



Cedar Rapid Downtown SSMID Commission Minutes
November 20th, 2019 | 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance

Present: Dave Drown, Darryl High (via phone), Chris Lindell, Linda Mattes, Andrew Morf, Randy Rings, Craig Stephan, David Sorg, Joe Terfler

Guests: Adam Lindenlaub – City of Cedar Rapids, Patrick Alvord - Confluence

Absent: Emily Ellingson, Dawn Jaffray, Matt Miller, Fred Timko

Staff: Jessica Komisar, Melissa McCarville, Doug Neumann, Jesse Thoeming, Tyanna Stephenson, Phil Wasta

Welcome, Introductions & Call to Order

Mattes welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of September Minutes

Morf moved approval of the September minutes with Sorg seconding. The September minutes were unanimously approved.

Streetscape Design Guide Presentation

Alvord said they have been working on this streetscape aesthetic style guide project for a year and a half and it creates consistency between common streetscape elements as well standard applications of materials and elements including street lighting, benches, pavement, plant material, etc. Primary design parameters taken into consideration include roadway classification, land use and pedestrian activity level. Secondary parameters include if the project/road includes transit facilities, bicycle facilities and/or on-street parking. Alvord said there are 126 unique “kits” that were developed after compiling this information city-wide.

Alvord presented the design standards based on this new guide for 3rd Avenue in front of the Paramount Theater. Details include:

- Red pavers to indicate an intersection or high pedestrian area
- Gray pavers for curbside zones
- Black paver stripe on the curb for door swing space
- No longer using pavers in pedestrian crosswalks with the exception for areas in front of businesses such as the Paramount for a “grand entrance” feeling
- Red raised bump patch at pedestrian entrance to the street to assist the visually impaired detect when they are about to leave the sidewalk and enter the street. Although the color doesn’t necessarily feel cohesive with the rest of the color pallet, it’s important that it is a bright color to stand out.
- Kingston Village will be using the same color palate but will be applied a little differently

Alvord’s presentation with visuals will be sent out to the full commission via e-mail.

Taxy Levy Discussion & Approval

The executive committee made their recommendation to the commission to keep the levy rate the same at \$2.75. Mattes said we have kept it the same since the SSMID renewal and we have been spending at or below the rate so the executive committee didn't see a need to raise it. Lindell moved approval of the \$2.75 levy rate with Terfler seconding. The \$2.75 levy rate was unanimously approved and Komisar will inform Casey Drew with the City.

2020 Budget Discussion & Approval

Mattes reviewed the 2020 draft budget. Discussion points included:

- Starting cash balance for 2020 is at \$313,926
- \$100k set aside in reserves for any future large projects
- SSMID revenue has a 3% reduction. Thoeming said after some research, this could be due to 5 Downtown buildings that has decreased valuation equated to \$572k which would be close to our 3% reduction.
- \$20k for new trash receptacles which would be matched by the City for a total of \$40k. Would like to try a few "Big Belly" trash receptacles which are being seen in larger cities and alert you when they full.
- Decrease from \$60k to \$40k for holiday décor in 2020. Making a big splash in 2019 for new items to make a larger impact.
- Direct staffing expenses is seeing an increase from 28% in previous years to 31% in 2020 in total overhead based upon initial figures plus the time from Jim who watered our planters this season.
- ConnectCR \$5k per year for 5 years contribution. Mattes said the executive committee struggled with this contribution because it is a project that has components outside of our district and that we are expecting to invest a lot within our district for trail lighting and other improvements. Sorg and Stephen said they think this project will have a direct impact on our district and we should contribute more than the \$25k. Sorg said he wonders if \$10k per year would be better. Mattes said she knows every large company is being asked on an individual level and Alliant will be meeting about it within the week. Sorg motioned for approval of keeping the \$5k per year for 5 years contribution with Terfler seconding. All commissioners were in favor with the exception of Rings who believes we don't get the same return on investment for projects outside our district. With an 8-1 vote, the motion carries.

Rings moved approval of the 2020 budget with Sorg seconding. The 2020 budget was unanimously approved.

