

Downtown Business Improvement District

Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
March 23, 2006

The March 23, 2006 Board of Directors meeting was held in the in the First Floor Conference Room at Union Pacific, at 1400 Douglas, beginning at 8:35 A.M.

Minutes

A. ROLL CALL/ INTRODUCTION

Members Present

Curtis Christensen
Joe Bateman
Jeff Jorgensen
Christian Christensen
Dee Dee Spetman
Todd Heistand

Mayor's Staff

Ayesha Graves

City of Omaha Planning Department

Bridget Hadley
Kenneth Johnson

Public

Jim Prouty

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A quorum was not present to conduct official business.

C. Old Business

The group will need to start having meetings with the city council and the public

D. Kotok of the Omaha World Herald would like to have a copy of the business plan.

C. Christensen has not approved the formal boundaries.

The second draft will bring in \$50,000 for the tax exempts if they are excluded from the BID but the assessments are separate because of their structure. The goal is to have equal assessments whenever possible given various situations.

The use of federal government agreements as a model for paying the aforementioned assessments; Dee Dee Spetman will look into the policy when paying assessments in order for entities to put into their budgets.

D. New Business

Christian Christensen discusses the need for a comparison of the various drafts in order to recognize the corresponding responses and concerns.

B. Hadley discusses how the BID must understand the factors used in deriving assessment formulas. This needs to be acknowledged in order to answer potential public questions. Furthermore, there needs to be a specific breakdown of the budget versus the assessment value. This is needed because there are numerous responsibilities for the project manager. The current budget allows \$75,000 for the project manger to work with and would it be possible to contract some of the work out? And, if so, how would the overall budget adjust.

C. Christensen stated that the BID currently does not have the permission to increase the budget.

B. Hadley noted the need for a marketing manager for the Omaha Planning Department. This position will serve as a guide post –via internet- to serve as a crossroads of information for contributing organizations. The group will seek to promote a downtown residential living area rather than having an individual real estate agent in hopes that this would portray a downtown environment.

J. Bateman stated that the Omaha World Herald sent a message that downtown is being overbuilt. The document presented is general in order for BID to make a decision.

J. Jorgensen asked that certain language be put into the document that will not limit or hinder BID from receiving contract dollars. The BID should have the ability to spend the money where it sees fit. The word “stakeholders” should be used to encompass the meaning of “property owners, residents, users of public space, and business operators”. This word needs to apply to all the paying members involved in the BID.

Christian Christensen stated that this concern would be better suited in a cover memorandum rather than in the actual document. Then he questions what is being heard regarding the budget?

Curtis Christensen stated that Brad feels that currently the budget is comfortable with all areas of adjustments, management costs, stakeholder concerns, and the BID activities.

T. Heistand asked if there is any idea of how much the money in grants they would receive with a \$350,000 budget.

K. Johnson saw the need for an explanation that this is a base budget and grants will allow for an expansion of services. The business plan will be the governing document. For changes of assessments occur, the city council must approve. Public Works will handle the assessment application and the Finance Department will receive the money pending payouts to the BID. The board needs to address with the City Council whether the assessment will be a line item on the County Treasurer’s property tax statement or handled as a separate billing. The DID must have the approval of Public Works and Finance to set up a payment plan.

C. Christensen discussed the need for a separate operating document that the board should consider attaching to the business plan as presented to the Planning Board and City Council. The goal of this is to be ready of the next budget cycle.

K. Johnson stated that there needs to be a planned out schedule of meetings (a minimum of two) before anything goes to the Planning Board. The opposition may show up at the Planning Board meeting. Planning may not veto but, they will share their decision with the council. BID may submit to planning now and schedule two meetings to put on the website in order to let the Omaha World Herald write a story. This is necessary in order to let the public know that they can comment for a certain amount of time. This should be put into an executive summary and a full copy can be found on the website.

Curtis Christensen requested that there be a special public meeting of the Board on Wednesday March 29 in the Union Pacific Building at 9:30 A.M. for the purpose of discussing further and voting on the Business Plan.

E. Public comment

J. Prouty sees the BID as redundant with regard to what the Old Market, the Chamber, and Abbot neighborhood is doing. People do not know that the BID will apply for grants so stakeholders will not have to shoulder all of the costs. It is unfortunate that more stakeholder members of the public, including persons opposed to the BID, are not in attendance. To build support and understanding of the BID, stakeholders should be at the meeting. Mr. Prouty also noted that Mutual of Omaha and the Omaha Med Center may form a BID for Destination Midtown. Thus, neighborhood association should send letters of support.

C. Christensen wants to coordinate meetings with the council members no more than three at a time.

K. Johnson will schedule for May planning board meeting.

Need a special meeting to vote on plan for next week.

F. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 A.M. The next meeting will be held at March 29, 2006, at 9:30 A.M. at Union Pacific.