

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2014

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Tallgrass Business Resources

Present: John Albert, Richard Cooley, Tim Charles, Michelle Jensen, Kathy McCauley, Mary Meisterling, Julie Sterling, Julianne Thomas, Phil Wasta and Marcie Watson

Absent: Mike Sundall and Ted Townsend

Steering Committee/Guests: Gordon Epping, Kris Gulick and Jennifer Winter

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

Welcome & Call to Order

Albert called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Consent Agenda

McCauley moved approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Meisterling. The Commission unanimously approved.

Committee Updates, Next Steps and Timeline

Branding/Marketing

Thomas shared that the previous issue with getting banners approved by Iowa DOT for 1st Ave has been resolved. City is still working with Sign Pro to finalize the agreement before the project can move forward. A Request for Proposal for bundled marketing collateral materials will be released shortly to local firms. She also shared that the Committee is exploring a table for the Especially for You Race event.

It was suggested that when a committee recommendation has a financial (or value) ask of a specific business or institution, that support be sought with that entity before bringing committee recommendations to the Commission. This step between the committees and the Commission will help entities better understand what is being asked, provide opportunity for discussion, alleviate any miscommunication and more importantly be supportive once brought to the Commission. The Commission agreed that this was a good process to follow.

Operations

Meisterling shared the Committee's recommendation to use the signage/wayfinding/banner designs Lakota Group created as illustrated in the Master Development Plan (page 22). The Committee proposes using the "Major Gateway – Site Entry" design at the corners of the Medical District and a few other key locations. Additionally, they suggested MedQuarter signage be placed above street name signs throughout the district – similar in shape to the white MedQuarter sign illustrated with the "District Wayfinding – Site Orientation" suggested in the MDP (page 22).

DOT is supportive of having signage on Interstate 380 N/S but they request consolidating signage with other destinations/attractions. Public art as signage, such as murals, was discussed and it was mentioned that Mike Sundall and Kathy McCauley expressed interest in having murals on their facilities.

There was discussion about the Downtown District's new logo and banner news release, Neumann noted that everyone was pleasantly surprised this received so much coverage.

Committee Updates, Next Steps and Timeline (cont.)

Standards

Wasta began by sharing that the Committee felt that the standards need to address the unique needs of the four zones within the MedQuarter: 1st Avenue Retail Corridor, 10th Street Corridor, Greenway and Transition. The Committee is considering how standards may apply broadly across the district or as sub-standards that are zone specific.

He shared that Lakota's suggested design standards, while comprehensive, could impede development as the Committee felt they were very restrictive. The City was asked to review Lakota's recommended design standards and provide information as to the City's status whether they have: 1) existing regulations in place; 2) regulations that are similar; 3) similar language within existing overlay districts or; 4) requirement/concept that zoning ordinance doesn't currently reflect.

It was suggested that any potential developers present to the Commission. Also, discussed was that it may be beneficial to get input from property owners regarding the overlay district ordinance, such as an open house.

There was clarification that the overlay district ordinance would not be retroactive, but applicable to future development.

A concern was shared that the Committee and Commission be sensitive to the precedent that is set with the overlay district ordinance design standards and that moving slow and deliberate would be wise.

Wasta agreed in the importance placed on design standards and suggested a balanced approach since one thing that gives the Committee a sense of urgency about creating standards for the overlay district is that there may be developers who are waiting on the Commission for these standards.

Economic Development Opportunities

Linn County Public Health

Linn County Public Health has approached the Commission about their interest in potentially relocating to the MedQuarter. There was discussion about how requests like this should be handled.

Gulick offered that the City's Community Development Department fields questions like this and could assist. Bhakta also shared that economic development prospect services are standard services provided by the Economic Alliance to members. Wasta also indicated that Dennis Jordan of the Economic Alliance is someone who has a good handle on prospects and space available in the area. Neumann offered to arrange for Jordan to present to the Commission along with the City, to further clarify the process and services by both.

District Services

Neumann shared that Firestone is willing to have the drop-seed grasses removed. Bladework's estimate was \$6,179.08+Tax (Total = \$6,611.62) to remove the drop-seed grass and replace with mulch. SSMID will be responsible for a large portion of that, and Firestone will be responsible for the portion between the sidewalk and its property.

Wasta moved that the Commission approve the funds for removal of drop-seed grass near Firestone, and ask Firestone to pay its portion of work done on their property. Meisterling seconded the motion. The Commission approved on a 9-1 vote with Charles in opposition.

There was discussion of where the City vs. Commission's responsibility lies regarding space between the sidewalk and curb. Neumann shared that the district services plan agreed to with the City obligates the SSMID to only very minimal services in the right-of-way for now, but that scope could grow as additional streetscape is constructed.

Cooley offered that the City declined to agree to a wider scope of services that the SSMID suggested. We may get there someday, but for now the agreement is limited.

4th Avenue Update

Thomas shared that she has identified the property owners along 4th Avenue. Due to the limited number of owners, it should be easy to get them together to seek input on 4th Ave design options.

Winter introduced herself and began by presenting the timing of when the 4th Avenue project is going to bid, which is December. There are 60 days needed to prepare the project for bidding, which means that design would need to start soon.

Winter reviewed that 4th Ave is going to be converted from one-way to two-way and there will be no street parking between 10th and 8th Street. In her initial review of a potential greenway design, there is no room for a bump out and with limited space between the road and sidewalk – using the back side of the sidewalk is a better option for design opportunities – if the property owners are amenable to giving an easement.

Lighting is going to be part of the City project. The Commission is interested in having lighting and crosswalk paving consistent throughout the district. Winter was given Anderson Bogart's name from the 10th Street streetscape project so she can get the specs of the decorative lights for the design concept.

The Commission also discussed that widening sidewalks was something that potentially could be done as part of the greenway initiative. Winter mentioned the need to balance sidewalk width vs. removing of mature trees. Thomas also shared about the pocket park and who to contact for the design.

The Commission reiterated its goals for consistency within the district and to cultivate walkability, green space, and pedestrian-friendly environment along 4th Avenue.

Management & Professional Services

The Executive Session was pushed to the next meeting due to time.

Other Business

Meisterling shared that Alliant is doing a light study in the downtown area – with three options for poles. They will go from 1st to 12th and across the river two blocks.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.