Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2018 | 8:30-10:00 am | Space donated by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Present: Ana McClain, Craig Byers, Jessalyn Holdcraft, Pam Lewis, Jim Piersall, Lijun Chadima, Bob Schaffer, Stephanie Jelinek. (A couple of members had to leave the meeting early).

Economic Alliance Staff: Sherokee Eder, Doug Neumann

Call to Order
Byers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Consent Agenda
No consent agenda for this meeting. Two sets of minutes will be distributed for next meeting.

Brainstorm/Discussion re: SSMID Focus
Commission Members mentioned that Jennifer Pratt with the City of Cedar Rapids typically attends the meetings and that they would like to make sure the invites are extended to her, so she may continue. Commission Members discussed Summit Meetings, and the possibility of attending those.

Neumann said thinking about potential roles for the SSMID should start with an understanding of the very broad areas in which the SSMID could get involved. A long but not-all-inclusive list of programs, initiatives, activities includes:
- retail business support & attraction
- commercial space occupancy
- operating as a land bank and holding real estate for future economic development projects
- being a grant funder to others’ projects and ideas – leveraging dollars/seeking dollars
- streetscape aesthetics: banners, flowers, benches, garbage cans, holiday lights, street lighting
- streetscape maintenance: clean and maintain, including the above in aesthetics
- communications to the district and its stakeholders (primarily events, public safety, etc.)
- communications and marketing to a wider audience than just the district (business/resident attraction)
- existing business relationships that lead to a report/survey of opinions
- parking management
- Events (marketing for whole district vs. actually running event logistics for parades, races, festivals, concerts)
- community development/quality of life projects
- flood protection
- Urban planning – create, market and execute the plan
- Historic preservation
- public safety
- promotion of district housing
- serving as the district liaison/voice to government or even to state government

Byers noted that the SSMID had previously discussed a signature event. Holdcraft expressed she would like to avoid duplicate services and branding with other organizations active in the neighborhood. Chadima said she would like to find
something that was a source of revenue. Commission Members discussed better districtwide communication. McClain shared that she would like to see more beautification/streetscape, and district lighting done. Piersall said he would also like to see streetscape on the list. Commission Members discussed banners and the possibility of sponsorships around them. Neumann shared the downtown model. Lewis noted the SSMID would have to make sure the banners didn’t take away from area business. Neumann provided updates on the flowers in the area. Commission Members requested a watering contract for the next meeting to take action on. Pedestrian crossings and safety was discussed among Commission Members as another major issue in the district. Commission Members discussed Communication as a main priority to the SSMID and what information property owners vs business owners want to know.

As a summation of the entire discussion, there was unanimous consent that the SSMID should immediately take leadership/ownership of districtwide communications and of streetscape projects. A third priority should continue to be discussed. There was significant discussion around signature events, parking management and a grant funding program but no decisions will be made at this point about a third focus area. There also was discussion about “taking charge” “being the quarterback” in the district, with an acknowledgement, though, that there continues to be ongoing discussion about how all the organizations in the neighborhood work together.

Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 am.