

Hello,

My name is Michelle Donovan and I am the operator of the businesses inside The Nile Theater. I am also one of the lucky ones who received a grant through the first round of fund for the facade improvement program. I understand the hesitation of awarding CDGB money to private entities when it's initial intent and use is for housing, homelessness, and other social welfare issues. As defined by the HUD website: The Community Development Block Grant, one of the longest-running programs of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, funds local community development activities with the stated goal of providing affordable housing, anti-poverty programs, and infrastructure development.

The perception is that "millionaires" are benefiting from this money. I can tell you that I am not a millionaire and probably never will be one. I can tell you that the infrastructure issue that this facade program is aimed to fix is real and we have seen a tangible result since the colonnade was removed. I can tell you that I have been in an un-updated 7,500 square foot theater for 9 years without AC. We survived light rail construction, a botched sewer re-do where our line was tied into an inactive line from the 1940s and a bevy of competing venues opening in neighboring Phoenix. In 9 years of operating the venue and 4 years of operating the coffee shop I have taken less than 12 paychecks. I pay my car insurance and my cell phone bill. The Nile is a labor of love and some could argue...stupidity. I have always believed in this place and what it means to the youth and the community. I saw the beauty in it before it was beautiful. I saw the potential in Downtown Mesa before it was cool. And now, thanks to the facade program, everyone else can see it's beauty as well. The Nile is the largest building to have the facade redone. It is now can act as a rallying point and a point of pride for Downtown Mesa.

Since the scaffolding and fencing came down we have seen an increase in revenue of 38% percent. We have added more jobs. We now have 3 people on daily instead of 1 or 2. And on the weekends we have up to 5 people working. This is just in the coffee shop. We have not seen a financial change in the theater but that is something that will be over time. The bands and fans who have come through the door make comments about how good it looks or how impressed they are with the improvements. People are always stopping to take pictures. It is also interesting to hear people ask how long we have been here.

Think about that. We have been here for 9 years. We have been one of the most active storefronts on Main Street and it took the colonnade coming down for people to take notice. How many other businesses on the street would benefit from not being blocked off by large cement columns and how many jobs would they be then able to provide? It is not clear if this is going to be the new norm for us but we are doing everything in our power to capitalize on this opportunity. As soon as we were rewarded the grant we started a massive overhaul of everything inside as well. We understood what an opportunity this would be and the potential it gave the business to grow and we were not going to squander it or rest on our laurels. We picked out the finishes, the details, the colors...everything inside and outside was picked with purpose. The facade improvement program gave a second wind. It made us more proud than ever of The Nile and of our city.

So, as a recipient of the first round of the facade improvement program I would like to thank City Council, The City of Mesa, the Jeffries (Robbins and McVey), the inspectors, the contractors, the architects, and our patrons for giving us this opportunity. For letting The Nile shine and for giving me hope that one day I will collect a paycheck for my work...even if it isn't for millions of dollars.

MICHELLE DONOVAN
The Nile, 105 W. Main

Mayor Giles, Councilmember Duff, and members of the Council,

Over the past couple of years, we have acquired several old buildings along Main St in Downtown Mesa. Our initial attraction to Downtown Mesa included the establishment of light rail, the MAC, and the historic and unique diversity of its buildings.

Given the age of these buildings, and the neglect of a number of them from previous property owners, we have realized the need for significant funds to bring these buildings up to current market standards in order to attract quality tenants. In conjunction with a building owner's investment in tenant improvements (TIs), the City's Facade Improvement Program has provided an additional incentive to attract great tenants to our Downtown.

For example, at 212-214 W. Main, a TI investment of close to \$300,000 plus the City's assistance with the Facade Improvement Program successfully attracted the National Comedy Theatre (NCT) to choose Downtown Mesa as its new home. The NCT brings patrons day and night to their events and performances. These patrons also visit Downtown restaurants, brew pubs, and shops before and after attending the NCT, all of which contribute to the financial success of Downtown Mesa.

We support your and staff's foresight in establishing the Facade Improvement Program and believe an expansion of the program (along with a willingness on the part of building owners and tenants to invest significantly in these historic buildings) will further enhance the financial success of Downtown Mesa.

Sincerely,
Brian Marshall
Mike Starkle

Owners of 212 and 214 W. Main

Hello,

Part of our decision to move our business to downtown Mesa was absolutely based on the City's decision to invest in its downtown. Our business thrives with a livable walk-able and vibrant downtown. Investment in the facade program will bring in patrons as well as other business and raises the profile of Main Street. Even with construction, non-stop since October, our patrons continue to attend comedy shows. Patrons are aware at what Mesa is doing and are excited to see the growth.

We comedy nerds suggest that you allocate more funds to the facade program.

Dorian and Kristina Lenz
The National Comedy Theater

As our facade project nears completion, a few points should be noted regarding this effort. First of all, the result is excellent and really makes our building an unique standout in downtown, and we have received nothing but compliments on the new look. We can only hope that the process of positively re-identifying downtown continues. There are many other colonnades that should also go, such as the Surf & Ski section that effectively blocks any view of the work we just had done, as we didn't realize how claustrophobic they were until they were demolished and replaced. Our thanks to the city for creating this effort and we will continue to support change for growth in downtown Mesa.

George Notarpole, History by George

129 W. Main St.