



## RECHARGE DOWNTOWNS

### Recharge Downtowns Group Meeting

November 15, 2016

5:30 – 7:30 PM

### Minnesota Discovery Center

Mineland Reclamation Classroom  
1003 Discovery Drive, Chisholm, MN

### MEETING OBJECTIVES

- 1) Discuss member education
- 2) Demonstrate the Initiatives Database
- 3) Identify local initiatives and make commitments to connect interested persons to those projects
- 4) Working session to identify the status and next steps of initiatives represented at this meeting
- 5) Set the next meeting date, time, and location. Identify volunteers to invite new members.

### PROPOSED AGENDA:

---

5:30	Introductions
------	---------------

---

5:40	Member Education – Discuss Article
------	------------------------------------

---

6:10	Demo/Critique of Initiatives Database
------	---------------------------------------

---

6:30	Connect People to Initiatives
------	-------------------------------

---

6:45	Brainstorm Next Steps for Represented Initiatives
------	---

---

7:15	Schedule Next Meeting and Critique
------	------------------------------------

---

**Downtown Revitalization**  
**Sub Group of Livable Communities**  
**November 15th, 2016**  
**Mineland Reclamation**  
**5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**In Attendance:** Vicki Hagberg, Jim Plummer, Sara Ferkul, Ben DeNucci, George Walters, Chris Zigan, Kelsie Anderson, Wayne Kangas, Larry Killien, Whitney Ridlon, Mary Finnegan and John Ongaro

### **Member Education:**

The point of this discussion was to build the knowledge base of this group. Vicki provided a guidebook that was made by Smart Growth America – (Re) Building Downtown, A Guidebook for Revitalization. This guidebook focuses on a seven step approach to downtown redevelopment. All of these are important elements in a great down town. Members were encouraged to pass on the guidebook to EDA's and chambers as a reminder to take a step back because there is more to it than just tearing down buildings. For example, many years ago, the city of Hibbing planned on tearing down the Androy, people banded together and began to make improvements. The seven steps are listed below:

#### **1. Understand your Community**

- ❖ What is the culture of your town? Learning the demographic of your city is also important. What is the direction we should move in? Creating a comp plan for you city can be helpful and actually following it. Would it be helpful to host 5-6 businesses in one large building so smaller businesses have a chance to grow? This will also help with costs for the businesses. Does your community feel like they have a voice?

#### **2. Create an attractive, walkable place**

- ❖ Decent and clean sidewalks, beautification of downtown, inviting store fronts (Chisholm – storefront improvement program – city will pay \$500 towards fixing. They also have a low interest loan program.) Look at the amount of time that your downtown has people on the main street (signs of vitality)

#### **3. Diversify economic uses**

- ❖ Promoting employment downtown and diversify retail stores and businesses. Old infrastructure can be an issue for businesses – for example steam is expensive.

#### **4. Plan for equity**

- ❖ Economic Opportunities and Affordable Housing Strategies

#### **5. Improve government regulations and processes**

- ❖ Improve processes and regulations to make it easier for businesses and developers to thrive. May need more time to discuss this issue.

#### **6. Finance Projects**

- ❖ Think outside of the box about funding a project. Capitalize on trying to get public funding first and then asking for private sector funding.

## 7. Establish on going place management

- ❖ Establish a plan for upkeep on the improvements that you have completed. Think long term.

**Pass on any member education information that you may come across to Vicki.**

Discussion about the initiatives database that Vicki created. This will be a tool to track what is going on around the Iron Range. This spreadsheet will be accessible to all downtown revitalization group members, you will also be able to edit and add any new information as you come across it.

*What's happening around the communities?*

Hibbing – Lighting of the Androy Sign (will need approval ahead of time because it is a historic building), Mural painting downtown, Signage to connect downtown to the Mesabi Trail and possibly repainting some street lights. \*\*The county has a sign shop, they may be able to make signs for the Mesabi Trail at a lower cost.

Cook – Community Group came together to complete the Community center, this is finally finished and open, Hospital/Nursing Home is adding another addition, Louisiana Pacific will be coming to Cook, the city completed a comp plan with assistance from ARDC, Concert series in Summer every Wednesday, host farmers markets in the Summer as well and the Dental office moved downtown. A couple shortfalls, the amount of downtown businesses are dwindling fast, rumors that the school that was just built is now too small to accommodate the amount of kids and there is a need for a crosswalk and lights to cross the highway.

Nashwauk – Adding bike racks to the Mesabi Trail, Cleaning up monument signs and trailheads, the Hawkins Pit Overlook is in disrepair, the area has be redesigned, the city has purchased the old Midland store to use for storage, however, a new business is interested in that building, either way the building will be renovated, also working on tearing down old dilapidated buildings and homes currently working with APEX for marketing purposes, there will also be a packet available at the city hall to see available properties. Looking to the future, they are working on put a disc golf course in, in 2018 highway 65 will be redone – including street lights and a water line, and they will be approaching the school to renovate the field house and hopefully have an exercise room that all area communities can utilize.

Eveleth – Current renovation of the city auditorium, the EDA has helped fund two new businesses, they have also created a map of all the city properties to try and sell or make into something else. The city has refocused on what is being done and what can be accomplished. Trying to get some new artwork downtown that will focus on hockey and maybe bring more people in for being the “Hockey Town”

Duluth and St. Louis County Days at the Capitol. March 29<sup>th</sup> through March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.  
<https://duluthchamber.com/major/#capitol-days> we should have a presence at this event.

Next Meeting:  
January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
Mineland Reclamation