

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2024, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust

Present: Eric Dalton, Gordon Epping, Pauline Herb, Michelle Jensen, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Brian Steffen, Michelle Stramel, Nathan Van Genderen

Absent: Casey Greene, Eric Griggs, Russ Nieland, Okpara Rice

Guests: Scott Freres (virtual) and Siraj Asfahani (virtual), The Lakota Group; Rachael Schaefer, City Development

Staff: Jennifar Bassett, Peggy Degnan, Phil Wasta

Welcome & Call to Order

McGrane-Hop called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. and welcomed Brian Steffen to the Commission. Wasta introduced Jennifar Bassett who is the Downtown District Program Manager, and Rachael Schaefer with the City's Community Development & Planning Department.

Consent Agenda

Dalton moved to approve the minutes, financials and reports with Van Genderen seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discuss/Approve Budget for Creation of MedQ Improvement Foundation

Wasta reached out to Jonathan Landen at Shuttleworth Law about the formation of a 501(c)(3). Wasta noted that MedQuarter, Inc. is a 501(c)(6). Jonathan estimated the cost at \$2500 and taking 6-8 months because it has to be approved by the IRS. The MedQ Improvement Foundation will need to be a separate entity and have a different Board of Directors than MedQuarter, Inc., consisting of 2-4 members. Wasta said one of the action items in Master Development Plan Update is to establish a separate funding source for things a SSMID can't do.

Wasta proposed the SSMID request \$4,000 from MedQuarter, Inc.'s Professional Services budget instead of \$2,500 to have a buffer if needed. Wasta will take to MedQuarter, Inc., to get approved. **Epping moved to approve the \$4,000 request with Dalton seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Executive Director Annual 2023 Annual Review Results

McGrane-Hop shared 10 people responded on Wasta's review. Overall, Wasta's approval rating is 90% with comments he is always working hard and is a pleasure to work with; thus, a glowing review noted McGrane-Hop.

Committee Updates

Branding, Economic Development, Finance & Operations and Standards reports were provided in the agenda packet.

Executive Director's Updates

Executive Director's update was included in agenda packet.

Herb moved to approve the Committee and Executive Director's Updates with Stramel seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion Facilitated by the Lakota Group RE: Master Development Plan Update and New 5-Year Action Strategies

Freres and Asfahani made their presentation virtually while focusing on the implementation chart.

Wasta stated the intent is for the Master Development Plan Update to be approved and adopted by the SSMID at today's meeting, since everyone has had the opportunity to touch this master plan at least four times. Freres mentioned master plans only have a shelf life of approximately 1-3 years due to ongoing technology updates. Thus, it is important to constantly re-evaluate priorities.

Asfahani reviewed what has been done since last time we met and went over the following Quick Updates:

- Initiatives Expanded-- describes why initiation is valid to MedQ and helps us remember what was discussed.
- Case Studies Finalized – stories throughout document give examples that this is doable.
- Additional Urban Design Improvements Proposed – shade structures, permanent and useful furniture, branding.
- Signage & Wayfinding Updated – refresh with new trends, small gateways, anchor entry points and bring sense of safety with lights, etc.
- Roadmap Developed – all initiatives have a timeframe, so Asfahani explained why sometimes they will move to different parts of a Pillar, in order to pull-out immediate initiatives determining why some are first, second and last in getting done. Each year is broken into four quarters and shows when each initiative begins and ends during 2024 - 2032.

Plan Structure:

1. 10 Years of Reinvestment = \$100M combined total investment to-date
2. MedQuarter Today
3. Engagement – public space and art, wayfinding, etc.
4. The Plan – includes the Five Pillars: Policy; Management & Marketing; Appearance & Identity; Access, Circulation & Infrastructure; and Community Development
5. Implementation

Asfahani stated the implementation matrices have already been vetted by the City. Therefore, the next step is the City Council Adoption of the Master Development Plan Update. Wasta said an executive summary is needed because it is unlikely anyone will digest all 76 pages. From a newly appointed commissioner's perspective, Steffen said he appreciates the layout and scope of what is being done.

Wasta emphasized there is low hanging fruit to get started on some initiatives right away, including the open space concept at 4th Avenue & 10th Street by seeking potential grant funding, and the outdoor café at PCI Medical Pavilion 1 by utilizing the Façade Improvement Grant Program.

Formal Adoption of MedQuarter Master Development Plan Update and New 5-Year Action Strategies **Epping moved to approve the master plan with Steffen seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Freres will present to the City Council at the April 9th meeting. Wasta recommends some commission members attend because it is good to have Commission representation in front of council.

Freres feels this plan has a solid foundation and complimented Wasta's work; and in turn Wasta thanked Freres and Asfahani. Wasta mentioned he reached out to Freres in October of 2022 and here we are today, which shows how long this plan's due diligence has taken.

Other Business

Commissioner Renewals

Six commissioners are coming up for renewal in June: Dalton, Epping, Greene, Herb, Steffen and Stramel. A new application will need to be submitted no later than April 30th. Wasta will send out a link to the application.

Gateway Improvement Project

Since 2021, a Gateway Improvement Project at 7th & 8th Streets and I-380 has been talked about. All that has been done in recent years is cleanup and mowing by the Downtown SSMID. The Downtown SSMID's matching grant request to IDOT was approved. Thus, they received a \$45K grant from IDOT. The MedQ had earmarked funds for this initiative previously, but eliminated it from the budget due to lack of action. Wasta recommends that the MedQ contribute to this

initiative by donating \$15K toward the matching requirement. Wasta said we're getting \$14K from the City toward the Master Development Plan Update that wasn't budgeted. This can be reassigned toward this, so we can help with the match and get the improvements made at 7th & 8th Streets and I-380. Wasta will bring this to the May meeting for approval.

2024 Visitors Guide

Wasta provided copies and pointed out that the MedQuarter is featured on pages 64 - 65 with a new QR code that takes people to the MedQ's 'Things To DO in the MedQ' landing page and provides a resource of places to visit and things to do in the district.

Roundabout Project at 8th & 10th

McGrane-Hop asked Wasta for an update on the project. Wasta said that the project is in Phase 1C, which is prep work consisting of temporary and permanent paving of the roads in preparation for future phases so that there will always be one lane open each way on 8th Avenue, but finding alternate routes is highly recommended. Depending on weather, this project is scheduled to be functionally completed by the end of 2024.

Mural

Wasta was contacted by Iowa Healthiest State organization. They want to put a mural in Cedar Rapids in support of Mental Health Awareness Month in May. They have already secured funding, an artist and design, but the building they wanted to put it on fell through. Wasta recalled Jensen mentioning CarePro would be interested in a mural on the south side of their building, so he shared this with Iowa Healthiest State and is waiting to hear back. The mural would say, "Be Kind To Yourself" with an image of a heart that looks like a brain.

Adjournment

McGrane-Hop asked for a motion to adjourn.

Wasta expressed his thanks to Pauline Herb and CRB&T for hosting today's meeting!

Epping moved to adjourn with Dalton seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 a.m.

/pd