

**Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes**

**February 10, 2016**

**8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**

**Tallgrass Business Resources**

**Present:** John Albert, Tim Charles, Gordon Epping, Michelle Jensen, Julianne Thomas, Ted Townsend, Julie Sterling (on phone), Karen Smith, Richard Cooley, Mary Meisterling, Kathy McCauley

**Absent:** Mike Sundall

**Others:** Phil Wasta, Doug Neumann, Jason Wright, Tim Goody

**Welcome & Call to Order**

A design/engineering presentation regarding 10<sup>th</sup> Street streetscape preceded the business meeting and ran a little bit long. Charles called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

**Consent Agenda**

Meisterling moved approval of the consent agenda. Seconded by Epping and unanimously approved by the Commission.

**FY 17 Tax Rate**

Charles summarized the tax rate discussion from January and reminded the Commission that this must be decided today to fit with the City's budget deadline. Wasta highlighted near-term priorities from strategic plan that will take continued significant funding and said the feedback he has gotten from stakeholders is that they want to see visible and tangible progress.

Thomas was concerned that feedback hadn't come enough from property owners paying the taxes, and also noted that with significant reserves already in place, the District could fund priorities even with a reduction in tax rate for the coming year. Sterling agreed that a little relief would be welcomed by smaller property owners.

Townsend moved to set the FY 17 tax rate at \$3.25 per \$1,000 of taxable value (down from the maximum possible rate of \$3.75 per \$1,000), noting that if reserves dwindle and priority costs outweigh new revenues, the levy can always be returned to \$3.75. Thomas seconded the motion, and the Commission approved on 10-1 vote, with McCauley opposed. She said she wanted to keep the levy at the same rate in order to continue to see the maximum amount of revenue go toward projects that could make a difference in the district.

**MedQuarter Inc.**

Wasta and Epping have been working through options regarding establishing or renewing a private, non-profit entity that could handle the non-public, voluntary funds that come to the District. Wasta said the advice seems to be leading toward establishing a new entity that would be a 501c6, and dissolving the entity that was created back in 2010 but has been "mothballed" for several years. He estimates legal costs not to exceed \$5,000 to get this all done.

Townsend moved approval of up to \$5,000 to engage Shuttleworth for legal services necessary to establish a new private, non-profit and dissolve the former non-profit entity. Thomas seconded, and the Commission unanimously approved. It was noted that the old MedQ Board will need to take some actions related to the dissolution as well. Wasta clarified that the legal fees will be paid from non-public, voluntary funds.

### **Committee Updates**

Written committee reports were in the agenda packets. Wasta and Thomas called particular attention to a digital billboard ad that is now running at the US Cellular Center. We've had more downed banners, but hopefully that gets resolved when new banners go up. Jason Wright noted that the History Center will be accelerating some of their improvement activities in order to comply with the 12-month grant funding deadline for the façade improvement grant. The Commission indicated a willingness to work with Wright to make things work.

### **Executive Director Update**

Wasta asked for feedback on building the agenda for the Strategic Planning Retreat. Among ideas shared:

- More work on use of funds, priorities, how the SSMID and the separate non-profit work.
- Frequency of commission meetings.
- What can be done to engage property owners and tenants.
- Performance measures for Wasta.
- Perspective from prospects for moving to the MedQ.
- Focus on execution of priorities already agreed to in the master plan. Always room to discuss a new "big idea" but maybe more so a fresh look at a marketing plan, a fresh look at the way we want to do economic development and how to increase investment in the District.
- Discussion around difference between pro-active, reactive and defensive economic development strategies.
- Should we do a lunch-and-learn to commercial Realtors and commercial developers to continue the education about the MedQ?

Wasta provided an update on the Regional Vision Strategy, which kicked off this week with a series of meetings with the consultant Market Street. Wasta also mentioned progress in discussions about potential pollinator zones that could green up the District in concert with master plan initiatives and in a unique and environmentally beneficial way.

### **Other Business**

Epping is going to be leaving his employment at First Lutheran Church, and his Commission seat will need to be reappointed.

### **Executive Session**

The Commission went into a brief Executive session at 9:15 a.m., then adjourned without further action.