



Central Business Improvement District

Meeting Minutes

March 19th, 2008: 10:00 a.m.

First National Bank 8th Floor Board Room

Attendance: Sam Sicard, Chairman; Richard Griffin, Vice Chairman; Birnie Pryor, Bennie Westphal, Rodney Ghan & Jayne Hughes.

Absent: Phil White

Others in Attendance: David Kerr, Bill Black, Rep. Tracy Pennartz, Mat Pitsch, Ben Boulden.

Call to Order:

Chairman Sicard called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the February 20th, 2008 CBID Meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report:

None

Director's Report:

A copy of the Director's Report is available in the CBID office.

Rep. Tracy Pennartz was present to discuss her involvement with the state historic tax credit bill. She has been speaking with other state reps gaining support for this effort. She reported the issues concerning the Bill from the last legislative session which failed and how this effort she hopes will bring this added incentive for redevelopment to the cities in Arkansas. One of the concerns on the last effort was with the transferability of the tax credit option with new ownership of the property. She is not going to press for a cap on the amount. However, we will need to really push for the inclusion of CBID's on this bill. She feels that possibly 3 – 5 bills will come from all of these efforts to provide an incentive package to help encourage Downtown and Historic redevelopment.

The bid and contract has been approved for the new street scape program from 8th to 9th then on both sides of 9th from Garrison to Rogers and also includes the drainage improvement project around 10th.

Young Emerging Leaders has donated \$5000.00 to the Downtown Beautification Project which will be used for the planters along the sidewalk to the east of the Town Club.

The Grand Avenue entrance trees have been planted and sod will go down soon. Additional electrical requirements if needed will be available from the power poles.

The Parking Authority has been meeting to address the questions from citizens concerning parking in Downtown. Further information and updates will be provided from the P.A. as they become available.

New Business:

Mr. Griffin brought up the need for the CBID to have a first look at plans that would concern the Downtown Area. This could prevent things like a sidewalk being called a promenade when it is really concrete and lighting. Improve the communication on the front end would prevent these issues.

Old Business:

Copies of the expansion progress were handed out. This provided the commissioners with the signatures we have received and the dollar amount to meet the 2/3's requirement which we have and that which we need. The letters to all property owners have been mailed so hopefully additional signature sheets will come in. Ms. Hughes asked if additional calls and meetings could be set up with Mr. Bowden, Mr. Catsavis and also with Mr. Curtis. The petition was also handed out and reviewed.

Adding the Sparks properties were discussed. At this time we determined due to the Sparks properties exempt status that there would not be a need to include them in the boundary. The benefits they will receive from the neighboring properties being enhanced will happen anyway. Mr. Griffin brought up the River Front Development Task Force and the contract that they had accepted from the design and marketing company. He pointed out the many things that were accomplished from the original task force and that the update to the original was included as a goal which the group was trying to accomplish. The money was budgeted, adjustments to the bid were made to fit into the budget and then at the Board Meeting last night it was voted down. Mr. Griffin asked that for the domain for which we are charged to protect and improve please get involved and stand strong for what we believe in.

Additional discussion on parking and the need for communication with the Parking Authority took place.

Mr. Westphal also presented the need for additional events in the Downtown area to give the businesses that "shot in the arm" that bringing 1000 or more folks to the area for a particular event can accomplish. It was suggested to build on the Thursday Night Art Nights later this summer after the 4th.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jayne Hughes