Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2018 | 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Alliant Energy Classroom at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

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

Absent: Craig Byers

Guests: Kathi Nelsen – community member, Jennifer Pruden – Czech Village Main Street

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

Welcome and Call to Order
Piersall welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda
Holdcraft moved approval of the October minutes with Schaffer seconding. The October minutes were unanimously approved.

Holdcraft moved approval of the September financials with Chadima seconding. The September financials were unanimously approved.

Ingredion and Cargill SSMID Expansion Discussion
The SSMID has discussed we would like more involvement from Ingredion and Cargill as they are large organizations and employers in our district. Neumann shared property values of various parcels owned by Ingredion and Cargill, and it appears there would be an opportunity to bring those companies into the SSMID at reasonable rates far less than including the entire value of their full properties, similar to the way Quaker Oats was handled for the Downtown SSMID. Going this route would leave us with a better chance of obtaining their involvement. Neumann stated we need to be thinking about what the value proposition would be for these large companies joining the SSMID as well as if we are willing to become advocates for their business and economic growth.

Pruden stated the SSMID had approached Cargill and Ingredion for a voluntary donation in the past. Piersall added if we do go to Ingredion or Cargill, it’s important that we make it clear that just because they pay into the SSMID, doesn’t mean that we will always promise to support everything. For example, Neumann stated in the future we would support an expansion if it would create more jobs and a bigger economic footprint. Holdcraft stated she would be interested in hearing what level they would like to be involved at: voluntary contribution or including their parcels in the SSMID boundaries.

Neumann stated he can setup a meeting with representatives at both Cargill and Ingredion to give them an update on what is being done in the district and what our progress is without a rigid ask for SSMID involvement.

16th Ave Extension Landscaping
Piersall shared information gathered from a meeting with the City in regard to the 16th Avenue extension and roundabout landscaping and back of curb treatments. There were three proposals presented at this meeting with concept #1 being the most favored. Piersall stated the City would be responsible for the installation of the landscaping and the mowing of any grass, but they would not be responsible for the upkeep including trash removal from plants, watering, etc. and that they are looking at the SSMID to be the one responsible for those tasks. Jelinek asked if there
was discussion at this meeting about benches. Pruden stated there wouldn’t be ample space for benches. Piersall added there would be banner options on the light poles.

The concepts and project will be discussed again at the next meeting with the City which will be held on December 4th at 5:00 p.m. at the St. Wenceslaus Church gymnasium.

**Vondracek Property**
It was brought up at last month’s meeting that this property in NewBo is becoming an eyesore to the district, especially since that is where the district mural is located. It was determined at this meeting that the SSMID should not be spending money on the maintenance of the property and the issue will be revisited with the City in the spring after the winter months.

**Run CRANDIC Routes**
Neumann stated the CRANDIC Marathon, which will be on Sunday April 28th, will begin in Iowa City and will end in Cedar Rapids and there is a strong possibility that the finish line and post-marathon celebration will be in Czech Village. Neumann added that if we want to get into district advocacy, this would have been a good opportunity to voice our opinions and/or concerns. Advocacy opportunities similar to this arise all the time, if the SSMID decides this is one of its priorities.

**Tax Rate Discussion**
Piersall stated the City needs to have our rate decision by the end of this calendar year. When this SSMID was first created, the rate was set at $1 and there was some pushback from property owners. The current rate for our SSMID is $1.25, Downtown SSMID is at $2.75 and Medical SSMID is at $3.25. Piersall added that our maximum rate is $3. Holdcraft stated our property owners will want to see a budget and what we have planned if we are wanting to increase the rate. At this point, the commission does not believe we have enough to show our stakeholders in order to increase the rate.

Pelley moved approval to keep the rate at $1.25 with Holdcraft seconding and all in favor.

