Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes
November 21st, 2019 | 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Czech Museum and Library

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

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 8:31 a.m.

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

Lewis moved approval of the October minutes with Byers seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chadima moved approval of the October financials with Lewis seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

2020 Priorities and Budget
Action Plan – Role for SSMID
Lindenlaub presented on two action steps from the district action plan that the City would like the SSMID to take on. These steps are reviewed annually as part of the comprehensive plan. Progress on timelines are also reviewed, but the timeline for these steps aren’t completion dates but when the step can begin. Timelines can be within 1 year, 2-3 years, 3-4 years, 4-5 years or 5+ years to begin the step. Neumann asked if the SSMID is being asked to plan/buy/install and create these action step details and/or just long-term maintenance of them. Lindenlaub said the goal of the SSMID’s involvement is to help create a different character and be involved in initial discussion and planning. Time will determine what will come after that. All of the action steps have a partner identified, such as the two below for the SSMID. Lindenlaub will send Komisar a list of the other partner leads.

Action Step #1: 16th Ave SW Streetscape
• Future streetscape improvements from the Bridge of Lions to D Street including benches, planters, lighting, garbage cans, etc.
• Roundabout maintenance on 16th Ave SW and C Street
• Promenade to Roundhouse from 16th Ave SW between Sykora Bakery and Lost and Found, and reinforcing other connections such as the bandstand to museum
• Considering West of D Street to convert to 2-ways
• No current timeline to do street improvements but City would inform SSMID when that happens
• Timeline agreed upon by Commission: 5+ years

Action Step #2: Future Arts Walk Corridor
• Develop Art Walk on 11th Ave SE from Cherry Building/NewBo City Market to the river as part of the flood control system
• Enhance and promote the “arts and culture” feel that NewBo has
• Sculptures, murals, etc.
Review Top 5 Priorities & 3rd Bucket Priority
The current two “buckets” of the SSMID are streetscape aesthetics and communications. Based on October’s meeting and determining everybody’s top 8 choices on how to fill the third “bucket”, the top five with the highest collective scores are more streetscape aesthetics, district collaboration, public art, parking and advocacy on plan. The Commission discussed those top five in more detail and what each might look like.

1. **More Streetscape Aesthetics** – examples include: extension of holiday décor and banners throughout the district, more planters, lighting, benches, snow removal plan, pocket park, dog park, extension of basic streetscapes (i.e. in front of Bo Mac’s, bridge, Schaffer’s new development), grant opportunities and collaboration with the City.

2. **District Collaboration** – public art continues to come up between all three districts, jumping on a project once it has started instead of taking the lead would be less costly and by collaborating with others, we can leverage our dollars into a much larger project. Holdcraft said this is something we should always keep in the back of our minds no matter what.

3. **Public Art** – Byers likes the idea of public art and Jelinek said it would be a good opportunity to partner with others, such as the other districts. Holdcraft said there are some guidelines for private/public property and the Visual Arts Commission. Neumann said the way the Commissioners were talking sounded like they would need more of a program administrator and somebody to plan the public art strategies which could be factored into the budget. Huff said Main Street is working on public art so it could be a collaborative effort. It will be important to be very clear which group has lead on different projects or different components of public art. The clearest starting point would be for the SSMID to lead on the 11th Avenue art walk that the City has asked the SSMID to lead. To a suggestion about funding submitted art proposals, Neumann noted that the Commission discussed the role of funding others’ initiatives which would be the “Grantor” priority which was #6 on the final list. He discouraged the SSMID from spreading itself to yet another priority. Byers said that wouldn’t need to be its own bucket item but more of a procedure we put in place by a document or application in case an opportunity arises.

4. **Parking** – Lewis said she likes the idea of more signage for parking but that could also be leveraged into streetscape aesthetics. Other than a desire for more signage, there wasn’t much support for tackling parking management, at least not over the other new priorities that have been discussed.

5. **Advocacy on Plan** – There was limited support for comprehensive advocacy on the plan being a major component of the 2020 priorities. Rather, the commission felt it could/should assist the City with the two action steps discussed above, which also fall under streetscape aesthetics and public art.

Communication and streetscape aesthetics will remain two of the buckets, and there was strong consensus from the Commission on both making the streetscape bucket bigger and adding public art as the third bucket item. The Commission decided there would need to be more discussion about whether the public art priority means the SSMID developing its own plan and priorities or collaborating with others.

2020 Draft Budget
Neumann shared a draft budget for 2020 showcasing three options based on the current $1.25 levy rate. Each budget option shows different spend options amongst the buckets of streetscape maintenance, projects and program/administration. Neumann said the SSMID underspent by approximately $17k in 2019 and will be up to $50k in undesignated reserves in 2020 once that underspend is factored in. Piersall said he doesn’t have a problem with having a high amount in reserves, but we do need to be spending that money on positive projects for the district. No action was taken on the budget at this time as Neumann will compile another draft for the December meeting based on levy rate discussion and new priority direction from today’s meeting.

Levy Rate Discussion
The current levy rate is $1.25, Downtown and MedQuarter’s rates are both $2.75. Piersall said as we create more priorities and projects to complete, we should raise our rate to $1.50. Others said we can’t raise the rate if we don’t have completed initiatives or projects to show them where their money will be going toward. Lewis said the
beautification committee discussed wanting a $15k budget to have electricity and banner poles on all district light posts to make a bigger impact on banners and lighting. Pelley moved to leave the levy rate at the current $1.25 with Chadima seconding. The motion was approved on a 6-3 vote with Lewis, Schaffer and Piersall opposed because they wanted it to be raised to $1.50. Komisar will inform Casey Drew that the levy rate will remain the same.

Economic Alliance Service Contract
Piersall said the working relationship with the Economic Alliance has been wonderful and they have provided a tremendous amount of service and information. He asked Neumann to provide a proposed service contract at December’s meeting with two cost proposals – one with the current level of service and one with upping that level as the commission works into their 2020 priorities. Neumann said there hasn’t been administrative or executive compensation for the past 17 months but that going into 2020, the Economic Alliance would be asking to be compensated at some level for program management, administrative services and executive oversight. The commission concurred that was appropriate after this length of free services.

Big Updates from Commission Members
Komisar said she needs to reserve the space at the Czech Museum and sign a contract for 2020 dates and asked if commissioners would like to continue to meet monthly or transition to bi-monthly similar to the other two districts. Holdcraft said we should continue to meet monthly until we can hire somebody who can work on the logistics on a more frequent basis. Commissioners agreed. Komisar will move forward with the 3rd Thursday every month from 8:30-10:00 a.m. at the Czech Museum.

Piersall would like to see our commission cut back on the amount of paper it provides in the agenda packets. The one-page agenda would be the only print out provided, everything else would be sent via e-mail as normal. Commissioners are welcome to print off their own agenda packet copy or bring a laptop or tablet to follow along with the rest of the material. This initiative will begin at next month’s meeting.

Adjourn
Holdcraft moved to adjourn the meeting with Lewis seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.