Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes  
September 20, 2018 | 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Alliant Energy Classroom at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Present: Craig Byers, Lijun Chadima, Jessalyn Holdcraft, Stephanie Jelinek, Pam Lewis, Ana McClain, Chad Pelley, James Piersall, Jennifer Pratt, Bob Schaffer

Guests: Kathi Nelsen – community member

Economic Alliance Staff: Jessica Komisar, Melissa McCarville, Doug Neumann

Welcome and Call to Order
Byers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda
Lewis stated she would like the August minutes to reflect the conversation regarding challenges with the Czech Village planters in heavy shade. August minutes were thus amended. Chadima moved approval of the amended minutes with Holdcraft seconding and all in favor.

Banner Program Updates
Neumann shared that replacement hardware has been ordered. Holdcraft stated herself, McClain and Clarissa Koch with the Economic Alliance have met over the last month and came up with 2 different banner design options. One is a square design and features the Bridge of Lions and the other design is more rectangular and features only the lion, not the bridge. These banners would help indicate which part of the district you are in, Czech Village or New Bohemia. The colors for the banners were a result from the study that was done, which suggested we avoid a red and white color scheme due to those being the colors of the MedQuarter district.

Neumann asked for direction on the bridge banners. The commission agreed that eastbound bridge traffic should see the NewBo design and westbound bridge traffic should see the Czech Village sign.

Lewis and Schaffer pointed out that on the banner design, one side has the lettering going from top to bottom and the other side has it going from bottom to top. After discussion, it was agreed that the Economic Alliance will mock up a design that starts letters on the top of all banners. The commission will get a chance to weigh in via email on which design they prefer. That direction should be provided as quickly as possible. Banners will arrive two weeks after being ordered and they would be installed once they are in depending on the weather. Lewis asked if there would be special hardware for the banners on the bridge to ensure the stability of them, Jelinek confirmed that it was discussed in last month’s meeting that there would be. Piersall moved approval of the overall banner designs with Holdcraft seconding and all in favor, with additional input on the lettering direction to come.

Holdcraft noted there has been some initial discussion including providing a non-profit rate for 1 block of banners. Non-profits would have to print their own banners, but we would install them for no charge. Piersall suggested an idea that if they sign up for 1 month worth of banners, they would pay for installation but if they wanted more than 1 month, installation could be free. Neumann added that the Downtown banner program encourages a quarterly term. McClain suggested the Commission approve banner designs of the non-profits, and asked about the process for doing so. Byers doesn’t want to keep a non-profit waiting for a month for the commission to approve a banner. Instead, perhaps designs could be shared via email, with the commission providing feedback.
The banner program will be discussed in more detail at October’s meeting and will include more information for non-profits and other organizations who want to participate by having their branded banners placed in our district including pricing for non-profits and for-profits and a design/content approval process. Draft program language will be sent prior to the next meeting to allow enough time for the commission to review.

**Winter Planter Options**
The picture shown in the agenda packet of the single upright evergreen is similar to what is proposed to be put in Czech Village and NewBo and is different than the other districts. The cost would be no more than $120 per pot for materials and labor. Byers confirmed that this cost would go under the streetscape line item in the budget. These would be live plants and would be single use. Neumann stated most of these arrangements would be placed on the NewBo side of the district due to Czech Village already owning a lot of holiday decorations. Lewis added that all of the Czech Village decorations are paid for by the business owners through the association. Jelinek believes the focus should be on 3rd Street between Chrome Horse and Fong’s which would be approximately 7-8 pots. She also noted we could ask the businesses in that section if they would like to pay an additional fee for these holiday planters outside of their business. There was some discussion, pro and con, about that, with it ultimately being agreed that the Economic Alliance would do outreach to businesses about paying for planters. Additional deadline, lead time and planter location information will be brought to the October meeting.

**Summit Debrief**
Pratt provided commission members with 3 versions of the Sinclair Site Redevelopment Master Plan created by different architects from the EPA. This was completed during a 2-day workshop that focused on this area specifically. Piersall added that the EPA representatives came from a large area of the country and this was by far the best planning summit he has been at. Some highlights from the maps include:

- Rowhouses along 2nd Street – this was present in all three versions
- Boutique hotel
- Parking ramp
- Mixed use residential and retail buildings
- Plaza area
- Separate paths and routes for bikes, pedestrians and car traffic

Pratt noted an overall summary will be shared eventually which will go in more detail including numbers of rowhouses and square footage. Pratt is excited to work with these same groups to kick off this process and when will report back to the commission when there is more to announce.

