

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2022, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., PCI Medical Pavilion 1

Present: John Albert, Eric Dalton, Gordon Epping, Michelle Jensen, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Okpara Rice, Julie Sterling, Michelle Stramel

Absent: Tim Charles, Pauline Herb, Michelle Niermann

Guests: Lisa Gleason – Eastern Iowa Sleep Center & El Sleep Supply, Sandi Fowler – City of Cedar Rapids, Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O’Donnell

Staff: Jessica Komisar, Jesse Thoeming, Phil Wasta, Nikki Wilcox

Welcome & Call to Order

Rice called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. and welcomed Dalton to his first official meeting as a Commissioner and congratulated Charles on his planned retirement from Mercy Medical Center.

Welcome from Mayor O’Donnell

Mayor O’Donnell said she has been learning so much from constituents, including Wasta about this Commission and District. O’Donnell said in her first 30 days she has put out RFPs to update the Downtown and Riverfront plans and there are so many good things happening in Cedar Rapids and it’s her job to package it up and communicate it back to the community. O’Donnell said her priorities continue to include jobs and opportunities, safe and nice streets and placemaking amenities.

For the sake of the newer Commission members, Wasta stated that the reason for the creation of SSMID districts is to spearhead improvements within the boundaries, and to operate in tandem with the City as the SSMID is a tax-funded entity and members are approved through the City Council and the Mayor. The Medical SSMID has done well partnering with the City and leveraging city dollars for accomplishments in the district. O’Donnell said the City absolutely relies on this group as the Commission knows the district better than anybody else.

Consent Agenda

Jensen moved to approve the January minutes and January and February financials with Albert seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Nomination of Lisa Gleason

Wasta introduced Gleason from Eastern Iowa Sleep Center & El Sleep Supply, who is being proposed for nomination to be the newest Commissioner, filling Mary Meisterling’s seat. Gleason is the administrative director for Eastern Iowa Sleep Center, but has been employed at St. Luke’s, Mercy and PCI over the last 20 years. Gleason said it’s been a privilege watching the SSMID projects over the years and is excited to be a part of it.

Epping moved to nominate Gleason to the Medical SSMID Commission with Albert seconding. The motion was unanimously approved. Wasta will submit the nomination to Mayor O’Donnell for appointment.

Review/Discuss Committees and Committee Members

Wasta reviewed members of the four committees: Branding & Marketing, Economic Development, Finance & Operations and Standards. Committees typically only meet when there is something to discuss, and are chaired by a Commissioner but the rest of the committee can be non-Commissioners. The Commission Chair/Vice Chair are usually not on a committee.

Updates to committee rosters:

- Branding & Marketing – all have agreed to continue and Jensen will continue as Chair.
- Economic Development – Charles has been Chair but with his pending retirement will be looking for a new Chair. Epping and Niermann agreed to continue on the committee. Dalton volunteered to join as well.
- Finance & Operations – all have agreed to continue except Kay Christ who retired. Epping will continue as Chair. Wasta will seek an additional member.
- Standards – haven’t heard from some, Albert is Chair but will be rolling off the Commission in June. Dalton said he will talk to PCI’s facility employee, David Wilson, about joining this committee. Wasta will seek a new Chair.

Discuss Core District Collaboration Efforts

Rice said executive teams from the Medical and Downtown SSMIDs have met with Doug Neumann with the Economic Alliance about ways that the core districts can be more efficient and collaborative. Neumann is working on proposals for the SSMIDs to consider, more details to come to the Commission.

Discuss Executive Director Annual Evaluation Results

Rice said Wasta's evaluation has been completed by Commissioners, and overall there is high satisfaction with Wasta and what he brings to the district.

Wasta thanked the Commission for the positive feedback and his appreciation for the ongoing opportunity to represent the District.

COVID Updates

Dalton – a couple departments that won't eliminate masking due to the nature of their work, hear that COVID hospitalizations are decreasing but the issue the facilities are having is staffing.

