

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Tallgrass Business Resources

Present: John Albert, Richard Cooley, Michelle Jensen, Mary Meisterling, Kathy McCauley, Julianne Thomas, Julie Sterling, Mike Sundall, Ted Townsend, Phil Wasta and Marcie Watson

Absent: Tim Charles

Steering Committee/Guests: Gordon Epping, Jason Willis, Jason Wright of The History Center, Daniel Gibbins of the City of Cedar Rapids, and Dustin Hinrichs of Trees Forever

Economic Alliance Staff: Sarika Bhakta, Doug Neumann and Wendy O'Brien

Welcome & Call to Order

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

Consent Agenda

Meisterling moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Thomas seconded, and the Commission unanimously approved.

Committee Updates, Next Steps and Timeline

Branding/Marketing

Thomas began by sharing that there's an amendment to the contract for design services with Shive-Hattery, which is included in the meeting packet for informational purposes. The amendment is for an additional \$2,950 to expand scope of work to include preparation of variances for gateway monument signs or meeting with private property owners relating to the monument signs.

Thomas requested permission to negotiate one-time compensation to private property owners for granting easement for gateway monument signage up to \$1200 (\$12/per sq. foot). Sundall moved approval. Wasta seconded. The Commission approved 10 to 1, with Townsend opposing.

Thomas also shared that the bottom bracket of the banner holders in the district are being replaced, due to faulty springs. Replacement cost is covered through the supplier. There are several banners that need replacing. The marketing plan includes a refresh of the banners—so the banners will be replaced with the new design that is similar to the pop-up banner signage.

In her outreach efforts, Thomas noted that Tanager Place (purchased the Kirkwood Community Resource Center on Fifth Ave) appreciates the SSMID's work and wants to make a voluntary contribution. Their current property tax contribution is reduced since they have several non-profit tenants, and they are willing to give an additional \$1000 to the SSMID. Thomas also noted that Bank of the West is interested in doing banking for the MedQuarter. There is also interest in networking opportunities with businesses in the district, something to consider going forward.

Thomas highlighted the recent Gazette article announcing Phil Wasta as the new Executive Director and an Iowa Hospital Association article.

Operations

Meisterling reviewed the 2016 Budget that was included as a handout with the agenda packet at the meeting. Information on some of the new or unique line items was shared:

- Open space/greenway/PFP (\$50k): Wasta noted that this includes \$25k for façade improvement program.
- Seasonal lights (\$50k): New for this year.
- Signage/wayfinding study (\$50k): Wayfinding study and strategic plan in partnership with other districts—Meisterling expects SSMID costs to range from \$20-25k depending on who is able to partner with us. The remaining amount to be used for implementation. She recommended RDG as a possible vendor since they did nice work for Des Moines.
- Street Sign Toppers (\$25k): Meisterling shared an update that there has been recent employee changes at the City that slowed the timing on this, and she expects it to pick back up soon.
- Streetscape project (\$65k): Meisterling gave an update that she is meeting with the company that did the streetscape pots on 10th Street and is looking to implement that look throughout the length of 10th Street. She invited others to attend and will send details to the Commission.

Wasta moved approval of the budget as submitted, Thomas seconded. The budget was unanimously approved.

Sundall asked what was currently in reserves. Projected cash balance at 6/30/15 is \$1.02 million, according to the financial report in the packet.

Bhakta mentioned recent issues with the streetscape project that was to be part of the Day of Caring clean-up in the district. Removal of the unsightly brush at the corner of 1st Avenue & 7th Street requires machinery rental and labor. The City was unable to help on that day. Wasta requested to review the in-ground beds on 1st Ave block and come back with a recommendation at a later date.

Standards

The Commission congratulated Wasta on his new position as Executive Director for the MedQuarter District, which will officially commence June 1. Wasta thanked the Commission for the opportunity. He shared an update from the Standards Committee. The Overlay District Ordinance is proceeding as expected through City Council with the first reading on April 28. The second reading and approval is expected later this month.

