

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2022, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., Hybrid Zoom & In-Person

Present: John Albert, Tim Charles, Gordon Epping, Pauline Herb, Michelle Jensen, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Mary Meisterling, Michelle Niermann, Okpara Rice, Michelle Stramel

Absent: Julie Sterling

Guests: Eric Dalton, PCI and Sandi Fowler, City of Cedar Rapids

Staff: Phil Wasta, Audrey Wheeler

Welcome & Call to Order

Rice called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Wasta reminded Commission members that we were unable to establish a quorum at last meeting creating the backlog of items in the consent agenda, but no issues were brought to his attention and investments are within guidelines. Gordon moved approval of the September minutes and financials, fourth quarter investment account reports and final FY'21 financials with Jensen seconding. The minutes, reports and financials were unanimously approved.

FY'23 Medical SSMID Levy Rate

Wasta shared the history of levy rates for the three SSMIDs and recommended a continuation at \$2.75 as it was the rate used for budgeting. Epping moved approval of the FY'23 Medical SSMID levy rate with Herb seconding. The levy rate was unanimously approved.

FY'23 Expenditure Budget

Wasta noted that the Cedar Rapids Medical SSMID Expenditure Budget is a report for the City that demonstrates how levy funds will be used. Epping moved approval of the FY'23 expenditure budget with McGrane-Hop seconding. The budget was unanimously approved.

Voluntary Contribution

Wasta reminded the Commission that the District is funded by two sources, a levy tax that goes into the SSMID accounts and voluntary contributions from both hospitals and a few other nonprofit entities that go into the MedQuarter, Inc. accounts. The original memorandum of agreement with the hospitals is expiring at the end of the current fiscal year and was for an annual contribution of \$125k for ten years. The new agreement language is the same apart from a reduction in annual contributions to \$100k and for a two year period that allows for more frequent review. It will go into effect FY'23. Niermann noted that UnityPoint Health has every intention of contributing for a significant time period.

Commission Appointment

Rice and Wasta welcomed and introduced Eric Dalton who took over as CEO of Physicians' Clinic of Iowa upon Mike Sundall's retirement. Dalton shared that he is a CR native and has been in health care 27 years. He worked in the Twin Cities for seven years at a CPA firm specializing in health care, returned to Cedar Rapids working as a financial analyst for six years before moving on to PCI 15 years ago. Dalton expressed his pleasure to be joining the commission. Niermann motioned to nominate Eric Dalton for appointment to the Medical SSMID Commission with Albert seconding. The appointment was unanimously approved and will be recommended to the City.

Meisterling shared that she submitted her retirement notice to Alliant effective March 1. She expressed her joy in being a part of the development of the District and working with a dynamic group of people who have created great movement. Wasta noted that Meisterling was an original member of the MedSSMID and thanked her for her service.

2022 Action Strategies

Wasta reviewed the 2022 Action Strategies highlighting proposed deletions and additions from the previous year.

Space Maintenance

Planters changed to implementation and maintenance rather than planning. There will be 32 locations. There was a change in tree stump language to reflect collaboration with the City on stump grinding. Bigbelly receptacles were added which is something the Downtown SSMID tested last year with great success. Bigbelly offers solar-powered, sensor-equipped waste and recycling stations that communicate real-time status to collection crews. The idea is to place a few along 10th Street as a pilot.

Memorandum of Agreement

Adding a review of the Memorandum of Agreement with the City to assure all aspects are in line with expectations. Charles inquired about whether the City might want to back away from anything they are currently doing and Wasta responded that he doesn't believe so.

Child Care

Wasta added the convening of parties to support development of childcare center in the MedQ. This was paused due to COVID. Charles shared that there is some ground available to locate a facility, but the challenge is to find a developer to invest and a facility operator. There may be some opportunities with state funding that didn't previously exist. The priority will be to serve the needs of MedQuarter workforce but will likely extend to others as well.

Marketing

Wasta struck the Phase 5 Banner Program as it is complete and has moved to maintenance stage. A change was made to Faith and Medicine wording to reflect work with broader initiatives rather than limiting to forums. Wasta cited the example that within several weeks, a mental health website landing page will be in place to provide resources. He updated the Main Street Survey to reference the new year. Wasta proposes removal of COVID vaccine education as it has been agreed this should be led by health care providers.

