

Downtown Business Improvement District
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
June 22, 2006

Draft Minutes

The June 22, 2006 Board of Directors meeting was held in the Jesse Lowe Conference Room of the Civic Center, at 1819 Farnam, and began at 8:30 A.M.

A. Roll Call / Introduction

Members Present:

Joe Bateman
Christan Christensen
Curtis Christensen
Jeff Jorgensen
Brian Magee
Marc Nichols
Dee Dee Spetman
Paula Steenson

Mayor's Staff:

Andrea Fox

City of Omaha Planning Department

Bridget Hadley
Ken Johnson, Sr.

Public:

Paul Bitsos
Sharon K. Krauss

A. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

June agenda was approved.
April and May minutes were approved.

B. Old Business

Planning Board Meeting Results and Opponents Remarks: A presentation was made to the Planning Board. The Planning Board approved 4-3 to forward the resolution of intention to the City Council. The resolution will be in front of Council on Tuesday, June 27th.

Christian Christensen observed that the opposition was not very well informed as far as geographical boundaries and the proposed budget for the DBID. He stated that the correct information needs to get out to the public.

Curtis Christensen acknowledged issues with the mailing list (on both sides) contributing to this issue of misinformation.

Jeff Jorgensen asked if this issue would be addressed so that decisions were made on fact rather than misinformation. He would like the issue addressed on how an increase in assessed value will impact the 48 cents. Jeff wanted to point out that a general property tax assessment goes into a general fund where it can be spent anywhere, whereas this assessment will go to a downtown board that is focused on downtown issues.

Curtis Christensen wanted to point out that the council must approve the existence of the DBID every five years, or it will go away.

Christian Christensen stated that this board did not pinpoint what each dollar will be spent on because they feel the next board should be able to govern how the money is spent.

Curtis Christensen stated that the resolution of intention includes elements from the state statute. He further stated that the DBID is a foundation for downtown stakeholders and residents to develop the desired programs and leverage funds to use grant writing to do bigger programs. The DBID is a support mechanism for existing civic and private organizations.

Brian Magee stated that the board needs to contact residents. There have been some miscommunications about the purpose of the DBID, and some residents feel as though they have not been included in the process. Some residents want more representation on the board, because some day, residents will outnumber commercial parcels.

Marc Nichols pointed out that the new board can change the mix as the needs of the community change.

C. Public Comment:

Sharon Krauss – Thanked the committee for their presentation to the Planning Board. She is resistant on the principal of creating another layer of bureaucracy and having another taxing authority, from a board which is not truly elected by the residents at large. Sharon does not think it's an equitable taxing system. Sharon also believes that the Old Market is an acceptable level of dirtiness, and she does not want the Old Market to be "disney-fied and sanitized."

Brian Magee responded that he is also concerned with keeping the current character of the Old Market. Brian informed Sharon and the board of his position on the Landmark Commission. The Landmark Commission also wishes to preserve the character of the Old Market, and approval of the Landmark Commission would be required for signage changes and things of that nature.

A question was asked regarding access to the DBID business plan. The website www.omahadowntownbid.com was given out in response to this question.

There were questions asked to the board regarding the assessment cap, and the logic behind using a cap. The board answered the questions, and an explanation was given.

D. New Business

Upcoming City Council Meeting – It is very important that board members and supporters are present at Council on Tuesday, June 27th. Council will likely want to hear from more opponents and proponents.

E. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.