



Meeting: Small Business Networking Group May 3, 2024

Location: Plymouth Community Center, 14800 34th Avenue North

Community Present: Carlos Arroyo, A-Team Solutions; Lisa Buck, Lisa Buck Photography; Ben Droege, Midwest Podiatry; Cheri Gengler, Minneapolis Regional Chamber; Bill Goins, SAVE; Kathy Petersen, Opus Music Academy; Armetha Philstrom, Philstrom Consulting Group; Valerie Ruha, Very Organized by Valerie; Nirav Sheth, Stratosphere; Jeremy Wolfsteller, SAVE; Ashley Winter, CEL; Kathy Parks (and associate), Park's Place; Jamie Young; Brew Park

Staff Present: Economic Development Coordinator Tyler Parsons
Community and Economic Development Intern Sophia Kucera

Tyler Parsons started the meeting with a presentation of some of the city's initiatives and updates relevant to the economic success of Plymouth-owned and operated businesses. Topics included the Plymouth Boulevard and Highway 55 construction closures, the development of a Plymouth business passport program during the ongoing road construction, and potential directions for a workforce development program to develop.

Tyler opened discussion to the group, starting with a round of introductions in which each attendee shared their name, a brief background of their business, one professional development goal, and one personal goal. Attendees shared their experiences and potential opportunities for their businesses to work together.

Tyler introduced President and Founder of Opus Music Academy Kathy Petersen to give a presentation on her experience starting and growing her music education business, the first in what will be a rotating series of similar presentations in future Small Business Networking Group meetings.

Kathy Petersen introduced herself and shared a little about her family and education background in music therapy and adaptive programming. She specializes in adaptive lessons tailored to individual learning styles and needs based on disability, reflecting Opus Music Academy's greater "mission-based" education style interested in the process of learning, teaching, building life skills and self-confidence.

Kathy stated that Opus Music Academy does one-on-one children's lessons and some group adult lessons, with options for lessons to be done in-studio, at-home, or virtually. Beyond private and group lessons, Opus also offers accompanists, instruments and accessories for sale,



and special occasion music for weddings, live music, living room concerts, custom created ensembles, and more. She has found success developing partnerships with Community Education and Parks and Recreation divisions. Her current goal for Opus is to establish three full scholarships every year. New and upcoming offerings include summer camp, instrument rentals, a monthly Parent's Night Out event, and field trips to orchestra hall. After the presentation, Tyler opened the floor for attendees to network, ask questions, and generate ideas.

Jeremy Wolfsteller suggested a page on the City of Plymouth website for the Small Business Networking Group—a spot to sign up for the email list, future dates for group events, and/or public-facing advertisement for participating Plymouth small businesses.

Tyler explained the role of Plymouth's new Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and the difference in capacity between the Community and Economic Development Department and the DMO to promote private business. He agreed that a dedicated online presence for the Small Business Networking Group would be beneficial.

Armetha Philstrom advised the group to get involved with regional chambers when they can, adding that members should bring their gained knowledge "back home to Plymouth" to foster local business relationships and growth.