Wasta indicated he received additional information pertaining to façade improvement program from Neumann as to the Downtown SSMID's template agreement used with property owners and the reimbursement process.

City of Cedar Rapids & Tree's Forever Presentation

Bhakta introduced Gibbins and Hinrichs who presented information on benefits of trees and plants in an urban environment. Hinrichs shared that they are working with Cedar Rapids school district to help re-envision green spaces. And as such, McKinley School is planning a landscape that will be available for patients and employees at Mercy. Hinrichs and Gibbins presented information about benefits of native plants in design; they showed examples of both formal and informal landscaping incorporating native plants. Gibbins offered to schedule a tour of downtown landscapes for the Commission later this summer to showcase various projects and is willing to be a resource for insights on any upcoming SSMID landscaping designs. The Commission encouraged him to view the MDP on the website. Meisterling asked what they would recommend for 10th Street. Gibbins recommends incorporating small grasses along with a more formal planting. Hinrichs encouraged the Commission to attend the Tree's Forever annual symposium on December 10th.

Economic Alliance MOU

Townsend shared a Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and the Economic Alliance which reflects the new Executive Director Contract and continuation of professional services for 90-120 days. During that transition time, Wasta and Neumann will negotiate the EA's scope of

services that will be needed following the transition. The Commission unanimously agreed to the Memorandum of Understanding, which will be signed by Townsend. Wasta clarified that he expects some continuing level of professional, programmatic and administrative services with the Economic Alliance and is looking forward to working with them.

Lakota June Preview

Albert reminded the Commission that Lakota will present at the June meeting. In preparation for that meeting, Lakota is asking Committee Chairs to complete some homework as feedback to the MDP. Commissioners are asked to review the MDP and ask themselves “Is there anything I don’t understand?, Is there anything missing?, Is there anything that needs a different approach? Please send any insights to Albert or respective committee chairs. Meisterling shared that the University Circle website (www.universitycircle.org) is worth taking a look at and will send the link out to the Commission.

Long Term Planning Commission Update

Townsend shared that the Long Term Planning Commission has neared completion. In their report, which essentially endorses the EnvisionCR plan, they’ve suggested to the City to reach out to community stakeholders to seek where they have synergy and interest to move the work forward. Townsend will send a copy of the report out and encourages Commission members to read it and consider what 1-2 things make sense for the MedQuarter to consider helping with.

2016 Committee Discussion

Townsend opened the floor for discussion on how the committee structure should change or evolve with the new Executive Director model. It was suggested and agreed that, as director, Wasta will lead the committees. The Branding & Marketing and the Operations Committees were noted as still having a purpose and should continue. The Standards Committee may not be needed, but a Façade Improvement Committee will be needed.

Thank You to Watson for Completion of Her Service on the Commission

Townsend noted that this is Watson’s last meeting on the Commission and thanked her for her service over the years. Watson thanked the Commission and shared how she appreciates the knowledge, spirit and passion this group has. She mentioned that each day, for the last three years, she has prayed for the members in this group by name and she wishes them well.

Executive Director Report

Wasta shared an Executive Director Report that he handed out at the meeting which touched base on some of the activities/events he’s participated in over the past months and also listed several questions for the Commission. He shared his current schedule and discussed several items including: business cards—which Economic Alliance will lead on, MedQuarter committee meetings—which he will lead, PowerPoint presentation for 15-20 minute group presentations, Gazette Editorial Board—suggested by Commission to wait a few months and to bring Board Chair to the meeting, protocol for how to handle confidential inquiries—committee would like to discuss this topic at a future meeting.

Other Business

The next SSMID Commission meeting is June 10 at 8:00 a.m. at the Physician’s Clinic of Iowa’s 3rd floor conference room.

The Commission adjourned at 9:22 a.m.