Mayor – Sandy Sanders

City Administrator – Ray Gosack

City Clerk – Sherri Gard

Board of Directors

Ward 1 – Keith D. Lau
Ward 2 – Andre' Good
Ward 3 – Mike Lorenz
Ward 4 – George Catsavis
At Large Position 5 – Pam Weber
At Large Position 6 – Kevin Settle
At Large Position 7 – Philip H. Merry Jr.

AGENDA

Fort Smith Board of Directors
Brainstorming Meeting
August 25, 2014 ~ 6:00 p.m.
Fort Smith Sanitation Department
Administration Building
5900 Commerce Road

~ Dinner served at 5:30 p.m. ~

CALL TO ORDER

1. Brainstorm

ADJOURN

RESOLUTION NO. R-171-13

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING GROUND RULES FOR BRAIN STORMING MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors will conduct quarterly brain storming meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors desires to have ground rules for the conduct of said brain storming meetings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas that:

The ground rules for brain storming meetings of the Board of Directors attached hereto as Exhibit A are hereby adopted.

This Resolution passed this 3rd day of December, 2013.

Sandy Sanders
Mayor

ATTEST:

Sherri Gard
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

No Publication Required

Exhibit A

GROUND RULES FOR BOARD BRAIN STORMING MEETINGS

1. Overall objectives of brain storming meetings are to:

   -- Allow the mayor and board members to engage in free-flowing discussion on matters of importance to the elected officials.

   -- Identify new, creative, innovative, breakthrough ways to view and solve problems, issues and concerns.

2. Discussion should be focused on long-term issues and policy matters; and be forward thinking. The discussion should be about the "what" and "why" questions.

3. Discussion should avoid micro management. The discussion should avoid the "how" questions.

4. Everyone is treated as an equal and has equal opportunity during discussion. A round-robin technique for input may be used. Listen respectfully to each person's input.

5. When input is offered, it should not be questioned initially. Suspend judgment. Research and analysis (e.g., testing the idea) can be provided later.

6. All ideas should be recorded.

7. Discussions should be honest and candid.

8. Keep an open mind; shut down personal bias. Encourage new and creative ideas. Build on other people's ideas. Pursue seemingly conflicting thoughts and ideas.

9. Ask anything. Question things you don't understand. But, questions should clarify ideas, not evaluate, criticize or compliment the ideas.

10. No side conversations.

11. Have an agreed-upon method for reaching consensus, but there is no formal action or voting.

12. Treat these as guidelines, not as hard and fast rules.

Memo

To: Ray Gosack, City Administrator

From: Jeff Dingman, Deputy City Administrator

Date: 8/20/2014

Re: ***Update*** - Notes from Board of Directors Brainstorming Meeting, 5/27/2014

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1. Board Governance Policy. Advanced "condensed" version for consideration on 6/3/14, including provision to revisit the plan at least annually. ***Update: Item is slated for further Board discussion at August 26 study session.***

2. We have such a high percentage of working-age people in FSM that are not participating in the workforce, as reported by UAFS' Kermit Kuehn. Is a strong housing authority a reverse incentive, keeping working-age people out of the work force an keeping annual incomes down? Asked to invite Dr. Kuehn to an upcoming study session to discuss the data and his interpretation (*tentatively planned for August, pending Dr. Kuehn's availability)*. ***Update: Dr. Keuhn and the Board addressed this topic at the August 12 study session. The update to the city's comprehensive plan may recommend policies for improving the community's economy.***

3. NHL Hockey idea. How would we even get started? Investigate the league's policy for expanding or relocating teams, and what it takes to get it done. *Consider appointing an exploratory committee* to investigate league issues and Green Bay, WI's model for community ownership of a team. Learn from GB how it was initiated, sold, built, and continues to operate as a community-owned franchise. ***Update: A cross-section of individuals from the community attended a presentation and discussion on this topic on July 9.***

4. Concrete railroad crossings. Increasing rail traffic will make this more critical. Many street/railroad crossings in town need to be upgraded from asphalt fill to concrete panels. RG reported that formerly on city projects, the city would purchase the panels (est. $30K per crossing depending on size) and the RR would install them, but that hasn't happened in quite some time. New streets & street crossing rehabs have installed the panels. Many (not all) of the problem crossings still existing are on state highway routes, specifically the truck routes on Wheeler Avenue, North A/North B and near the north end of Riverfront Drive. *Direct the Engineering staff to follow-up with the railroads as necessary, and consider allocating funds in the 2015 CIP specifically for upgrading railroad crossings on city streets*. ***Update: Engineering staff is working on a plan to inventory and grade all railroad crossings of city streets, and will use the inventory to address a number of crossings each year as part of the annual CIP program. More information will be provided with the CIP program discussion at the September 23 study session.***

