

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2014

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Tallgrass Business Resources

Present: John Albert, Tim Charles, Richard Cooley, Gordon Epping, Michelle Jensen, Kathy McCauley, Mary Meisterling, Richard Pankey, Pat Shey, Julie Sterling, Julianne Thomas, Ted Townsend, Phil Wasta, and Marcie Watson

Absent: Mike Sundall

Steering Committee/Guests: John Osako, Kara Wiese, and Travis Schaufenbuel

Economic Alliance Staff: Sarika Bhakta, Doug Neumann, and Nicole Reck

Welcome & Introductions

Townsend called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Meisterling moved approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Watson, the Commission unanimously approved.

Committee Updates, Next Steps, and Timeline

Branding/Marketing

Dr. Thomas introduced John Osako, Kara Wiese, and Travis Schaufenbuel from Informatics who were in attendance to preview the new website. She noted the website was initially to encourage businesses to come to the District as well as educate on the district but that the focus is now also on providers and continued education about the District.

Osako keyed up the website to display the user side and functionality. The user side is where the public views content and users can maintain their profiles. The Informatics team demonstrated use of the website adding the site includes places to stay, things to do, news and events, and background on the Commission. Site maintenance was also demonstrated. The current link medq.informaticsync.net will be replaced when the site goes live.

When asked who the system administrator is, it was noted that the Economic Alliance can answer support questions and do some updates. Osako said there are simple steps outlined to assist anyone authorized to do updates. Ultimately, it's the SSMID Commission's responsibility to keep the site updated and to decide how that will be done. McCauley will assist contacting the Teacher's Store; Pankey will assist contacting eateries/bar establishments. Townsend reiterated the highest priority is promoting the District, noting there may eventually be advertising opportunities. When asked, Meisterling said Wi-Fi can be put up on poles through the District at a cost. The website is available on mobile devices which will primarily focus on wayfinding when used as a mobile site. The site is set to go live around January 15th. Osako suggested a press release a few days post launch to be sure it is functional. Bhakta will draft. Townsend suggested communication go district-wide to promote website. Osako recommended a quarterly analytics review to determine what changes are needed to adapt over time. He also suggested the website be reviewed periodically with a dedicated committee. The Commission applauded the Branding & Marketing Committee as well as Informatics on a job well done.

District Services

Cooley explained that a copy of the services agreement is forthcoming and he asked that comments be forwarded to his attention, keeping in mind that services already provided by the City may not be listed. The RFP comes down to status of the poles and needs to include the addendum. Meisterling stated the information should be available in February for usage to gain an effective cost analysis.

Neumann provided an update on snow removal service indicating service was provided four times due to multiple snow events in December 2013. As suspected there were locations that were problem areas: 1200 block of 2nd Ave near the abandoned church, rental properties, the Art Cellar, and the Catherine McAuley Center.

Master Development Plan

Albert recalled the December Commission meeting where the Lakota Group presented concepts, initiatives, and properties while seeking feedback on the priorities and initiatives grid. Albert displayed the grid and asked for big picture feedback which he will compile and forward to Lakota as they are seeking direction on priorities and implementation. Discussion surrounded District priorities, specifically how security needs may have changed noting the need to reevaluate coordination. District Maintenance was discussed as a priority, as was Spirituality/churches as a subset of Management, Marketing, and Branding Initiatives. Lodging was used as an example as was used as a focus of attracting development. Other priorities discussed were Signage and Wayfinding and Gateways; Branding and Marketing; Open Space Greenway; Attraction of businesses/economic development.

At the February meeting Lakota will nail down the priorities per Commission feedback noting immediate, short term, and long term priorities.

Commonwealth Apartments Update

Neumann referred to page 19 in the packet. The developer no longer needs a letter of support, because his tax credit application has been filed, so at this point this is just for information only as there's no action needed from the Commission. It is a \$13M renovation project that, if awarded tax credits, would be completed in 2015. Richard Sova of Landover Corp. is the developer. At this time, Sova does not need the support letter though he would appreciate support of the project. The consensus of the Commission is to get updates on the project as they're available but to take no other action. If tax credits are not awarded, this project will not come to fruition.

Total Child Campaign Correspondence

Townsend received a letter from Four Oaks and wanted to pass the information on to the Commission noting their commitment to the Total Child Campaign. There is a focus on acquisition of properties to reduce density in a neighboring District which is a step in the right direction. Wasta noted a presentation to the Uptown District and accomplishments were very impressive.

Downtown SSMID and Czech Village/New Bo Updates

Bhakta reported to the Commission that the Downtown SSMID boundary has expanded to encompass approximately 8 square blocks of land in SE Cedar Rapids. In July 2013, the City of Cedar Rapids received a petition from downtown property owners in the 8 square blocks to expand the existing Downtown SSMID boundary. In September 2013, the City Planning commission reviewed the petition and unanimously recommended approval followed by a public hearing in October 2013 in which no objections were received by property owners in the proposed expansion area or the public. The City Council approved the expansion in December 2013. Previously, the 8 square blocks was the only area in the core of downtown that was not part of an established SSMID as it was located in between the Downtown SSMID and the Medical SSMID.

Bhakta also informed the Commission that Czech Village/New Bo Main Street District has finalized their Strategic Revitalization Plan which was facilitated by OPN Architects. Bhakta has already shared this plan with The Lakota Group. Now that the Czech Village/New Bo Main Street District has a plan they are looking at funding sources, and are in the process of establishing a SSMID. The proposed SSMID boundary encompasses not only the original Main Street boundary, but also areas on both sides of it to include additional properties. They are proposing the tax assessment to be capped at \$3.00 per \$1,000 assessed property value and have already begin their petition campaign process.

Other Business

The February 5th meeting will be extended to be held from 8:00 am – 10:00 am at the PCI Medical Pavilion and it will be a joint Commission and Master Development Plan Committee meeting with The Lakota Group.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.