



**Cedar Rapid Downtown SSMID Commission Minutes
May 30, 2018
Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance**

Present: Darryl High, Chris Lindell, Linda Mattes, Andrew Morf, Randy Rings, Joe Terfler, Fred Timko

Absent: Steve Dummermuth Jr., Dawn Jaffray, Ann Lipsky

Guests: Patrick Alvord, Rob Davis, Matt Myers

Staff: Jenn Draper, Sherokee Eder, Jacob Mentz (intern), Doug Neumann, Jesse Thoeming, Audrey Wheeler

Welcome, Introductions & Call to Order

Timko welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Mattes noted that in event of bad weather, she would like everyone to know where the safe areas were. Eder clarified that the bathrooms serve as storm shelters in the building.

Draper shared a few updates about Market After Dark, emphasizing that it was not a Maddie Poppe concert, but would be featuring her as entertainment. Proper planning with the Police Department, Fire Department, and for traffic has been underway. Draper reported the venue is being extended to the second avenue bridge for the stage. The venue for Market After Dark will range from Greene Square Park to May's Island, also including more permanent drink cups, and extra vendors and beverage tents.

Public Works Presentation

Myers shared the plans to convert the angle parking on the 3rd Avenue bridge to Parallel parking, adding that it relieves tight angle parking restraints, and will not result in significant loss of parking. The change would include a protected bike lane. Myers showed a rendering including benches and trees, adding that the City typically relies on the Economic Alliance for planting. Mattes noted she wanted to make sure the plants complemented the new lighting and would like to see people stop fishing off the bridges. Rings said he would like the bridge to be a real pedestrian connector and would like to see more energy in it. Timko liked the idea of making it into a plaza that people come to, but added that trees required maintenance, and would get in the way of snow plows.

Myers shared that the Wayfinding initiative was going to cost around \$750k – 800 k. The MedQuarter has come to the City to kickstart their portion, and bids are currently out for that. The Wayfinding initiative includes 150 sign locations, 26 of which are pedestrian kiosks. Myers added that funding was currently an issue for the initiative. Mattes asked about maintenance, and Lindell asked about updating the kiosks. Myers clarified that public works would handle all of that. Timko asked for a break down of cost by district, noting he would specifically like to see Kingston and Downtown. Mattes noted it would be good to test all the kiosks and signage against rollerblades and skateboarders who may grab onto them.

Davis shared flood protection plans around the 8th Avenue Bridge. The bridge will be raised above the 2008 flood stage. A sign will be put up that a new bridge is coming. Davis noted the plans provide Kingston Village with development opportunities. Construction is thought to start in 2023. Davis went over the concept for Lot 44 with the levees and pump station. Rings said he would like the project to be thought of as a connector from Downtown to NewBo. Mattes and Rings both added that it should make pedestrian travel seamless.

Confluence Presentation

Alvord detailed a presentation for a 4-part Master Plan that would solve the issues with alleys downtown. The Plan includes inventory and analysis, a grease interceptor feasibility study, visioning, and phasing and cost option. Alvord showed a model of the grease interceptors and walked the commission through how they generally work. The pop-up alley behind Bricks was shown as an example as something that was done on a temporary basis. The SSMID is being asked to contribute \$10k toward the feasibility study Confluence would do. Alvord added that the alleys in Cedar Rapids are unique with the skywalks because it provides an existing infrastructure for lighting to play with. Commission Members discussed a City Ordinance around grease dumping. Thoeming added the study may recommend passing such an ordinance.

Paramount Lot RFP

Neumann shared that an RFP for the Paramount lot will go out soon. He has talked to some potential developers who would like to include a grocery store in their proposal but feel it might not quite be economically feasible. What if involvement of the SSMID would make a store viable now, rather than waiting more years for one? Would that be a worthy investment of the SSMID, if a subsidy of some sort made a grocery store possible?

Neumann felt all developers would have to be treated equally, and signaling now that the SSMID might help on that front would provide an opportunity to get the same information to all potential developers. Any developers making a proposal will be required to call the Economic Alliance for parking and design issues in the RFP, so it would be easy to distribute info about this help.

Downtown may be eligible for some grant funding via its "food desert" status. A fair way to contribute to the development could be for the SSMID to help provide matching funds for any grant award. Thoeming mentioned that grants of up to \$800,000 have been awarded in that program but that most awards were \$500,000 or less. At a 50% match, that would mean the match might be in the area of \$250,000, which could be paid over the span of a couple of budget years.

While SSMID commissioners were generally positive about the idea, most didn't want to commit to a specific figure. It possible there would be other funding sources for the grant match, and those should all be negotiable points at time of grant application. The SSMID directed Neumann to signal to any potential developer that the SSMID "would be interested in negotiating a significant contribution" if it made a grocery store possible in the Paramount Lot development.

EA Staff also will check on what subsidy was provided to Hy-Vee to put in the downtown Des Moines store.

FusionFarm Presentation

Thoeming showed the first of four downtown videos that will be launched as part of a social media campaign around downtown awareness and promotion.

Other business

Via an email update, Thoeming will share the slate of board members recommended for appointment to the SSMID Board. Elections on Mattes to chair and Lindell to vice chair will happen in July.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.