5. Transit & CNG. Discussion of the one CNG bus we currently have, and the fact that two more have been ordered and will be converted to CNG for the demand response routes. Investigate possibly transitioning more vehicles to CNG, including the possibility of buying the larger metro-style buses with factory-installed CNG for the fixed routes, which presumably have larger fuel tanks that can accommodate a full shift on a fixed route. *Transit staff will investigate whether those types of vehicles are as of yet included on the state purchasing contracts, as well as other operational considerations*. ***Update: Transit has ordered two additional CNG buses. Both are grant***

funded 80%. Once the vehicles are delivered, they will be converted to CNG. The plan is to have them in service In January, 2015. On the larger buses, the "12-year" buses similar to those used in larger metro areas cost in the range of $400,000 each, plus up to $50,000 for CNG versions. The buses we currently use are typically "5-year" or "7-year" buses cost around $80,000 each (we pay 20% of the purchase price), plus up to $20,000 for conversion to CNG. Also, it takes about 18 months for delivery of a 12-year bus. In the past, the Transit service did run some larger buses, but heard complaints from neighborhoods on having the larger buses. More generally, the Board did approve purchase of another CNG vehicle (along with three hybrid vehicles) in this year's fleet purchase, and staff will continue to evaluate CNG and other alternate fuel vehicles as part of the FY2015 budget recommendation.

6. Transit & expansion of the rail trolley, and other uses for "shared space" treatment of the streets, whereby trolleys, autos, and bicycles share lane space appropriately. Some discussion about where the downtown trolley might eventually go, and how putting tracks in the driving lanes would allow autos & trolleys to share the same space in the street. *Extension of the trolley rail from its current terminus near Wheeler Avenue up South 7th Street to Rogers Avenue is currently being designed and should be built this year using funding (about $200,000) allocated to the project from the city's share of the county-wide 1-cent sales tax. Design will be similar to the "shared space" concept discussed, but the rail will be near enough to the west side of South 7th St. so as to only require one line of poles to support the electric infrastructure.* ***Update: This project design is nearly complete. The downtown trolley association is to provide an inventory of materials that they have on hand so the Engineering Dept. knows how much additional material will be needed to put in the project bid specifications. This project is being done in coordination with the scheduled overlay of South 7th St.***

7. What do we think about downtown in general? Looks very nice in most places. Encouraged that private development is picking up, even if it isn't moving very quickly. Discussion about how we need to invest in ourselves for our own sake, get into some true public-private partnerships, and then private development will follow. Downtown businesses are missing out by not being open in the evening. Lots of food/drink establishments bring people downtown in the evening, but the local downtown shops close at 5pm and don't take advantage of the evening foot traffic. How do we go about encouraging them to do more evening hours, aside from the First Thursday efforts? How do we build interest in a Downtown Merchants Association? *Staff is working on the merchants association concept, but having mixed results.* ***Update: The downtown programs are currently being re-evaluated in terms of service delivery, promotions, events, and the overall aesthetics. The revitalization of the Downtown Merchants Association is in this mix. The streetscape up Towson Avenue to South A street is complete except for the portion in front of the Otasco building. Recent topics such as the Mobile Food Trucks/Court discussion are ongoing and continue to be fleshed out as a means of improving the amenities offered downtown. Private investment in downtown redevelopment is occurring with some current projects underway. The CBID is mindful of projects to enhance amenities to attract people downtown.***

8. The Farmers Market is taking off and is very popular and crowded. There was brief discussion of the improvement plans from 2010 to augment the facility with canopy structures (cost estimates for that design were $1.2 million). Something like that would improve the atmosphere, attractiveness, and overall viability of the market. The 2010 costs were substantial, but improvement along those lines at a lesser scale might be more affordable, and *staff needs to determine if other grant funding opportunities are available.* ***Update: A letter of interest seeking inclusion in the "Local Foods, Local Places" program supported by the EPA, the USDA, the USDoT and some other agencies to create more livable places by promoting local foods was submitted in hopes of***

securing funding in support of the Farmers Market. WAPDD is pursuing an EDA grant in support of the Farmers Market, which will require a 50% local match. The CBID has plans to update its priorities this fall, and the enhancement of the Farmers Market area continues to be near the top of their list. Wi-fi connectivity was added to the Farmers Market area earlier this year to allow vendors the ability to accommodate patrons with SNAP cards.

