

Downtown Omaha Business Improvement District

Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
March 10, 2005

The March 10, 2005 Board of Directors meeting was held in the Jesse Lowe Conference Room of the Civic Center, at 1819 Farnam, beginning at 8:30 A.M.

Minutes

A. ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

Members Present:

Curtis Christensen, Chair
Joe Bateman
Brenda Dooley
Jeff Jorgensen
Dee Dee Spetman
Paula Steenson
Brian Magee

Chris Apperle
John Yochum

Mayor's Staff:

Sheryl Lindau
Silas Clarke
Gail Braun

City of Omaha Planning Dept:

Bridget Hadley

City of Omaha Law Dept:

Bernard in den Bosch

Public:

Jim Prouty
Jim Monahan
Kelli O'Brien

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

B. Magee made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, seconded by J. Jorgensen, approved.

C. OLD BUSINESS

Staff Report:

Sheryl Lindau reported that Mayor Fahey is supportive of the concept of a DBID and would like to have a plan developed by September 2005. The Mayor is also willing to assist with the fundraising efforts in conjunction with Board Members, after the election is over. Sheryl reemphasized that the staff is committed to assisting the Board as needed in the development of their plan to create a district.

Committee Chair Reports:

No committee meetings were held since the last Board meeting. B. Magee stressed the need to know the timeline to determine what to do.

Curtis Christensen reported on website development. After consulting with others in his firm, he recommended that the Board adopt Silas Clarke's idea to add a page onto the city's website for now. In the future, a more sophisticated website could be developed as needed.

Brian Magee reported on the status of further assistance by the consultant, Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.). The consultant had presented a proposal for full services to assist in the formation of a BID. Brian recommended that the Board consult with Brad Segal (P.U.M.A.) on a periodic basis.

Brian also presented information from the International Downtown Association, and suggested our group use their information from BID creation in other cities, to draft a business plan. Sheryl will research the IDA website along with other BID websites. Suggestions were made to contact BID's in other cities to assist in plan development. Brian will call Brad Segal to get contact names from other cities.

Paula McMullen, of the Lincoln DBID, was suggested as a potential resource person.

D. NEW BUSINESS

Goals of the BID:

The Board needs to define the purpose of the BID. Why should it be formed? A discussion followed which stressed the need for Omaha to have a strong independent downtown management organization that focuses exclusively on downtown.

Marketing and the image of downtown were discussed. Other issues included: customer needs, convention and meeting locations, parking, vacant buildings, resident needs, and retail development. The vacancy rate in the downtown area is 29%.

Other comments included the following: Downtown needs to be a better environment. We need to maintain downtown Public/Private partnerships. We need people to: "want to come downtown".

Jim Prouty, of Wessco Graphics, spoke to the Board about why he believed the previous BID plan was not accepted. He said the Board needs to realize that downtown is a "good old boy" network and they need to get the opposition to come to the meetings. The last plan was "too big, cost too much money, and was not fair".

Jim Monahan, President of Parking Management & Consultants, presented the Board with a letter expressing his opposition to the formation of a BID. He stated at the meeting that the previous assessment formula was a problem, and the Board needed a more representative assessment.

Curtis Christensen reminded the group not to look only at the things that were done in past, but to see this as a new start. Discussion followed on the necessity of preparing a fact sheet enumerating the goals and purpose of the BID, to be distributed to stakeholders and all interested parties.

It was decided to form two new committees. A communication committee was formed to write a clear statement of purpose for the creation of a BID and to develop a short fact sheet for distribution to the public. Members of the communication committee are: Brian Magee, Paula Steenson, Dee Dee Spetman, Jeff Jorgensen, Bridget Hadley, and Sheryl Lindau. A boundary committee was formed to look at the previous BID boundaries and determine if changes should be made. Members of the boundary committee are: Curtis Christensen, Joe Bateman, Jim Doyle, Brenda Dooley, and Silas Clarke. Both committees will meet and present recommendations to the full Board at the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: March 24, 2005 8:30 A.M. Jesse Lowe Conference Room

Respectfully submitted,
Sheryl Lindau