



MBA Membership Meeting Minutes, October 12, 2017

Welcome: President Michael Higgins called the meeting to order.

Secretary's Report: September minutes were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report: As of September, 2017: Income: \$1,946.75; Expenses: \$31.68; Balance: \$21,701.62. Estimate of gain from Bites on the Boulevard: \$4,000

Guest Speaker: Rasha Said, Founder, Sensible Innovations

- The saying, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention" describes the rise of Sensible Innovations (SI), founded by Springfield resident Rasha Said. Having no experience with blindness before becoming a mother with a visually impaired young son, Said began her search for a technology application that could deliver accessible information about a person's surroundings that could assist him (and others like him) in "seeing" his environment. In collaboration with LRS (Levi, Ray, & Shoup) they developed a smart phone application called Aware. The app takes an image-based map of items in a location, a grocery store, for example, and converts it to text. It uses Apple I-Beacon hardware that is installed throughout a facility and through Bluetooth technology provides detailed instruction via smart phone where to find an item using the Aware application. Business owners who purchase the system have flexibility to change or add to the mapping. Only a certified vision specialist and a computer engineer are needed to map a location. Sensible Innovations recently received a patent for its image-to-text based mapping application. Glenwood High School where her son is a student and Mary Bryant Home for the Blind use the technology.

President's Report:

- President Higgins made the following appointments: David Farrell, Chair, Nominating Committee and Julie Dirksen, Chair, Annual Awards.
- Higgins described the steps that were needed before MBA could consider transfer of MacArthur Boulevard from the State.
 - Decide what we want;
 - Must be included in IDOT's funding plan.

Local Government Update

Kristin DiCenso, Ward 6:

- Announced sixty people attended the Mayor's strategic planning meeting recently in the Ward.
- Warned us to lock our cars as there has been an increase in break-ins in unlocked vehicles in the neighborhoods.
- Bob Jones will be the new neighborhood police officer for Beat 200.
- Will be presenting her first resolution, Welcoming Cities Resolution, to the City Council on October 24. Michael Higgins signed onto the resolution.

- Recent street flooding in the Ward was quickly repaired by the Department of Public Works. Lots of road work taking place in the Ward.

Joe McMenamin, Alderman, Ward 7:

- Announced strategic planning meeting in his Ward for October 16, 5:30 pm, Hope Presbyterian Church on Wabash. Discussion will focus on city core vs. outer edge issues.
- Said the City is facing serious financial stress in the operations budget that is in the red;
- Wrote an op-ed piece in the Illinois Times about how business is getting done in the City Council.

Officer Tami Russell:

- Stressed need to lock car doors to prevent break-ins.
- Working with the City to inform the public about panhandlers confirming that they are not homeless in spite of their signs.
- Hosted a well-attended (75-100) Neighborhood Watch Meeting on Outer Park.
- Announced that appliances belonging to MacArthur Town Homes are being stolen. The locations can only be entered using a key. Cameras will be installed, new keys issued, and a police officer will live in the Town Homes.
- Hoping to use the Town Homes Community Center to prepare official Police reports.

Announcements:

- President thanked County Board member Lisa Hills as this month's coffee sponsor.
- John Eck announced a Neighborhood Watch Meeting for the State-Glenwood-Laurel area would be held 5:30 on November 6.
- Laurie Farrell, who leads a talented pool of retired teachers who assist children in MacArthur Town Homes tutoring program, announced the construction of a Little Free Library, containing picture books and paperback books for the whole community. She urged the membership to attend the opening on Tuesday, October 17, 4 p.m.
- Franklin Middle School Volunteers are needed for Clean-Up MacArthur Saturday, October 21st.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Durbin, Secretary