9. Business Improvement District along the Midland Ave corridor? Brief discussion on how it would need to be driven by the property owners and/or merchants of the area, or else wouldn't have much chance in being formed. *Without the support of the affected property owners, a BID couldn't get created*. ***Update: This initiative has not been investigated, though it has received some discussion in the context of the update to the city's comprehensive plan.***

10. Status of the homeless campus. The FSM Housing Authority is still trying to raise funds for construction. If the funds aren't raised and committed by August/September, the city's CDBG allocation will have to be withdrawn and perhaps reallocated to other projects. Question was asked about what types of mental health services, if any, are to be included at the campus. RG responded that he believed a mental health component was being included, but didn't know to what extent any services would be available. *City Administrator has asked the Housing Authority for an update on funding and for a description of any contemplated mental health services.* ***Update: The Housing Authority was not successful in seeking particular grant funding for this project, so the CDBG allocation for the project may have to be diverted to other projects or risk being forfeited. The city will remain supportive of this initiative, and could make further allocations of CDBG funds at a later time. This topic is currently schedule for update and discussion at the Board's September 9 study session.***

11. Walk-ability of the city, particularly Rogers Avenue. Referenced the current I-540 project that rebuilt the overpass over Rogers Ave but did not include a sidewalk to connect east-west, even though there is room for one. All agreed that with the beautification project slated for that interchange, a sidewalk would fit in nicely. *Street Department staff will be asked to investigate with AHTD the possibility of the city installing that specific piece of sidewalk*. ***Update: Upon completion of the interstate project and the commencement of the beautification efforts at the I-540/Rogers Ave interchange, staff has had informal discussions with AHTD about the possibility of the city adding a sidewalk along Rogers Ave under the overpass, to which AHTD has been generally receptive. The Streets Dept. is currently putting together a formal request for permission to add a sidewalk on the north side of the road, which would cost about $25,000 to install sidewalks, ADA ramps and crosswalks.***

12. Further, on the issue of trails and bikeways, KL inquired as to whether we have contacted the state (AHTD) about participating in the funding of bike lanes, as there is indication that they might do that. KS again mentioned the concept of "shared space" for travel lanes. *Engineering staff will follow up with AHTD to determine what programs might be available. This was a priority of the Board established at its 2013 retreat.* ***Update: Engineering staff has solicited proposals for incorporating bike lanes into transportation planning, including a public input component to gain a better understanding of whether the public desires to have the bike lanes integral with the street or as a separate bike path adjacent to the street.***

13. Discussion of possibly asking voters to include sidewalks and trails as allowable uses for the renewal of the streets/bridges/associated drainage 1-cent sales tax in 2015. There may be a way to separate the questions to the voters: 1-Renew existing tax? 2-Allow sidewalks? 3-Allow trails? If funding is allowed we could then really focus on linking the sidewalk gaps along major thoroughfares (like Rogers Ave) and creating trails for the purpose of transportation around town instead of simply for recreation. Discussion also included the issue of timing…how quickly we

expect these improvements will impact how we approach the issue of funding them. The sidewalk program in the Street Department has focused on sidewalk repair and improvement around schools, libraries, or other areas with high pedestrian traffic. That hasn't yet specifically included a focus on linking gaps along the thoroughfares. *Further discussion about the possibility of reallocating portions of the 1-cent street/bridges/associated drainage sales tax for other uses needs to happen so that there is a unified approach when it comes time to present the renewal of the sales tax to the voters in 2015.* ***Update: The City Administrator has asked the city attorney for clarity on the application of the legislation and the process for conducting an election in this fashion. The topic of reallocation of this 1-cent sales tax in preparation for an election in 2015 is slated for the October 28 study session.***

14. Evaluate/analyze the possibility of any cost savings in hiring a city attorney on staff instead of contracting for legal services. It will require an analysis of payroll & operating expenses compared to the legal fees we are currently paying for services. *A study to this point was conducted in 1999-2000, which will be forwarded to the Board to look at and determine whether a similar evaluation approach is suitable, or if it should be approached a different way*. ***Update: The Board deferred consideration of this topic. It will be re-visited at a later date.***

15. "Building our Brand" with basic set of design standards for city buildings & projects. Could serve dual purpose of creating an overall "look" to city facilities and perhaps achieving a measure of cost controls by specifying types of features, exterior finishes, and design components associated with city buildings. This would prevent the possibility of facilities being overdesigned for their intended purpose, thereby costing more than they should for little to no functional benefit. *The approach would be hiring an architect to come up with such design guidelines, which will be a budget consideration for the FY2015 budget. Will be discussed more during budget deliberations*. ***Update: The discussion continues as to how this mentality could extend to all capital purchases, including design of city facilities and purchase of the city's fleet.***