Present: Craig Byers, Lijun Chadima, Jessalyn Holdcraft, Stephanie Jelinek, Pam Lewis, James Piersall, Bob Schaffer

Absent: Ana McClain, Chad Pelley

Guests: Abby Huff & Monica Vernon – Czech Village NewBo Main Street, Adam Lindenlaub – City of Cedar Rapids

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

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

Approval of Consent Agenda
Holdcraft moved approval of the agenda with Chadima seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Holdcraft moved approval of the September minutes with Schaffer seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

The City has not sent updated financials since July, so there’s no report to review. Commission will discuss at a future meeting on how we go about transitioning the financials to a different account instead of with the City so things can be more timely. The City actually prefers that and has done so for the other two SSMIDs.

2020 Strategic Planning
Neumann walked the Commission through a long list of 2020 priority options in order to get their feedback on where their focus should be in the coming year in addition to the communications plan and streetscape. Dialogue on some of these priorities include:

- Advocacy on the District Plan – Lewis asked if this would include advocating against parts of the plan such as the location and size of the round house. She said despite the complaints, the City has minimized the size of it and has moved it back into the park further away from 16th Ave. Piersall said the topic came up in the last meeting and the City showed the round house in almost the exact original location, but Lewis says Czech Village stakeholders do not think it’s prominent enough in the plan.
- Coordinate District Events – Holdcraft said she would like to see us create a procedure document that would be housed on the website on how to hold an event in the district and where we should be directing people rather than coordinating the details of events.
- Development – Piersall said most developable land is owned by the City and would be difficult to obtain from them. Byers added the MedQuarter has done a nice job with taking dilapidated properties and turning them into assets for the district such as pocket parks. He would like to talk about nuisance properties. Piersall said the biggest example in our district is the Vondracek property.
- Existing Business Relationships – more collaboration and reporting with Main Street and the conversations they are having with businesses.
- Fill Commercial Spaces – this is an item Main Street is focusing on, however the district needs more than restaurants.
- Grantor – Holdcraft said we would need to be consistent and be clear that there’s no funding guarantee for every ask that comes our way. Byers said a process needs to be put in place regardless. It could be a committee of 2-3 people to review and bring to the full Commission to discuss.
• Housing – Byers said putting the district housing map on the website helps but the district itself is doing a good job at filling the demand for tenants and developers. Holdcraft said we could advocate for certain percentages or number of projects be income restricted vs market rate.
• Maintenance – this would be staff time in addition to the base level services the City provides. This base level service includes emergency services, waste receptacles, street lights, forestry (dead trees), road maintenance, signs and signals, sidewalk inspections, etc.
• Parking Management – Neumann said there are ways to implement this without having consumers pay directly for parking, which has been a district principle for years. But parking is never “free.” Byers said we would need to be advocates to keep parking free for consumers. Lewis said we need to clear up the perception that there is no parking available. Vernon suggested consideration of a trolley or bus loop.
• Public Art – separate from streetscape. Part of the City’s action plan is planned areas for public art.

Commission members were asked to rank their top 8 priorities, 8 being the highest rated item and 1 being the lowest rated. They also put an X on any items they thought the SSMID should stay away from. Neumann and Komisar will tally up the scores, obtain McClain and Pelley’s feedback and report back to the full Commission.

Updates from Commission Members
Deck the District is an event that will be held on the first weekend of December. Originally, they had a horse-drawn trolley to transport people around the district but that had been changed to a regular trolley. This was paid for by several organizations including the Czech Village Association, Cherry Building, African American Museum (1 year contribution). This year, they will have a 24-passenger bus which will cost approximately $1,700 (increased by $400 from previous years) and Chadima asked the Commission if this is something the SSMID could financially contribute to. Holdcraft said she is not comfortable paying the full amount, but maybe a share.

Schaffer moved to have SSMID contribute $700 to the bus with Byers seconding. The motion was unanimously approved. Huff will send an invoice to the Economic Alliance with Piersall’s name on it.

Lewis said the titles have been transferred for the parking lots that have been obtained by the Czech Village Association and things are moving along nicely. They are working on renting out a limited number of parking spaces spread throughout the area for $30/month and are encouraging this for landlords for tenant parking. These spaces will be marked as reserved parking and violators will be towed. There is a component in their contract that parking must be free except they can rent 10% of total spaces for long term parking or they can close for events. The revenue made on rented spaces will pay for long term maintenance and snow removal.

Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.