



**Cedar Rapid Downtown SSMID Commission Minutes
January 25, 2017**

4:00 p.m.

Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance

Attendees: Jasmine Almoayed, Jon Dusek, Dawn Jaffray, Nancy Kasparek, Chris Lindell, Linda Mattes, Andrew Morf, Joe Terfler, Fred Timko

Absent: Steve Dummermuth Jr, Trish Ellison, Marty Hoeger, Ann Lipsky, Jeff Pomeranz, Randy Rings

Economic Alliance Staff: Sherokee Eder, Melissa McCarville, Doug Neumann, Casey Prince

City Staff: Jasmine Almoayed, Casey Drew, Sandi Fowler, Bill Micheel

Guests: Jerry Paytas

Welcome & Call to Order

Timko welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm

Guest Presentation- Fourth Economy

Micheel introduced Paytas and explained that Fourth Economy was providing data analytics to the City related to the Envision CR plan to help make city services decisions and sustainable budgeting.

Paytas highlighted 2004-2014 data outlining population growth, change in jobs and employed residents in Linn County, the demographics behind the numbers, changes in commuter numbers, and posed the discussion questions "To what extent is Cedar Rapids losing development to the surrounding communities," "What growth should Cedar Rapids be targeting," and "What factors are helping or hurting?" Morf asked if the data was based off of school district, or township. Paytas clarified that it was based off of city boundaries.

Micheel indicated that he would leave his business card with Prince so that Commissioners could reach out with further questions and input. Jaffray asked if there were standards from other communities to match up with Cedar Rapids. Micheel said they are planning to identify communities for that purpose. Terfler said it would be interesting to see what other comparable communities have that Cedar Rapids doesn't.

Consent Agenda

Kasparek moved approval of the consent agenda with Lindell seconding. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Approve 2017 Downtown SSMID Budget

Lindell asked if the budget would span the whole year, or if it only covered through June. Timko clarified that it was for the whole year. Prince noted that the parking ramp debt service commitment has expired, but recommended continued support at some level that will be negotiated. Prince asked for an increase in the signage and wayfinding study contribution from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Jaffray asked for clarification on the signage and wayfinding study. Prince explained that the study was for both vehicular and pedestrian signage in all core districts. Lindell asked if any of the contribution went toward paying for the signs. Prince clarified that it was only for the study.

Commission Members discussed “wow” ideas. Dusek suggested a music festival. Mattes said that putting murals in the alleys would be nice. There were several ideas around outdoor festivals very similar to what’s already done with the Night Market and the Downtown Farmers Market.

Lindell asked if the budget could be approved before the SSMID is officially extended beyond June 30. Timko clarified that it could be conditionally approved if there was any concern about the action. Jaffray inquired about the ending cash balance vs the starting balance. Timko said the spirit is to put the funds to use and not to carry large balances, so having 2017 expenses that cut into part of the balance was intentional and recommended.

Timko said he would like to see streetscape and benches worked on. Mattes added that the benches should be low maintenance like the ones in NewBo. Commissioners discussed a survey to assess priorities. Jaffray brought up changes in how visitors find their way. A mobile application for signage and wayfinding was discussed. McCarville expressed that mobile responsive websites have typically been more successful because visitors tend to just “google” everything. Terfler asked if this budget would allow for implementation of new signage to start this year. Prince clarified that several line items could allow for it if the study is completed in 2017.

Lindell moved approval for the 2017 Downtown SSMID budget conditional on a new SSMID ordinance being effective July 1, 2017 with Kasperek seconding. The 2017 Downtown SSMID budget was unanimously approved.

Review 2016 Metrics Results & Approve 2017 Goals

Prince referenced the 2016 metrics, adding that 2017 was very similar. The key changes were referenced as presented at the top of page 10 in the agenda packet.

Kasperek suggested having a winter market at the Convention Center like those tried unsuccessfully back in the mid-2000s, believing they would work better this time around. Jaffray suggested having something outside such as ice carving or ice skating. Mattes suggested incorporating the “buy local” message into a restaurant crawl. Terfler said that it was important to put jobs on the radar for Downtown and asked if a metric or indicator could be developed.

Mattes moved approval of the 2017 goals with Jaffray seconding. The 2017 goals were unanimously approved.

Executive Director's Report

Prince shared highlights of current work with the Downtown Housing Working Group, City Public Works & Community Development Depts, and the Economic Alliance Operations Team. He also provided updates on holiday lighting, the parking system, façade improvement grants, wayfinding, the skywalk connection, the 10-year report for Downtown SSMID, complaints about loitering and littering downtown, the City's 8th Avenue bridge survey results, and he encouraged applications to boards and commissions at the local or state level. Lastly, he shared dates for the following meetings:

- Sustainable City Talk: Local Leaders Embracing Sustainability is on Tuesday, January 31st from 3:00-4:30 p.m. or from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the Downtown Library's Whipple Auditorium.
- February 13th will be the Downtown Property Owners meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the Economic Alliance.
- February 15th will be the Developers' Incentives forum from 11:45a.m. – 1:30 p.m. If anyone is interested, reach out to Prince to RSVP.
- March 6th is the next Downtown SSMID Meeting date
- Urban Living event is tentatively set for May 16th with hopes of holding it at Eastbank Venue and Lounge so that attendees may tour the Smulekoff's apartments upstairs

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.