



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 ~ Summary

Fort Smith Board of Directors

Brainstorming Meeting

May 27, 2014 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Fort Smith Public Transit

6821 Jenny Lind

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

CALL TO ORDER

All present, except Catsavis

Mayor Sandy Sanders presiding

1. Discuss Board Governance Policy
Lau/Lorenz placed resolution on the June 3, 2014 regular meeting to adopt the condensed version with a provision that such will be reviewed annually.
2. Brainstorm
See attached summary.

ADJOURN

7:44 p.m.

Memo



To: Ray Gosack, City Administrator
From: Jeff Dingman, Deputy City Administrator
Date: 5/29/2014
Re: Notes from Board of Directors Brainstorming Meeting, 5/27/2014

1. Board Governance Policy. Advanced "condensed" version for consideration on 6/3/14, including provision to revisit the plan at least annually.
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 and 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*).
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.*
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.*
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.*
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.

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.*
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.*
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.*
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.*
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.*
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.*
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.*

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.*
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.*