

Winter Solstice Planning Session Minutes

08/11/10

Attendees

Jessie Desmond-Red Couch, Vanessa Horace- In the Bag!, Charlotte Wilson- In the Bag!, Mary Ann Fortune- Pets with Santa, June Rodgers- McCafferty's, Frank Eagle- Lavelle's Bistro, Georjean Seeliger- If Only...a fine store, Ken Kokjer- Co-Op Arts, Bobbi Eller- River City Café, Trevor Eller-River City Café

Purpose of Event

- Business comes and goes, traditions are long lasting
- People want to come and have a good time, invite the masses
 - Bounce Back- People return after the event
 - Capture the people who are here
- Encourage community
- Promote traffic, promoting downtown benefits everyone
- Have a traditional event (Macy's Day Parade) that keeps people coming back

Dates

- Event changed from Saturday in 2008 to Monday 2009
- It's unclear why certain things did not work in 2009 due to so many variables
- After vote, decision was made to host finale on Saturday, December 18th

Structure of Event

- Keep it simple, do it well, "invite and involve" the community
- Businesses have the responsibility to grow and create individually; Downtown Association's roll should promote the event as a whole.
- Don't enable, empower.
- Parking Garage- Having the ability to market the parking garage on event days could benefit downtown as a whole.

Activities

- Window Decorating
 - Panel of judges and People's Choice Award
- Gingerbread Man Chase
- Live Music
- Santa
 - Sadler's can be an uncomfortable space and too busy
 - Moving Santa would be hard because he is expected at Sadler's and parking is free and abundant.
 - Santa at Sadler's allows an efficient photo taking process.

- Possibly move Santa photos to a more centralized location: New Horizon's, River City Café, Spring Hill Suites by Marriott
- Pets with Santa
 - Sadler's space works perfectly with an entrance and an exit zone for pets.
- Fireworks
 - In person sponsorship solicitation may help funding.
 - KickStarter.com- sponsorship website, an opportunity to raise funds
 - Community support, member support

Promotional Ideas

- Talk with Latitude early to guarantee events/info for reserving space Thanksgiving-Christmas
- *News-Miner* NEEDS community events to keep up paper subscriptions
- Word-of-Mouth is most important
- Bring-a-friend Coupons
- Punch Cards for event calendar- Come to an event on the calendar and receive a punch for prizes.
- Print more programs for business use
- Shopping bag stuffers

Halloween Ideas

- Friday, October 29th
- Red Couch: activities, cake walk, costumes, etc.
 - Emphasis on themed food and drinks
- Chartreuse: Intends on hosting Haunted House with proceeds benefitting Breast Cancer Detection Center. Looking for any helpers or support from other downtown businesses.

Final Conclusions

- Promote the month, finale on December 18th.
- Keep Santa, Window Decorating, Gingerbread Man Chase and other activities as our downtown holiday traditions.
- Try and raise funds for Fireworks
- Follow up meeting- Thursday, September 9th at 6:00pm