Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes  
July 18, 2019 | 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Alliant Energy Classroom at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Present: Craig Byers, Lijun Chadima, Stephanie Jelinek, Pam Lewis, Ana McClain, James Piersall, Jennifer Pratt, Bob Schaffer

Absent: Jessalyn Holdcraft, Chad Pelley

Guests: Abby Huff & Monica Vernon – Czech Village NewBo Main Street, Beth Orth – Geonetric

Economic Alliance Staff: Ron Corbett, Jessica Komisar, Melissa McCarville

Welcome and Call to Order
Byers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda
Lewis moved approval of the June Minutes & May Financials with Schaffer seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Lewis asked what the $100 income was from on the non-profit contribution line item. Komisar said she will inquire and let the group know.

Chair & Vice Chair Election
Piersall was the single nomination for Chair. All were in favor of Piersall transitioning from Vice Chair to Chair.

Holdcraft and Chadima were the two nominations for Vice Chair. With a 4 to 3 vote, Holdcraft was elected as Vice Chair.

Economic Development Updates
Cargill Railyard
The Cargill expansion project via new railyard would assist efficiency for Cargill operations. Cargill has received complaints from individuals in the Rompot neighborhood. Corbett said the concerns from the neighborhood include areas of safety, property values, aesthetics and operations. Corbett further explained how Cargill is working diligently to address those concerns:

- Safety – the railyard wouldn’t have car or pedestrian traffic or access, making it a safe facility
- Property Values – this has become an industrial city where other properties such as Watertower condos continue to increase in value, despite being near railroad tracks
- Aesthetics – Cargill willing to plant trees, shielding and berms
- Operations – limiting operations of the railyard to 7 a.m.–7 p.m. even though it is a 24/7 facility so there isn’t excess noise

Corbett requested the SSMID endorse a letter of support for the project which will be submitted to the City’s Planning and Zoning committee. Corbett commented the project would bring good paying jobs, not only to the community but more specifically, the Czech Village/New Bohemia district.

Chadima moved approval of allowing Piersall to sign the letter of support on behalf of the entire commission with McClain seconding. The motion was unanimously approved. Piersall signed the letter and gave it to Corbett.
Landover Corp./Loftus Lumber
Richard Sova has been working with the City on a 20 year TIF although the City’s standard for housing is 100% for 10 years. The largest challenge right now is obtaining the funds for the land itself. Corbett encouraged the commission to continue to voice their support of this project not only to community members but City Council members as well.

Public Lighting Projects/Coordination with Downtown
During June’s meeting, Jelinek proposed a festoon lighting project on 3rd St between 11th and 12th Ave. These would be string lights across the street with metal support poles on both sides of the street. She has spoken with Jesse Thoeming, Executive Director of the Downtown District as the Downtown SSMID was interested in a lighting project on 3rd St between 2nd and 3rd Ave. However they have decided not to pursue the project this year. Thoeming told Jelinek they used Sound Concepts to obtain their estimates which came out to around $100k. Jelinek has received a contract from HBK Engineering for this potential project in our district and she had sent the contract to Piersall to review. Piersall said after reviewing the contract, it had listed rates for individuals who would work on the project, but he feels reluctant to sign off on the contract without a ‘do not exceed’ price included. Jelinek said HBK’s initial estimate was $60k but based on her conversation with Thoeming, she is thinking it could be around $100k when all is said and done. There would also be continuous costs for maintenance and utilities through Alliant. McClain said we would need to determine the light and pole’s longevity to avoid major maintenance costs every year or so.

The commission had overall interest in this project but agreed we cannot afford a $60k project. This would need to either be raised via an event or a partnership with Alliant. Byers said he will forward the HBK contract to Pelley who is knowledgeable about contracts like these and to initiate a conversation with HBK about the details before August’s commission meeting.

Interactive Housing Map
McCarville offered commission members knowledge of an existing resource, the Core District Housing Map, which is housed on the Economic Alliance website under the Our Community pages, including a link on the Czech Village NewBohemia SSMID page. This map began as a component of the Community Development core function of the Economic Alliance along with the Housing Commission’s oversight, and is a way to keep track of housing units in the three core districts as an example of district collaboration. McCarville told commission members if there are any updates that need to be made to listings in the district to let her know. McCarville said there have been initial conversations about creating an interactive restaurant and amenity/retail map that would function similarly. This map would not be a SSMID project but would showcase the district nicely. Jelinek asked if McCarville sees high traffic visiting this map on the website. McCarville said she hasn’t pulled that data specifically but can come back with those numbers for a future meeting but springtime is normally when the Economic Alliance highlights core district housing overall in their communications. McClain said housing is not a SSMID priority as we do not receive income from housing projects and although the Economic Alliance can use the district logo on the map that it is not a SSMID focused project.

District Guest Updates
Main Street Iowa does community exchanges where a representative from 2 main street districts swap locations to experience the other’s district and to give feedback on strengths and areas of improvement. This past week Huff went to Waterloo and a representative from Waterloo came here. Overall strengths that they experienced from Czech Village NewBo Main Street include the streets, sidewalks, street furniture, architecture, litter removal and parking. Overall areas of improvement include signage and wayfinding and flowers/planters. When they came to the district, our flowers hadn’t been planted yet.

Vernon said they will be having their Dinner on the Bridge September 6th from 6-10 p.m. The event will include local catering and beer on the Bride of Lions. Vernon has been happy to see sponsors for this event being corporations that aren’t necessarily in the district such as Raining Rose. Tickets are now on sale.

Big Updates from Commission Members
McClain asked Komisar if we can begin pricing out Christmas decorations for 3rd Street to match Czech Village’s decorations of lights and garland on the light poles. We will also need to determine storage options for 3rd Street decorations.
Chadima requested if we can review the flower plantings at the end of the season by taking pictures before they get removed. Lewis said she has already taken photos of the flower beds, we will take photos of them again next month.

Piersall asked if Main Street has a retail space availability study or information that has been updated. Huff stated as of right now, their website is up to date on the availability, but that is only if business owners or real estate companies have given them the information. Vernon added they have several studies on retail in the district that they can pull and report on at a future meeting if we would like.

Lewis announced the Czech Village Association now owns 4 parking lots. They are having a meeting on Tuesday, July 23rd at the Czech Museum that is open to the Czech Village community for individuals to give their input on how the parking lots should be ran. McClain voiced concern about how the Association will pay for maintenance and snow removal.

Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.