

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2021, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., PCI Pavilion 2 Conference Room

Present: John Albert, Tim Charles, Gordon Epping, Pauline Herb, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Michelle Niermann, Okpara Rice, Karen Smith, Michelle Stramel, Mike Sundall, Sarah Wickenkamp

Absent: Michelle Jensen, Mary Meisterling, Julie Sterling

Guests: Sandi Fowler – City of Cedar Rapids

Staff: Jessica Komisar, Julie Kraft, Jesse Thoeming, Phil Wasta

Welcome & Call to Order

Rice welcomed everybody and called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Wasta thanked Wickenkamp and Smith for their time on the SSMID and Smith for her leadership as Chair. Wasta welcomed Herb and Stramel to the SSMID.

Consent Agenda

Charles moved approval of the May minutes, May and June financials and investment reports with Epping seconding. The minutes, financials and reports were unanimously approved.

COVID Updates from Commissioners

Niermann – continuing to see COVID patients hospitalized but in small numbers. Will see health care across the board changing processes including entrance screenings and other adjustments as needed. Masking in hospitals is still expected for team members and visitors. Workforce continues to be a challenge with a lot of opportunities in the region.

Charles – percentage of vaccinated employees keeps increasing and continuing to encourage it.

McGrane-Hop – first gallery opening on Friday, asking for RSVPs for estimated attendance. Masks optional but encouraged.

Smith – have stayed extremely busy, workforce is still an issue.

Sundall – stopped entrance screening a few weeks ago but have gone back to it due to OSHA requirements. About 75% of workforce has received vaccination, others are required to wear a mask. Anxious for workforce to return to Downtown again.

2022 Budgets

SSMID Budget

- Reduced façade improvement from \$25k to \$15k, averaging about 1 application for this program per year
- Park, green/parkway maintenance - \$18k, budgeting for last year's reality with a bad snow year and spent a little over \$17k
- Parkway improvement - \$170k to include \$55k for the 3rd Ave pedestrian crosswalk project
- Eliminated \$25k WOW project – added maintenance and beautification to \$55k to budget for flower pot initiative which has a budget of \$27k, Mural budget of \$25K, AND Core District Gateway budget of \$30k.
- Maintain a \$280k reserve
- Reduce cash on hand by \$182k leaving \$420k in cash through FY'22 budget

MedQ Inc Budget

- Eliminated ED/Workforce line which was brought in a few years ago for \$38k budget but it never got off the ground
- Added maintenance and beautification budget of \$27k to budget for flower pots, \$25k for Murals, and \$30k for Gateways
- Increased MedQ parkway improvement from \$115k to \$165k to include \$50k budget for 10th Street 1st Ave to A Ave NE improvements
- Maintain a \$500k reserve
- Reduce cash on hand by \$4k leaving \$226k in cash through FY'22 budget

Flower Pot Project

Wasta met with Blooms who provides material and labor for the Downtown flower pots and obtained estimates for 30 MedQuarter planters. Overall, each planter will cost about \$850 for a total of \$27k budget in the first year. The pots are self-watering which will reduce watering labor to as little as once a week or once every other week depending on the heat. Sundall asked if they will be mounted down. Wasta said that once filled with dirt and water the pots would be difficult to move, but will look into that option. The plan is to be ready for Spring of 2022.

3rd Ave Crosswalk

Wasta said there are a lot of pedestrians crossing 3rd Ave between 10th & 12th Street including PCI employees and Margaret Bock residents and it becomes a safety issue with having to peer around the parked cars. The proposed crosswalk would have the same design as the one on 10th Street between Mercy and McKinley including bump-outs and strobed crosswalk lighting. The City of Cedar Rapids doesn't have planned construction or improvements for this area, but is willing to provide design and project management at no cost. Wasta asked the City for designs and the preliminary cost is \$55k.

10th Street from 1st Ave-A Ave Improvements

Number 9 in the Master Parkway Improvement Plan is 10th Street from 1st Ave to A Ave NE which is only a 1 block section. It will be a low-cost, low-hanging fruit project that Wasta would like to move ahead with. It would include 2 light poles, taking care of existing trees and some sidewalk issues. It is estimated to be a \$50k project.