**Budget Discussion**
Piersall stated that the other SSMIDs are currently on a calendar year budget which seems to help with some of the budgeting as a lot of the money gets spent on summer-long projects that would be beneficial to keep within a single budget year. Piersall added the only possible downside to making this change would be that we would need to re-budget by the end of the year. Lewis stated it makes sense to her especially when we have to set our tax rate by January, that way we know what projects and expenses will be occurring that year.

Holdcraft moved for approval of changing our budget to a calendar year instead of fiscal year with Chadima seconding and all in favor.

**Banner Update**
Holdcraft presented updates to the commission in regard to the banner program. According to the City, they own the poles on 3rd Street and 16th Avenue in our district which means that the SSMID owns them and that we are the responsible party for the poles. The 12th Ave bridge poles are owned by Alliant so we do not have any control over those. The Economic Alliance confirmed they would have storage for only the district brand banners and not for any banners from non-profits participating in the banner program.

Holdcraft stated we would make approximately $300-$500 a quarter if we decided to move forward with the banner program for non-profit participation. McClain stated she does not feel comfortable getting into possible legal or ethical issues with non-profits and doesn’t believe it would be bringing in enough money to do so. Schaffer added it would be potential income, but would it outweigh the value of trademarking and marketing our district?

It was also discussed that there were 26 missing ball shaped ends for the banner poles as well as broken banner arms on two poles that sit a bit recessed back from the street. Lewis questioned that number and will visit with the Economic Alliance to verify. She said Czech Village Association will be responsible for all remaining banner poles in the Czech
Village area. The CVA will make repairs if necessary but will also design and purchase banners for the remaining poles in hopes to continue to have Czech Museum exhibit advertising.

It was decided that the discussion of banner program guidelines and the ball shaped ends would be tabled for another meeting or via e-mail until we receive more information. Holdcraft moved approval for tabling this discussion with Jelinek seconding and all in favor.

**Communications Proposal**
McCarville provided an updated proposal with three different options. The options increase by both cost and amount of benefits included.

- **Option #1:** Minimum support, minimum budget impact at 6 hours a month. Total: $2,736 for one year of marketing and communications support
- **Option #2:** Moderate support, adequate budget impact at 12 hours a month. Total: $5,472 for one year of marketing and communications support
- **Option #3:** Maximum support, increased budget impact at 20 hours a month. Total: $9,120 for one year of marketing and communications support

Chadima asked how we would pull information to create an e-blast distribution list. McCarville stated we would need to get that information from various sources, many of which we already have access to.

McCarville added that these options are not concrete and can be adjusted to meet the budget of the SSMID. Pruden said she and Byers had met to discuss what Main Street is currently doing with social media. They have a blog on their website as well as 5 newsletters that go out every month: 1 to the general public, 2 to businesses and property owners, and 2 specifically about events. Main Street would be able to share stories and information from the SSMID in their current e-blasts or letters at no additional cost at any time.

Lewis moved to table this discussion with Holdcraft seconding and all in favor, primarily because of lack of time to debate the issue.

**Other Business**

**SSMID District Meeting**
Neumann stated there is interest among the other SSMIDs to have a joint SSMID meeting. Sharing goals and upcoming projects among the districts could be a benefit. There are no specifics planned at this time.

**City of Cedar Rapids Update**
Neumann shared that there is a meeting with the City today at 4:00 p.m. with the finance committee and there will be presentations from the Downtown SSMID, Downtown Parking Board and the CVNB SSMID if anybody on the commission would like to attend.

**12th Avenue Safety Concerns**
Holdcraft provided a handout that identified potential solutions to safety concerns along 12th Ave including reducing the speed limit, installing a permanent crosswalk, converting traffic lights to four-way stops and more. The Commission is not involved in this discussion at this time, and Holdcraft said she will work with Pratt and the City’s traffic engineers to get these ideas incorporated into City discussions on 12th Avenue.

**Czech Village Association Contract**
Lewis said the CVA continues to work with the City on an agreement related to parking areas. She expects the latest draft of a contract will be back to the City by December 20th.

**Adjourn**
Holdcraft moved to adjourn with Schaffer seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.