

**CBID Retreat  
Meeting Minutes  
Downtown Fort Smith River Events Building  
October 16, 2008**

The day began with a special meeting of the CBID to review the plans for Mr. Bill Neumeier's Rib Room Project. The Commissioners had reviewed the project initially and determined it would need to come before the commissioner for a variance to the design guidelines and vote. Those present for this were: Sam Sicard, Richard Griffin, Birnie Pryor, Rodney Ghan, Bill Hanna, Phil White and staff member Jayne Hughes.

The commissioners listened to a presentation by Mr. James Reddick who explained the project and the materials chosen to accomplish the task to create the atmosphere for the outdoor music venue. Mr. Reddick addressed the questions on the colors which would be used for the project being that of dark green and burgundy similar to the colors used previously. The metal & steel would be painted either the green or black.

There were no additional questions and the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the variance for the project.

The special meeting adjourned at 8:16 am.

Mr. Westphal arrived at 8:25 and the retreat was called to order at 8:30 am.

The commissioners departed for the tour of the CBID on the Downtown rubber wheel trolley. We left the Park and headed north east and covered the entire new boundary of the CBID of Fort Smith. The following are items of interest which were discussed:

- Mr. Griffin's project on the west side of Clayton near the P Street Treatment Plant. This project theoretically could take 10 years to fill to accomplish the buildable space. A possible location for a botanical garden was mentioned as well as extensions of the walking trail.
- Mr. Westphal with reference to his property spoke about a minor league stadium, the USMSM, commercial and residential concepts. He said they are taking about 100-150 loads of fill a day to complete the project.
- Public art was a possibility either on the flood wall or in other locations along Clayton.
- The land to the south of the West End Lofts needs to be developed. Mr. Westphal agreed to leveling and preparing the space for now to accommodate more parking.
- There is potential for a larger development either residential or commercial from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> and A to B. Possible housing for UAFS.
- The north side of the 400 block of Garrison was labeled as needing attention by the property owners. Westphal discussed the plans to move the Liquor Store and tear down the building on the west end.
- Mr. Sicard asked Mr. Westphal to remove the billboards from 5<sup>th</sup> & Garrison. All agreed that this needed to come down.
- The development on Garrison is doing well and continues to grow.
- Street scape will be complete from the bridge to 9<sup>th</sup> in the coming months.
- The block from 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> on Grand is a possibility for housing.
- Towson Avenue needs to have its own design standards since it is not included in the Historic District.
- Street scape on Towson needs to be addressed.

- The warehouse area which includes the R.A.Y. Building needs to be cleaned up. A possible project for this effort was a parking area for the new Sebastian County Court Building.
- The Transit Station and a relocation of Jefferson Lines and the bus station were discussed.

We returned to the River Park and began the day to discuss the needs and opportunities for the CBID.

The current perceptions of Downtown were laid out.

Positives: Community Spirit, Clean surroundings, Wide street, Beautiful buildings, Riverfront Park, a Museum District, Hotels, the Ferris Wheel, \$50,000,000 invested in the district over the last 4 years, Tourism, Trolley System, Transit, Momentum.

Negatives: We broke these down into 2 categories, Perceived & Actual

Perceived:

Parking, Too many empty buildings, safety, lack of residential.

Actual:

Parking, Truck Traffic, Lack of Grocery/Retail Services, Bus Station, Next Step Day Room, Customer traffic, lack of residential, too few developers to share in the investment.

Targeted needs were brought out:

- More retail, a deli, market, Riverfront Development, Better Maintenance controls, Ball Fields, Additional Street Scape & Garrison Bridge lighting, Public Art, Parking Needs, Downtown City Hall, Legislation.
- Involve and incorporate the University with theatre and housing

The commissioners listed as a first choice or second choice the needs in the district.

Additional residential received 6 votes. Corporate offices were the next priority with a City Hall in Downtown coming in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Areas to develop for residential were:

- The 900 block on North Garrison (old Sears building)
- The block of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> between A & B east of the West End Lofts
- 5<sup>th</sup> & B
- 10<sup>th</sup> & B at Grand

Housing for UAFS students with the CBID developing and a lease back to the University

Areas to develop for Corporate Offices were:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> from B street north
- 900 block of Garrison north
- 5<sup>th</sup> & Garrison
- 6<sup>th</sup> & Garrison
- Riverfront

Areas to develop the City Hall were:

- Cisterna Park and the Triangle with Bercher Tire and Days Inn
- Unifab on South A & Carnall at South 11<sup>th</sup>
- In close proximity to the Sebastian County Court House

Areas to development additional Tourism was:

- Additional promotion
- USMSM
- Hotel on Riverfront

Additional locations to develop were:

- Towson & Garrison, old Otasco building, on 6<sup>th</sup> street between A & B

- Bus Station & Professional Building

The Plan should consist of what areas to develop and for what uses. How to acquire these properties and then who to focus on to develop. In addition, in this plan how the CBID can help to make the project a success should be included. The CBID should research a low interest loan program, become more knowledgeable on the Rehabilitation Tax Credits and better connected with the University.

The CBID as a commission needs to: Think of Downtown as "The Soul of The City".

- Create a marketing plan
- Better use of the CBID ability to assist and encourage additional development
- Create a list of tools & services to offer developers
- Develop a mapped plan to show possible uses of land and buildings
- Educate the members on the CBID – A solid PR statement – explain your role as a CBID member- better communication to the community and be consistent and in unity when you communicate a positive message to the community about what you are, what you do and stand for. This should be for all ages and demographics. Don't be afraid to bring up what is happening in Downtown.

Know the current projects,

Be certain you can name the business and the investor

Know the residential numbers

Know the cultural improvements

Know the incentives – converse intelligently about the tax credits

Overall the short term projects were:

- Define the "face" of the CBID.
- Determine the Plan, use this as a marketing tool
- Begin the first stage of acquisition of the R.A.Y. building. Formulate the approach.  
A motion was passed unanimously to go to the owner of the building and ask about the price. Determine if there is a willing seller.

Overall the long range plan was:

- To target areas for development with Residential, Corporate offices, and a new City Hall in Downtown
- Develop a partnership to encourage the partial use of the River front with a sports arena.
- Continue to bring in partnerships on the ball fields on the city owned property on Clayton
- Work on bond initiatives and possible low interest loans
- Work closer with the Chamber on legislative issues and economic development.
- Facilitate Public/Private partnerships

It was decided that in a year the CBID schedule another retreat to mark their progress on these goals, add new goals and present the plan.

The current goals are:

- Short term projects are complete
- An additional 40 units of residential
- More walking trails
- People are better informed about the CBID
- The Cash & Carry building has been demolished and some form of parking has been created

- Second Street Live is in their new building
- Gather Coalitions

The next meeting of the CBID will be November 19th at 10:00 am, First National Bank Board Room 8<sup>th</sup> floor.

The retreat was adjourned at 3:05 pm.