



Cedar Rapids Downtown SSMID Commission Minutes
March 29, 2023 | 3:00-4:30 p.m.
Economic Alliance Conference Room A

Present: Jon Dusek, Daryll High, Ted Kepros, James Klein, Sarah Madsen (Zoom), Randy Rings, Jake Ryan, David Sorg, Craig Stephan, Joe Terfler

Absent: Joe Ahmann, Wendi Cigrand, Dave Drown, Emily Ellingson

Staff: Peggy Degnan, Doug Neumann, Jesse Thoeming, Adrienne Tingba, Phil Wasta, Nikki Wilcox

Welcome, Introductions & Call to Order

Klein welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. (Ellingson took a new position with a Des Moines law firm, but will be serve through June 30th. It is a two-year term with Klein officially taking over on July 1st.)

Approval of November Minutes

Sorg moved approval of the November minutes with High seconding. The November minutes were unanimously approved.

SSMID Leadership Transition - Establishing a recruiting committee for future commissioners

Klein asked for three or four people to form a recruitment subcommittee that would meet ~ twice a year to build a pipeline of candidates to alleviate scrambling at the last minute to fill an open position. Rings stated he would be on committee with Klein's call -to-action for others to join. Dusek asked and Thoeming confirmed the board is currently at its maximum with 15 members. **Rings asked for a list of all members and term expiration dates (it will be distributed to all commissioners within this set of meeting minutes).** The committee is to consider more diversity and gender balance moving forward. To meet qualifications to serve on the Downtown SSMID, one must be a downtown property owner or property-owner designee. Wasta shared that the Medical Quarter SSMID requires members to be a business owner, property owner or property representative. Rings asked to have list of all members and term expiration dates.

Debrief on PUMA visit and next steps with new vision plan

Dusek remarked that PUMA roundtables uncovered many common themes. PUMA foresees a window of opportunity for Cedar Rapids over the next 2-7 years. They were impressed with what Cedar Rapids has done since the flood and to keep the momentum going. When they return in May, they would like to see more young people (40 <) involved in roundtables because we need to think of how to serve the ages of 20 to 40 group/workforce.

Wilcox mentioned that PUMA is creating survey questions to get community feedback with results expected by August. Their May visit coincides with Blues Night in the Park. They plan to have a station set up within the venue of the event. A follow-up call is scheduled with them on April 14th to plan their May visit. PUMA's final plan will have an under 40 age bias, with one of the first projects potentially being a downtown dog park. An urban designer will be with them during their May visit.

Sponsorship/revenue enhancement plan

Four events are planned this year for a total cost of \$130K-\$140K with \$70K currently in funds this year. The four events are:

- Blues Night in Greene Square, May 19
- Jazz Night on Second, June 23
- Dance Party – July TBD
- Block-tober, September 22

Discussions took place whether to hold only three events, excluding the Dance Party, or to do all four events. Funds could be reallocated to do three and raise money to hold four. Each event will cost ~ \$35K. Ryan noted there is a \$90k cushion. Sorg would like to see all four events take place because they appeal to four different demographics. **Sorg motioned to hold all four events with Dusek seconding.**

Tingba and Wilcox explained and distributed copies of a summer event sponsorship letter and sponsor benefits. Madsen asked if we're seeking corporate sponsors for all four events. Wilcox responded yes and outlined that the presenting sponsor is \$10K and second level sponsorships are \$5K. Terfler clarified sponsorships are not limited to downtown companies. Madsen and UFG leadership will look at sponsoring an event other than the May event.

Recognition verbiage/signage to be "Brought to you by Downtown SSMID" and "Presented by (sponsor name)."

Update on Blues Night in Greene Square

Keeshea Pratt Band and BF Burt are secured as the entertainment for Friday night.

A more intimate event is being planned for the night before/Thursday at Iowa Brewing Company. It would consist of a beer-tasting and a smaller scale blues performance. Klein deferred to Thoeming and Tingba to decide if the night before should be a private event/sponsor benefit or open to the public.

Rings stressed there is an immediate need to obtain sponsors. Klein asked everyone to find out right away if their organization wants to sponsor Blues Night or another event this summer. The plan is to circulate the modified sponsorship form to all Downtown SSMID Commissioners and see where we stand by Friday April 7th.

If using SMMID funds, Wasta stated the first group to ask should be downtown stakeholders. If no one is receptive, then go outside of downtown stakeholders. Rings asked if we have a list of businesses who are not property owners. Dusek mentioned asking the City or County since they have a stake in this.

Project updates

Alleyway: Need blessing from new property owners and approval from this group in May. Thoeming and project team will have a detailed scope., schedule, and budget to present during the May meeting.

7th/8th Gateway: seeking \$70-80K state support. Thoeming has been meeting with IDOT to learn what funding sources to approach. IDOT will look at our application before we submit. The deadline is June 1st.

Sidewalk update: Priorities are sidewalks by Barrell House/Jimmy Z, 2nd Street across from the Paramount, and the sidewalk by YMCA. Repairs are to start in late May/June. The City and SSMID partner 50/50. Rings mentioned the east side of Second Street needs repair. Dusek feels all repairs should be done within next five years.

Other business

- Klein requested more details about Jazz Night on 2nd. Thoeming shared it will be a more upscale event with Cobble Hill serving the food and that tables will be set up on Second Street. The Jazz event could pre-sell tickets as Cobble Hill may be limited by how many meals they can serve. Food trucks will also be there.
- Stephan heard more police will be needed at Block-tober. Thoeming to ask City if they would help cover costs for security at all downtown events this summer.
- Reabsorbing the \$10K from Race for the Space finalist.
- Tingba said social media needs more content, so she wanted to take a group photo to post.
- Madson shared UFC will have a new tenant above their gym occupying floors four through eight taking possession on May 1st. She will share more at a later meeting.
- Return to work: Klein reported Alliant to have employees work in office two days week starting in April, Terfler reported 50-65 % of GreatAmerica is working downtown and Rings said TrueNorth staff can choose to work 2-5 days in office.
- For all four Friday night summer events, there is a contingency to hold them on Saturday should severe weather impact the area.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.