, Northland. They might be willing to help maintain the site.
      2. Sam White – NFTA will step up and help.
      3. Juweria Dahir – Suggests reaching out to just breath block club and AARP placemaking grantees.
   5. **Partner Organizations** 
      1. Woody Brown – Albright-Knox Art Gallery supports the cause.
      2. Hunter Spitzere – Ameri-corp vista’s support this cause. He is curious about empty lots and if they can be included into the plans. Also suggests painted concrete over brick.
      3. Erin Grajek – VP of Botanical Gardens wants to be involved with horticultural advice or assisting with planting, etc.
      4. Barbara Bono – The Tool Library is a not-for-profit that lends tools and can help support a project. Also suggests connecting with the Foundry. Extend the radius of the corridor.
      5. Sharon Holley – needs input from Reverend Richard A. Stenhouse from AME Bethel Church, Skateland, metro storage, and other businesses in the vicinity. They need to be partners.
      6. Sydney – sewer authority reiterates support and RainCheck program. Offers landscape architects.
      7. Michael Finn – NFTA has the money. Finn will talk to them to bring these issues. Public Works point person until Project manager is identified. Finn wants durability and suggests embedded granite pavers into concrete.
      8. Madelaine – Tool Library can assist with tools and volunteers.
      9. Juweria – can make connections for us.
   6. **Sidewalk Maintenance** 
      1. Mavis – wonders about the cost and long term maintained of sidewalk.
      2. Sam – RFP for cost of sidewalk by NFTA would help clear this up.
      3. Sydney – pervious surfaces to help with absorption of water.
4. Lynn asks if there are any questions before adjourning for the night. Next meeting is scheduled for March 10 at 4:30 PM.