Alleyway Visioning Event

Confluence has been working on a study for what it will take to make the Downtown alleyways more effective and inclusive. In order to do so, there would need to be more trash, recycling and food grease management amongst the businesses that share the alleyways. Confluence has asked for a task force group to discuss the details and review the options we have for each alleyway. This task force would consist of 4 Downtown SSMID commissioners, 4-5 property owners, City officials and representation from 2001 Development Group and would gather for a 2-2.5 hour meeting between Thanksgiving and Christmas and then they would make a recommendation to the full commission in January. Thoeming said Timko and High have expressed interest and Sorg said he would be happy to be a part of it as well. The price for the alleys depend on the options and the amount of overhaul that's needed in each but Thoeming said \$100k for the first year was the initial recommendation.

Core District Summit Debrief

Representatives from the three districts met in October to review accomplishments from 2019 and goals for 2020. Downtown 2019 accomplishments that were shared include new benches, passport program, Downtown CR Sucks campaign, Greene Square Ambassador program and the Greene Square mural. We also previewed 2020 with information about the 3rd Street projector, cohesive holiday décor, re-branding exploration, Race for the Space sponsorship and lake to bride pathway improvements. There were several items that all three districts had interest in including collaboration on public art, a bike/pedestrian district loop, transportation system, 8th Avenue improvements and the MedQuarter's child care initiative.

Wasta said Tim Charles with Mercy Medical Center came away from that district meeting feeling encouraged about the collaboration interest in the child care initiative. MedQuarter has hired a consulting group and has sent out a survey to their employees as well as some large Downtown employees to conduct a feasibility study. The consulting group will do

a report out on the findings mid-December and Downton SSMID commissioners are welcome to attend. Mattes said Alliant employs 2nd shift workers and added the servers and bartenders at our Downtown bars and restaurants might be in need of 2nd or 3rd shift child care options as well. Terfler said GreatAmerica sends a survey to their staff and child care needs come up every year and sense their employees would be interested in a core district child care center. Wasta said Collins Aerospace has a 300+ slot child care center for their employees but are supplementing it themselves heavily with additional collaboration with Cedar Rapids School District for staffing. Wasta said they are looking at a pay to play model – if x business contributes x amount of dollars, they will get so many slots for their employees. If they don't use all of the slots, those will go back into the pool for others to use. Wasta said they are collecting other data from the survey results including preferred distance of child care – do they want it close to home or close to work – which will come down to individual personal choices. Lindell said this would be a great workforce attraction tool for employers.

2020 Appointments

Lindell has announced his retirement from Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust and with that, will no longer be serving on the commission. Mattes thanked Lindell for his time on the commission and said we will need a new Vice Chair to fill his spot and would take over as Chair July of 2020. Mattes encouraged commissioners to consider as she would like to make the appointment before December which could be done via e-mail. Mattes said the expectations of the Vice Chair/Chair is to not only serve on the full commission but also the executive committee and maintain communication with Thoeming. Thoeming said he can make his schedule as flexible as needed.

Because the Downtown SSMID contributes over 5% of the overall revenues of the Economic Alliance, the commission gets to appoint 3 members to the Community Development Innovation Council. These appointments don't necessarily have to be current commission members. John Osako is the only Downtown appointee, so we are looking for 2 others. This Council has 5 meetings per year – 4 regular meetings and 1 joint governance meeting with all Innovation Councils, Large Investor Council and Policy Board at the beginning of the year. Thoeming requested any suggestions or nominations to be sent to him.

Other Business

Sorg asked if the Downtown SSMID had any relation to the 1st and 1st West site process. Thoeming said he goes to the visioning events and has standing meetings with Jennifer Pratt at the City. Mattes said the SSMID hasn't had a collective voice in that project. Sorg asked if that's something we should be doing. Thoeming said the current status is to release the RFP by January with a public input session in April which should have the selections in front of City Council sometime during the Summer of 2020.

Terfler asked who leads the organization of the volleyball tournament and urged the importance that we keep that event in our community in years to come. McCarville said the Cedar Rapids Office of Tourism is in charge of it. Mattes said Downtown Cedar Rapids has more restaurants and retail and people feel safe here but we need to do everything we can to make Downtown more attractive so they want to keep coming back. Thoeming will find out more information including 2019 number of parking and attendance.

Thoeming said there will be a lighting project test on the Cedar River Tower this evening similar to the Alliant Tower technology.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.