



**Barracks Row Working Group Meeting Notes:
Tuesday May 21st 2019 at 7:00 pm
Location: 700 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
7TH Floor Conference Room**

Introductions:

There were over 25 attendees, including Barracks Row business owners, neighbors, and representatives of the Barracks Row Main Street (BRMS), Eastern Market Main Street and CHAMPS.

Community Announcements:

No Announcements.

Presentation:

We did not have a presentation this meeting.

Marketing Ideas & Plan:

1. It is critical that any website, Instagram, etc, site, have continual new content and be updated on a regular, fairly often schedule. Hit and miss on this is worse than nothing at all. It should also be noted that individual business's websites need to be up-to-date. This is not the case now.
2. I also think Barracks Row should promote itself as the "Authentic" or "Real" Capitol Hill and hit hard on what we have here that is connected to our history.
 - a) We have a lot of historic buildings that connect us: Old Naval Hospital, Marine Barracks, Commandant's Home, Home of Sousa, the Eastern Market, Friendship House, Historic alleys, the Navy Yard (and their Museum), Congressional Cemetery, plus more recent buildings like the Haines Building, the Carnegie Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, Odd Fellows Hall (on Eighth), the old Synagogue, Car Barn on Eighth and M Streets, Fragers, Potomac Gardens, all of which have stories of their own (some, like Potomac Gardens, are not well known).
 - b) Also by the way, while it was Jefferson that chose the spot for the Marine Barracks and Home of the Commandant (also btw, the oldest, continuously occupied government building in Washington), Lincoln also often came from the White House, down Eighth Street to visit with the commander of the Navy Yard, who was a good friend of his. And John Wilkes Booth fled down Pennsylvania Ave. after the assassination.
 - c) We have lots of arts venues like the Black Box (home of Taffety Punk) in the Old French School (CHAW), the Miracle Theatre, the Folger Consort and Theatre, the North Hall of the Eastern Market, the Corner Store, The Hill Center, The Fridge, Library of Congress Coolidge Auditorium and CHAW.

- d) We have contemporary music at Mr. Henry's, Finn McCool's, The Soul Food Restaurant, the Hill Center, The Corner Store, The North Hall of Eastern Market.
3. At the meetings, neighbors attend showing their interest and support. Why not tap into that for a Docent Corps, who could give historical, or art or food tours, from a local perspective. I know that Sharon Bosworth has done this previously. Also we need to tap into Cultural Tourism DC and get them to do tours and events here on a regular basis that we can promote every week (and that they do it during hours when venues are open. And we already have the self-guided tour, which should be continuously promoted.
 4. Murals were specifically mentioned last night--The one we have on our garage is seen only by Asian tourists for some reason, but we (on Capitol Hill) have enough of them that a tour could be done combining it with, for example, a discussion on the history of some of our alleys (the one between the 700 block of Ninth and Tenth was named Abner's Court and has a history) along with who lived there and the conditions and jobs they had. The Fridge is based on street art, which has huge followings worldwide--it needs to be promoted for what it is, a center for this art.
 5. We should relentlessly promote our restaurants/bars. Barracks Row is an international food experience and hugely diverse--promote that--we have a true brewpub, a sushi house, authentic farm to table Italian, soul food, Latin American of various kinds, sports bars, lounges, true Mediterranean food, steak house, Caribbean and so forth. Go into detail to show their skills and roots. We also have special wine and liquor shops, sports clothing, children's venues, bakery, tea house and so forth, all which should also be promoted. If you do one a week with great photos and text, it will take a half year to cover them all...and then you can start again.
 6. But I think it is imperative that the content is there before starting and that it isn't just someone rushing to make it up to meet a deadline--organization shows and it makes things attractive.
 7. We also need to settle on specific symbols for Barracks Row, one or two or three symbols to brand mark everything on any site.
 8. We cannot just say "Barracks Row". We have to say where it is using slogans such as:
 - a) "A two minute walk from Eastern Market Metro"
 - b) On the L'Enfant-Eastern Market Circulator, "A lovely 10 minute walk through history, from our Nation's Capitol Building, down scenic Pennsylvania Ave SE"
 - c) "A 12 minute walk from Nationals Park"
 - d) "Located on Eighth Street SE, the Home of the Marines (Marine's Barracks)"
 - e) "A five minute walk from Eastern Market",
 - f) "The home of TWO of Washington, DC's Michelin Star Restaurants--Rose's Luxury and Pineapple and Pearls"

Things to get done:

- Put some attractive, but not outlandish signage on the north face of Starbucks, indicating where Barracks Row is and what is there. We need this desperately to direct people coming off the subway and coming down Pa. Ave.
- Eliminate the bus stop at Eighth and D (in front of the Starbucks). There is a stop on Pa. Ave for buses that turn on to Eighth and on the north side of Pa. Ave. on Eighth. We do not need another stop in front of Starbucks. This will also allow Starbucks to again put out outside seating--a very attractive feature. (There are possible challenges to this idea)

- Collaborate with Sweet Lobby and Yes! to fill the space between the two businesses get some activity there, especially outside seating/activity. We want to draw people from the subway to the street, and activity could do that.
- The Yes! Market could put a nice vegetable stand (and awning) out in front of their store. This could generate a lot of additional business and would be a huge help to get some activity on that side of the street. If they sold newspapers, they could also put a couple of table and chairs outside for people to buy coffee/buns/etc. and read the paper. Cafe 8 does a nice job of getting people outside.
- Continue with efforts to keep the begging in front of the 7-11 and the empty store to a minimum
- Work hard on owners to get their vacant spaces filled. Get people to contact them (like neighbors) on an on-going basis. The 400 block is a real and serious stumbling block in this sense.
- Work with Medium Rare to better configure their outside space. In particular, the choke point they create between their planters and the parking machine is horrendous, and dangerous, and makes it VERY difficult for anyone using a wheelchair or cane to move past it. It is a problem for able bodied people to walk through there. People walking in opposite directions cannot pass each other. When it rains, it just multiplies the problem.
- The issue of the pavers come up regularly. Just an historical note: The pavers were put in there as an experiment to see if the larger gaps between pavers would mitigate the water runoff--below the pavers there is considerable gravel to facilitate that. DDOT has possibly forgotten that it was an experiment.
 - It's possible that the pavers should all be taken up and replaced with brick so that there is not the problematical break in materials that causes so much trouble in walking down the street. The pavers are prone to break too, which causes problems.