

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2024, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust

Present: Gordon Epping, Casey Greene, Eric Griggs, Michelle Jensen, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Alejandro Pino, Okpara Rice, Brian Steffen, Nathan Van Genderen (virtual), Amanda Zhorne

Absent: Eric Dalton, Pauline Herb

Guests: Jennifer Pratt, City Liaison; Dale Todd, City Council; Noah Zeker, Assistant City Liaison

Staff: Jennifar Bassett, Peggy Degnan, Caleb Knutson, Phil Wasta

Welcome & Call to Order

McGrane-Hop called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Rice moved to approve the September minutes, financials and reports with Greene seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discuss/Approve Medical SSMID Levy Rate for FY'26 to Submit to City

Wasta explained the levy is based on commercial property assessments and is approved ahead of time. Currently the rate is \$2.75 per \$1,000 evaluation and has been at this rate since 2021. Remaining at \$2.75 supports the budget projections and matches the downtown SSMID levy rate. **Epping moved to approve the \$2.75 levy rate for fiscal year 2026 with Pino seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Discuss/Approve Medical SSMID Expenditure Budget to Submit to City

Wasta explained the expenditure budget is a condensed version of the operating budget for review and approval by the Finance Department and City Council. **Rice moved to approve the expenditure budget to be submitted to the City with Greene seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Discuss Approved Schedule for 2025 Commission Meetings

After some discussion about having the option to attend virtually, but still needing a quorum, Wasta provided the 2025 meeting dates (which are always the second Wednesday of the month): January 8, March 12, May 14, July 9, September 10 and November 12. The meeting time will remain at 8:00 – 9:30 AM. **Epping moved to approve the 2025 meeting dates and 8:00am start time with Steffen seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.** Jensen suggested that Wasta should include both the 2025 and 2026 dates in the calendar invitation with Wasta saying he will send out the calendar invites soon.

Next Steps on MedQuarter Improvement Foundation

Wasta said all paperwork has been submitted to the IRS for the creation of the foundation but no response from the IRS yet. It usually takes 2-4 months. Jensen will be serving as the Chair and Wasta will serve as President of the foundation.

Next Steps in Implementation of Pillar 3: Appearance & Identity; Initiative 3: Create and Program Interactive Community Green Spaces

Wasta reported the project has been moving quickly, as the property owner has signed the licensing agreement. The property measures approximately 60' x 200' and is located at the corner of 4th Avenue and 10th Street. It will have surface space and green space for food trucks, resting area, etc. Wasta spoke with Scott Freres with The Lakota Group. Freres recommended establishing key planning goals such as if it will be an active or passive park, who will management the park and address safety concerns, etc. With this area being adjacent to Wellington Heights and Oak Hill Jackson neighborhoods, there is opportunity to collaborate and perform outreach. Site features like walkways, softscapes,

security, WIFI, shading, lighting, etc., will also need to be decided. Thus, the commission agreed for this to be a project of the Standards Committee. From a timeliness point, we will budget internally and execute on this to get it going sooner rather than waiting for grants.

Steffen suggested replicating design elements for consistency among the pocket parks and this new park area, so the design is carried throughout and unifies the look and feel within the district.

Wasta explained MedQ won't own the property, so this investment is not an acquisition, but rather an improvement of property. Wasta and Pratt meet monthly so the City is aware of this agreement.

Jensen mentioned they will probably try some pop-ups like food trucks and have the design available there for people to view. Wasta plans to reach out since there may be some crossover for nearby neighborhoods to get involved.

Todd said he attended a recent Oak Hill Jackson neighborhood meeting and reported the neighborhood does want to talk with Wasta about incorporating public art and shared usage. Wasta said he would be happy to meet with Dorothy de Souza Guedes.

Greene asked who maintains the existing pocket parks. Wasta explained MedQ Inc. owns the park and the SSMID pays maintenance. He mentioned both entities have liability insurance. Jensen raised concern about who will reside in the space. Because signage is posted in the pocket parks and police monitor the areas, there have been very few issues. Therefore, it is believed once traffic opens up again, it will help to deter unhoused people from hiding or living in the new space.

With its location in the 400 block of 10th Street, this park will be perfectly placed in regards to accessibility. Steffen suggested using a hospital shuttle as an option to test the waters.

Upcoming Review Process for Executive Director

McGrane-Hop said to look for an email from Audrey Wheeler with the Economic Alliance the second week of December. She said she'd like to have it completed by the end of December so it would be done in time for the first payroll in January.

Committee Updates

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

Executive Director's Updates

The Executive Director's Report was included in the agenda packet. Wasta gave updates on the following:

8th Avenue / 10th Street / Mt. Vernon Road SE Roundabout Project

The retaining wall and switch back of trails is 99% done and streetlight poles are going up, so the southern side is almost finished. Prep work is being done on the back-lit logo and lower LED lighting beneath it.

3rd Avenue & 10th Street SE ADA Ramp Replacement Project

Wasta said 3rd Avenue and 10th Street will be under construction starting today to replace the crosswalks and ADA ramps. There will be a period when the intersection will be closed and all traffic detoured. Per the contract, this has to be done by December 20th.

A Avenue from 7th to 10th Street NE Roadway/Parkway Project Design

The first step will be the Coe Road conversion to two-way traffic from A Avenue to F Avenue NE which is scheduled to occur this month. Greene expressed his concern that improvement of A Avenue NE continues to be postponed. Wasta assured Greene that he is working with the City on getting the A Avenue NE improvements budgeted.

Parkway Renovation Along 8th Avenue from 5th Street to 7th Street SE

The City is proactively removing asphalt and putting in pavers from 5th Street to 7th Street. This also should be done by December 20th per the contract.

Holiday Lights/Banners/Decorations

Lights are operating in Zones 1-2-3. All of Zone 1 is done. Multi-colored lights will be on the evergreen tree at Fire Station along with the large holiday ornaments.

Other Business

- Wasta mentioned that 4 Hermanos Mexican Food is having a ribbon cutting and grand opening at 4:00pm on Thursday, November 14. They will be having a 2-hour open house.
- Samples of the newest Things To Do in the MedQ rack cards and business card size cards now have QR codes on them that will take you to a listing of restaurants, retailers, service providers, and experiences. Also, you can access and print a digital map of the MedQ from the website, www.MedQ.com

Adjournment

Epping moved to adjourn with Griggs seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

/pd