

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Tallgrass Business Resources

Present: John Albert, Tim Charles, Richard Cooley, Michelle Jensen, Mary Meisterling, Kathy McCauley, Julie Sterling, Mike Sundall, Julianne Thomas, Ted Townsend, Phil Wasta and Marcie Watson

Steering Committee/Guests: Emily Muhlbach, Ron Griffith and Gary Petersen from the City of Cedar Rapids; Tim Mroch from Shive-Hattery; Gordon Epping; Kris Gulick and Richard Pankey

Economic Alliance Staff: Sarika Bhakta, Doug Neumann and Wendy O'Brien

Welcome & Call to Order

Townsend called the meeting to order at 7:59 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Townsend noted consent agenda items included in the meeting packet: March meeting minutes, Professional Services Progress Report, financials and payables. Meisterling moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Thomas seconded, and the Commission unanimously approved.

Street Conversions & Other Updates

Emily Muhlbach, Ron Griffith and Gary Petersen presented an update on the City's downtown street conversion plan. Muhlbach began by sharing the benefits of two-way streets which help encourage "retail, pedestrian activity and easy access to downtown" and it is easier for visitors to navigate. The slower speeds create a "richer sense of place" and destination vs. a "pass-through"

Muhlbach shared conversions taking place this summer and details of what they will look like.

- 2nd Avenue (from 6th Street SW to 1st Street SE)
- 3rd Avenue (from 6th Street SW to 3rd Street SE)
- 4th Avenue SE (from 5th Street SE to 19th Street SE)
- 8th Street SE (from 4th Avenue SE to 12th Avenue SE)

Second and Third Avenues will have painted pedestrian 'refuge' areas that increase visibility of pedestrians and decrease the walking distance for crossing the street. Muhlbach also noted how protected bike lanes on 3rd Avenue will look, with a row of 'floating' parallel parking creating a safe zone for bikes away from traffic lanes. On 4th Street, bike lanes will be enabled on both sides of the street and extend to 7th Street, then convert to shared-use lane from 7th to 12th Street (and use 12th Street to connect to Coe College). Griffith explained that, as part of the street conversion project, traffic signals have been studied and several sets of traffic signals will be removed. He said that the vertical poles will remain for 6 months as the changes are assessed.

Griffith shared that 8th Street SE conversion segment is being evaluated to ensure truck traffic can be accommodated, and preliminary recommendations on the study are anticipated late-June.

In response, the Commission expressed that their biggest concern is getting truck traffic off of 10th Street. It was asked if the planned conversion on 8th Street SE would, in any way, inhibit moving truck traffic to that street in the future. Griffith thought that with, truck traffic requirements (turning radius, etc.) conversion to two-way may not work. Charles explained that the two-way conversion is important to Mercy and requested that the Commission push for this not to be an "either-or" decision but lobby for a combined solution.

Certainly, heavy truck traffic is a concern. Griffith explained that Anderson Bogert will be studying traffic patterns and routes for facilities in the area with heavy truck traffic.

Muhlbach reminded the Council that information regarding these changes is available online at: www.CityofCR.com/Conversions. And a copy of their presentation will be send with the minutes.

Committee Updates, Next Steps and Timeline

Branding/Marketing

Thomas introduced Tim Mroch who is working on the gateway monument signs. Design options were included in the meeting packet along with site locations and Shive-Hattery's opinion of probable construction costs. Thomas noted that they've received inquiry if there will be any payment (or tax abatement) to owners for providing easement for the signs, and the committee is investigating options.

The Commission discussed re-locating of the sign for 8th Avenue & 10th Street SE to the large triangle of land where Mt. Vernon Road SE approaches 10th Street SE. It was noted that there are future plans for a round-about at that intersection, but timing is likely to be 5-years out. Mroch said that the monument signage can be designed to be removable, by bolting it down. There would be some extra cost to re-do the stone base when moved. Mroch noted that the preliminary costs are based on non-removable signage.

The Commission reviewed the preliminary cost estimate. Neumann shared that there is room in the budget for the signage. And, if the Commission wanted to handle the cost over multiple budget years, that can be done as well.

The Branding & Marketing Committee brought forward the recommendation to approve the monument gateway signage design "Alternative 1" (page 12 of the meeting packet). The Commission unanimously approved.

Thomas also noted the new pop-up banner on display in the meeting room. If you would like to use it, let Bhakta know.

Operations

Meisterling shared that street poles on 10th St are planning to come down in the next 30 days, but there has been some problems communicating with MediaCom. Gulick noted there is a regional MediaCom contact that he is aware of that may be able to help.

Day of Caring is coming up soon, May 14 with rain date May 15. Projects include sprucing up in-ground planter beds with new mulch on 10th Street and pulling overgrown bushes in 3-4 in-ground planter beds and mulching on 1st Ave as an interim solution – in front of MedLabs & the old History Center location, as that is a key gateway to the MedQuarter.

Meisterling noted that revenue looks to be the same for 2016 and that it is time to think of what amenities the Commission would like to see incorporated next. As a reminder, it was determined in March that each committee will pull together 2016 budget numbers for their scope of expenses. And, the Operations Committee will pull together the committee budget recommendations for the Executive Committee and Commission to review.

Neumann reminded the Commission that they began this budget year with about \$700,000 already "in the bank" and are likely to have even more excess funds after this budget year is finished. So the Commission's priorities shouldn't be limited by the expected revenues for next year, because it can afford expenses well beyond that. Committees should set their priorities without regard for revenues (at least initially) because 2016 might be the right year, with completion of the MDP, to pick-up even more momentum.

Standards

Wasta gave an update on the proposed Overlay District Ordinance. The City Planning Commission meeting is April 9 and the City Council meeting is April 28 at 4 p.m. Wasta plans to attend and welcomes those who would like join him.

The Standards Committee met to develop a draft of the MedQuarter Façade Improvement Program included in the meeting packet. It is based off of the Downtown SSMID's program. As proposed, the program will cover up to 50% of eligible expenses on a project and award a maximum of \$10,000. Jasmine Almoayed attended the Committee meeting and expressed that the City is willing to put \$25,000 toward the program. Wasta will request MedQuarter funding for the program through the 2016 budget process.

There was debate about eligibility of residential structures, and it was decided to include them (as proposed) and assess the level of interest received.

The Operations Committee brought forward the recommendation to approve the MedQuarter Façade Improvement Program. The Commission unanimously approved.

Cedar Rapids Long Term Planning Commission

Townsend is on the Cedar Rapids Long Term Planning Commission. If there's something you think should be added or changed to the EnvisionCR plan, he welcomes insight you'd like to share with the Commission.

June Meeting with Lakota Group

Townsend shared that the Lakota Group had requested an hour and a half of time to present at the June SSMID Commission meeting. The Commission doesn't want to extend the meeting length to accommodate a full agenda and asked for Lakota to shorten their presentation to an hour.

The Commission suggested inviting committee members and City staff to the meeting. Sundall agreed to host the meeting at PCI, which can accommodate the larger group.

Bhakta also noted that Lakota will have some assignments that they will send ahead of the meeting and she will coordinate with Lakota and Albert.

Professional Services

The Commission adjourned to executive session for professional services discussion at 9:06 a.m.

The next SSMID Commission meeting is May 13 at 8:00 a.m.