Financing Initiative

The WOW project was removed and replaced with district beautification and maintenance initiatives. Albert inquired about the WOW project and Wasta shared that the beautification will essentially be the WOW project. Wasta proposes removal of the reference to tree removal as a more accurate reflection of the work will be on funding stump grinding and tree replacement.

Parkway

Priority #5 was adjusted to reflect the 2022 efforts which will be on finalizing construction. Priority #9 was added and focuses on 10th Street from 1st Avenue to A Avenue. Wasta added clarity to a previous entry reflecting that assessment would be for potential 2023 construction.

Charles moved approval of the 2022 Action Strategies with Albert seconding. The action strategies were unanimously approved.

COVID Omicron Update

Commission members shared current experiences with COVID with the common theme being more cases among employees and some employees who have lost family members. The demand for care is greater at the urgent care centers and medical clinics than at the hospitals as had been the case in the past. Charles noted that the collaboration among the medical teams at the two hospitals and PCI has been phenomenal. Niermann shared that deferral of care continues to be a challenge and concern.

Marketing Initiatives

'22/'23 Digital Marketing Campaign Update

Jensen noted that focus will be on recruitment of all jobs ranging from clinicians to food service. An additional initiative will be based around mental health.

2021 Holiday Lighting and Feature

Wasta shared that he received great feedback on the lighting efforts and ornament display on 1st Avenue. Plan for removal is in progress.

Executive Director Updates

A Avenue NE Mural Update

The mural rendering was shared with the Commission and McGrane-Hop noted that it was designed to be vibrant and created by a seasoned Midwest artist. She doesn't anticipate any concern from the Visual Arts Commission. Wasta pointed out how the mural is a wrap from one side of the building to another and shared that the background on the entire North side will be painted. Cost is approximately \$15k. St. Luke's mentioned they may pave the parking lot adjacent to where the mural will be placed. There is an anticipated spring start. Epping noted that any potential price increase should not be a barrier to completion and encouraged continued discussion should that occur.

Charles moved approval of funding for the A Avenue NE mural with Meisterling seconding. The funding of the mural was unanimously approved.

2021 1st Ave Parkway Improvements

Wasta shared that the 1st Avenue parkway improvements are 90% complete and will be wrapped up in spring after frost is out of ground.

2022 10th Street NE Parkway Improvement Project

Wasta noted that the conditions on the 10th Street NE project between 1st and A Avenue were worse than anticipated. The City has come up with additional funding. ADA compliance will be addressed at the intersection of 10th St and A Ave. He is currently working with City on costs and determination of funding. This will be a 2022 construction project, but the budget won't be finalized for another month or so.

2022 Planter/Flower Pots

Wasta shared a map of the District showing the locations where the 32 planters will be located focused on high traffic areas. They will be square with draping plants around the sides and taller plants in the middle similar to what you may be used to seeing in the Downtown planters. The planters will be self-watering which will reduce maintenance costs.

3rd Avenue Pedestrian Crosswalk

Wasta shared that this project is near PCI/Nassif Cancer Center and is an area that has a great deal of foot traffic. It will be a pedestrian crossing with bump outs similar to those at the Mercy Medical Center 10th Street crossing. It will include warnings to drivers that pedestrians are crossing. This project goes to bid in late January and will ask for an accelerated construction time with the hope of it being a spring project. It is already funded and expected to take 3-4 weeks to complete. Both Dalton and Epping expressed appreciation.

8th Avenue / 10th Street / Mount Vernon Road Roundabout

Wasta reviewed the preliminary renderings for the 8th Avenue/10th Street/Mount Vernon Road roundabout project. This project will include new paving and be ADA compliant. The 8th Avenue median will be torn out and redone. The roundabout will have median treatments that control the traffic flow but that will be large enough for trucks and trailers to navigate. It will include Z-shaped pedestrian crossings. Construction is anticipated for 2025.

Child Care Center Initiative

Wasta noted that a non-disclosure agreement has been signed by all parties and that he will now focus on financial resources.

Adjourn

Epping moved to adjourn with McGrane-Hop seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.