**Info/Update on Bike Share Program**
Pratt provided an update on the Bike Share Program. The first phase of this program would include 20 hubs throughout the MedQuarter, Downtown and CVNB districts. This would total to 200 bikes, 10 bikes at each hub. Currently, the program committee is working on securing sponsorships. Sponsorship levels would include a title sponsor (~200-300k) and then each hub would have a sponsor and the bikes themselves would have a sponsor. The cost to rent a bike would be an annual membership or a per use charge. Pratt noted there is an RFP out for equipment operations and results for that should be back by mid-October. Pratt added that for 2 years, it costs about $1 million for equipment and operations however most of that is an initial investment of $500k. Byers asked what other cities do in the wintertime when bikes would not be in use such as in the winter months. Pratt stated that is what the operations team of the program would be in charge of. They would store the bikes as well as moving the bikes to ensure a hub is not empty. Pratt noted they are hoping for a May of 2019 kickoff for this program and that is has been receiving a lot of positive feedback.

**Communications Plan Discussion**
Holdcraft proposed using the name ‘Czech Village New Bohemia District’ for marketing purposes instead of Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID as a lot of people in the community do not know what SSMID means or entails. A change to ‘district’ would entail a slight facelift to the existing logo. Nelson asked if the name change would be confusing when compared to Czech Village New Bohemia Main Street District. Some acknowledged it might, but the benefits of district (including that’s what Downtown and MedQ use) outweighed that concern. Pelley moved approval of using “District” instead of ‘SSMID’ for marketing purposes associated with this commission. Holdcraft seconded and all voted in favor.
Piersall noted that comments have been made about trying to unify the district to bring the East and West side together and questioned if the banners are not moving towards that goal. Schaffer questioned if we should be putting New Bohemia and Czech Village together on the banners to keep them all the same. Holdcraft stated that we are keeping unity of the district by having the same colors and look to the banners, just with different copy as people want to know where they are at within the district and that the average person probably does not care that the SSMID created them.

Holdcraft presented initial ideas and topics for a possible Czech Village New Bohemia District e-blast, using the Downtown district e-blast as a template. This e-blast could go out once a month but would also depend on how we structure the contract with the Economic Alliance for execution. Below are e-blast main topic ideas:

- **Big Picture**
  - ConnectCR, Smokestacks Bridge
  - Not promoting a business’ live music

- **Affects the whole district (property owners, business owners, residents)**
  - Road closures
  - Major events (maybe how to capitalize on higher foot traffic)
  - City communications affecting the District as a whole (flood updates, for example)
  - Development projects (new buildings, new projects – progress reports)

- Any events hosted by the District

- Articles about the District – links only. CBJ, Gazette, National news

- Any proposals in the city council, other advocacy items from the state level (funding/development opportunities)

- Advertising opportunities (revenue-generating)
  - Apply or pay to advertise in email communications, on social media

There was robust discussion about whether such a strategy would duplicate efforts of Main Street and whether our time and money would be better spent elsewhere. Among key points in the discussion:

- Main Street e-newsletter comes out once a month and includes district news. If it’s not good enough, could we make suggestions for improvement rather than doing our own version?
- There’s lot of development, infrastructure and other news information that Main Street doesn’t cover. What if that were the SSMID’s focus?
- The SSMID has an obligation to communicate with its constituents regardless of what Main Street does. The SSMID has to be renewed periodically and if stakeholder communication isn’t part of our focus, that’s not likely to happen.

Holdcraft and McClain offered to create a mock-up e-mail for review/discussion at next month’s meeting.

Lastly, Holdcraft asked if we want to develop a social media strategy including an Instagram and Facebook account for the district. McCarville added the fact that the Downtown District has an Instagram, Twitter and Facebook account and the MedQuarter District has a Facebook account and that this would be one more tool to use to talk to our constituents and what our SSMID is doing. Chadima asked if there is a reason we would not include a Twitter account for our district, Holdcraft stated that Twitter usage and engagement is decreasing. Holdcraft mentioned that a lot of pictures are taken in our district and the use of a Facebook or Instagram account can help promote events. Byers asked who would be managing these accounts, McClain stated we would need to get a quote from the Economic Alliance.

There was no motion for approvals at this time related to communications or marketing strategies. Discussion will continue at next month’s meeting. The focus should be on developing and improvement a Strategic Communications Plan, and the specific details and tactics can follow once the Commission agrees on the big picture purpose and goals.

**Adjourn**
The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.