Charles moved to approve the presented FY'22 budgets with McGrane-Hop seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Marketing Updates

'20/'21 Digital Marketing Campaign Update

Digital campaign that launched in November 2020 still getting good traffic and engagement. Average click through rate is .92% which means a good amount of people are reading the story when led to the site. The current campaign for July/Aug is a Mercy cardio patient and then back to a small business feature for August/September.

7/1 Launch of Awareness Campaign

Campaign launched on July 8 to build awareness for surrounding "tweener" communities. 30-mile radius excluding Iowa City/Coralville but including Independence/Manchester. Over and above campaign delivered digitally including a streaming service video "ad" that you can't skip. There are currently 1,900 views in the first 7 days. It will be a 3-month campaign.

7/19-7/30 Summer in the MedQ Scavenger Stroll

Scavenger Stroll to target 10 locations in the district. Pushed out via website and social media to encourage and entice people to go to these locations and get answers to the clues. Winners will receive gift certificates to district restaurants.

Medical SSMID 10th Anniversary Plans

Wasta has been working with the branding and marketing committee to brainstorm ideas to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Medical SSMID. Cookies from Kathy's Pies will be delivered to all stakeholders and employers with a message along the lines of, 'It's sweet to be in the MedQ'. Along with the cookies a brochure which will highlight our accomplishments in the first 10 years will be delivered that will have before and after pictures of improvements and what the future holds. Charles suggested that the brochure focus on the value that the SSMID has provided the stakeholders and that the brochure be reviewed by the SSMID before it is finalized.

Charles asked if many of our projects would have happened anyway through the City without the SSMID. Fowler said perhaps the City would have been able to but the City wouldn't have been able to maintain and sees a lot of value of having the SSMID and one point person to stay in contact with stakeholders as a liaison.

Committee Updates

Sundall asked if there's a process the marketing committee has for online directory updates. Wasta said the new direction is rather than hosting and owning all of the directory contact information is they will be linked to each organization's website.

Charles said the University of Iowa is seeking approval for a new hospital to be built in North Liberty with similar services offered in the MedQuarter and to attract people from our community, which would be concerning for the MedQuarter. Charles said letters of opposition have to be submitted by end of July. Wasta said the MedQuarter should weigh in. Others voiced support of Wasta sending a letter of opposition. Charles said he will draft a letter and send it to Wasta for consideration.

Executive Director's Updates

2020 1st Ave Parkway Project Close-Out

Wasta said this project came in right on budget. The total project budget was \$900k (369k SSMID, \$530k MedQ) and it came in at \$899k.

2021 1st Ave Parkway Improvement Update

Wasta said this summer's project will focus on 1st Ave improvements from 10th-12th Street including new streetlights, grass, new sidewalks, removing ash trees, planting new trees and new traffic signals. Some heavy lift at intersections for ADA compliance updates.

Child Care Center Initiative

Wasta had a meeting with a key property owner and developer who has a child care operator connection to share information about our feasibility study and pro forma analysis. There is also a group from Catherine McAuley Center, Waypoint, Kirkwood and the Small Business Accelerator regarding a daycare for immigrant families and children.

Core District Gateways Initiative

Wasta said we have a \$30k budget for core district gateways. One of the key gateways into the MedQuarter is at the 7th/8th street on and off ramp to I380. The Downtown district has identified 7 access points to their district to clean-up and this was also one of them. Before the June 19 Farmers Market, the Downtown district privately coordinated clean-up of that area including mowing. Wasta said the MedQuarter's \$30k is to be earmarked and put towards clean-up and improvement into one of our major in and out points.

Other Business

Wasta met with Breanna Oxley who will be running for State Senate and covers this district. Their conversation included information about the district, the American Rescue Act funding for social services/housing, west side flood protection, training/education and budgetary backfill for COVID losses. Fowler said there was a news conference about this last week and will continue to hear more and more. The City is partnering with the County to make sure the combined pot of money will have a big impact.

Wasta said there is a new app from the City called Mobile CR to report down limbs, potholes, and other city services concerns.

Wasta said tree stump and root ball removal by the City is much further ahead of schedule than he expected. Wasta said the SSMID was going to do some funding but doesn't believe we will need to spend those funds until we see how much the City accomplishes this summer.

Continued efforts in the Faith and Medicine task forces around community mental health issues and connecting faith leaders to correct resources.

Adjourn

Sundall moved to adjourn the meeting with Epping seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 a.m.