



News & Notes from Downtown Norfolk

Kind words from the North

From time to time, visitors find their way to our office – usually with a compliment. Recently, a gentleman traveling by boat from Florida to Ottawa, Canada dropped by during his stopover with rave reviews on his experience at the Waterside Marina – a shout out to Dockmasters Brook Smith and Tom Van Benschoten. Our visitor wanted me to know that our Ambassador, David O'Neil, had been exactly that – a true Ambassador. He couldn't say enough to express his appreciation for David. But he also wanted me to know how impressed he was with downtown Norfolk. And while we sometimes see the orange barrels of construction as an inconvenience, he saw them as a sign of a City filled with promise. It was a good reminder to me that construction is a good thing – it sends a strong message of progress.

Tree Wells Not Well

Last summer, we worked with the City's Department of Parks & Forestry to refurbish the tree wells on Granby Street, a much needed improvement. With the time, effort and money that went in to that refurbishment, we are dismayed to see that once again, many of the tree wells are looking bad. We are again working with the City and will be evaluating the soil conditions to see if that might be the culprit causing plant material to die. Our goal is certainly to have downtown looking its best, and frankly we are embarrassed by the condition of our tree wells. We will keep you informed as we try to find a solution to this problem.

Power to the trees

On a related and more positive note, we are pleased that the City's Department of Public Works has committed to putting power at the base of the trees that will be planted in the City's next round of streetscape improvements. As you may know, only a few trees downtown have a power source, leaving us unable to put lights in those trees. We are hopeful that installing power sources will become a part of the City's regular streetscape standard.

Advertising accolades

You may have seen the note in a recent Fast Facts that for the fourth year in a row, we have been recognized for the excellence of our advertising programs. DNC has won many awards over the years but the ones that always mean the most to me are those where we are recognized regionally. Our advertising goals are quite simple – to position downtown Norfolk in the minds of regional residents as an exciting place of unique experiences. We remind the region that there is much to do and see and getting around is made easier with a quick visit to our up-to-date and interactive map. Our message is carried in print publications, on WVEC and COX as well as the six radio stations of Max Media and Sinclair Broadcasting. And, as I'm sure you know, we have a Norfolk mermaid carrying our message.

Mermaid on the road

Speaking of our mermaid – she went to Richmond recently with a group of hoteliers to encourage associations to consider downtown Norfolk as a place for their meetings and conventions. I think we've definitely added a new ambassador to our team.

Rack one up for the Arts

More and more people are riding their bikes to downtown – for work and pleasure. This has pointed out the need for more bike racks. And now, through a new initiative, we hope to combine form with function by providing bike racks that are both utilitarian and works of art. This week, we issued an RFP to artists, sculptors, architects and industrial engineers from across the region and the nation to solicit designs for these "racks of art." The idea was conceived by our Granby District Place Making Committee and we have worked closely with the City's Public Arts Commission to develop an RFP that gives us the best chance of getting quality submittals. Responses are due back in early May, and we are hopeful that by fall we will be offering a new amenity to our biking community, as well as public art to the City.

And just one more thing...It's time to **Play Ball!**

Cathy Coleman
President & C.E.O.