Fowler – masking has been removed in all City facilities following CDC guidelines and pleased with the changes, especially with staff productivity being back in-person

McGrane Hop – first open house is April 1, likely won't require masking

10th Street from 1st Ave to A Ave NE Project Update

Wasta provided an update on the 10th Street from 1st Ave to A Ave project:

- Due to additional amount of work needed in the intersection of 10th Street and A Ave, construction will begin Spring of 2023
- Bids will be received in November of 2022
- Working around the St. Luke's skywalk over A Ave from the parking ramp – the push-back of the project with the City allows more time for this to be updated.
- City came to us asking if we have interest in engaging A Ave from 7th-10th Street (sidewalk, ADA, curblines) in 2024-2025
- Only SSMID construction project this summer is pedestrian crosswalk on 3rd Ave

Overview of 10th Street / 8th Ave / Mt. Vernon Rd Roundabout

Wasta presented updates and renderings for the 10th Street/8th Ave/Mt. Vernon Rd Roundabout. The project is well beyond conceptual and the City is building it into their 2025 budget and will be a 16-month build-out. Next year we will see the concrete pedestrian overpass taken down in preparation for the project. The roundabout will be dual lane, to accommodate grain trucks/semis, and will incorporate pedestrian crossing. As for beautification, there are height restrictions for anything that goes in the middle and any structures have to be non-permanent. The City doesn't automatically put power in the center of the roundabout but we believe from a design and visibility standpoint there should be lighting. The Medical SSMID would provide power and the circuit to bring in low LED lighting. There will also be a retaining wall backing up to McKinley Middle School with 6-8' sides on each end to prevent students walking along the wall. The Standards Committee will be heavily involved in the MedQ's portion of planning for the roundabout.

District Marketing Updates

'22/'23 Digital Marketing Campaign

Jensen said she and Wasta have discussed changing the direction of the district marketing. Since Mercy, St. Luke's and PCI already allocate significant marketing dollars to attract patients and staff, does it make sense for the MedQuarter to also spend dollars duplicating those efforts? Instead the campaign would pivot to workforce retention and focusing on who we can target, employees, and show them the benefits of working in the MedQuarter, potentially provide discounts to restaurants and other service businesses.

Jensen said she still needs to bring this idea to the Branding and Marketing committee. Commissioners agreed and think this is moving in the right direction.

GetHelpNowCR.com Landing Page

The Get Help Now webpage has been well-received. Wasta met with Jasmine Almoayyed with Kirkwood who saw the website and said they are looking into hosting a mental health event in May and asked if the MedQ Faith and Medicine Task Force would like to partner. This is being explored.

Spring MedQ Restaurant Promotion

In progress of putting together a Spring promotion for MedQuarter restaurants, similar to last year's Meals To Go From The MedQ. There will soon be four new restaurants in the District: La Casita Breakfast Cafe, Mamacita Taco Bar, Midtown Reserve Steakhouse and Topsy Tomato Pizza.

Executive Director Updates

SSMID Commission Terms Expiring

The current terms for Albert, Charles and Rice expire June 30, 2022. Albert will be rolling off. Charles and Rice will be renewing for 3-year terms. Charles' seat will be reassigned when he retires from Mercy.

2022 Planter Update

Wasta reminded Commissioners there will be 32 self-watering planters installed this Spring. The Downtown maintenance team will be assisting taking care of the plants and making sure they are watered throughout the summer.

3rd Ave Pedestrian Crosswalk Update

Wasta said the project has been bid and awarded with an accelerated timeline. The project has a mid-late May start deadline and will be a 15-day project.

Child Care Center Initiative

Wasta said we have had 3 potential operators come to the table and back away, mostly due to staffing issues. The MedQ Economic Development Committee will be hosting a brainstorming session on March 25 with several players representing a wide range of interests to discuss potential opportunities around child care including intergenerational programming, senior center, opportunities for immigrants, etc.

A Ave NE Mural Update

The muralist is lined up and as soon as the background white paint is up the muralist will get to work. St. Luke's owns the gravel lot adjacent to the mural and will be cleaning it up and paving.

Adjourn

Epping moved to adjourn with Dalton seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 a.m.