



Cedar Rapid Downtown SSMID Commission Minutes
September 25th, 2019 | 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance

Present: Casey Drew, Emily Ellingson, Darryl High, Dawn Jaffray, Linda Mattes, Matthew Miller, Randy Rings, Craig Stephan, David Sorg, Joe Terfler, Fred Timko

Guests: Dale Todd

Absent: Dave Drown, Chris Lindell, Andrew Morf

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

Welcome, Introductions & Call to Order

Mattes welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:14 p.m.

Consent Agenda

Rings moved approval of the consent agenda with Terfler seconding. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

3rd Ave and 2nd St Business Impacts

Thoeming was approached by businesses on 3rd Ave and 2nd Street who have been impacted by the on-street construction – specifically Marie’s Jewelry, Simply Divine and The Beauty Lounge. Gibbs Lamb Drown, who is the property manager for those businesses, has already agreed to provide a \$500 rent abatement. Thoeming asked the commission if this is something we would also like to assist with in addition to the abatement. The commission said it could be a slippery slope for future asks so it would be important to include a criteria of the business must be a ground floor retail who has truly been disrupted and that would qualify them for consideration and look at it on a case by case basis. Timko moved to provide \$500 each to Marie’s Jewelry, Simply Divine and the Beauty Lounge. The commission was unanimously in favor.

Jaffray said we should be encouraging our employees to visit those businesses as well. Mattes agreed and asked if the Economic Alliance staff could create a marketing piece we can send to their employees. McCarville will move forward with this ask.

Race for the Space

High, who is also a member of the Community Development Innovation Council, presented to the commission about the Race for the Space initiative. Race for the Space is a contest to attract businesses to compete to receive commercial space in the Downtown SSMID district for one year rent free. There would be an RFP sent to property owners Downtown to obtain the space. This was developed to spur economic development growth and drive interest from property owners. The original idea was to have 1 winner and 1 winning space but after meeting with the SSMID executive team, there could be a possibility to open it up more to several winning applicants and property owners. The Innovation Council has split into four committees: Marketing, Selection, Business Support and Build Out. The selection committee has created a grading rubric to rank and score applicants in areas such as viability/sustainability, economic impact, innovative, residency of the owner, cultural/environmental fit, green/eco friendly and if they stand out via an opening summary on the application. Once graded, the final 4 perspective winners would have the opportunity to “pitch” their business at a launch event. The ultimate winner(s) would get rent free space for a year and marketing

support from the Economic Alliance. The winning property owners would also be highlighted through marketing efforts. The budget for Race for the Space is \$45-50k (\$10k of which is marketing) with a \$30k request from the Downtown SSMID as a sponsorship. The requested funds would be spent on a 50/50 split on rent and space design. Rings moved to approve the \$30k request with Sorg seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

ConnectCR

Thoeming, Miller and Stephan met as part of the pedestrian bridge sub-committee and learned that connecting the potential bridge to the 4th Ave Plaza as part of the Flood Control system is doable. However, this project will cost significantly more than we had originally thought. The cost is closer to \$6-7M range if we are connecting to Mays Island. The sub-committee also discussed the idea of making a financial contribution to ConnectCR. Thoeming said doing so would still support our vision plan and have an impact on our district although it is outside of our SSMID boundary. The Downtown SSMID did not get a specific ask for a donation. ConnectCR is a \$20M project and is receiving other funding from the City, Hall-Perrine, Czech Village NewBo SSMID and the steering committee needed to raise \$7M and they are at \$5.2M. Todd said the steering committee has doable and significant asks out and said Downtown would be a big benefactor when the project is completed. Thoeming requested \$17k per year for the next 5 years from the commission.

Mattes said the executive committee was not supportive of contributing to ConnectCR as all of the dollars would be used outside of our district when there are many projects that could be done within our boundaries. Rings added we have an awesome bike trail that feels like it has a stopping point at 7th Ave by Iowa Brewing with no clear direction on what to do next and the funds we would contribute could be better spent making that connectivity in our district.

Thoeming is to come back to the commission at the November meeting with a more reasonable ask and specifics on how this contribution will benefit Downtown.

Big Ticket Budget Items for 2020

As the commission has been discussing a lot of things, it is important to start seeing some of these projects out. Alley way improvement project is in progress, the WOW committee's projector has been tested and close to securing it. Rings suggested starting every year with an infrastructure fund to leverage those funds into something big. Neumann said to think about big picture ideas that might not cost the SSMID anything but instead being advocates and champions for our stakeholders. Thoeming said he met with Shive-Hattery this week as they will be providing options for the 3rd Street and 8th Avenue intersection.

The November meeting will focus on the projects we want to see through and how much those will cost.

Year-End Report

Thoeming would like to create a report to share with stakeholders to shine a light on the things this commission has completed. He will create a list of items and a cost for the report (either print or a video) and share with the commission during the November meeting.

Other Business

- Mattes – Alliant will be lit up pink for the month of October and are close to being lit all the time
- Jaffray – UFG has created a lighting committee
- November SSMID meeting won't have any report out but will be reviewing the budget, WOW projects and how we want to spend our funds in 2020.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.