



## **Central Business Improvement District**

### **Meeting Minutes**

November 19, 2008 10:00 a.m.

First National Bank Board Room

**Attendance:** Sam Sicard, Chairman; Richard Griffin, Vice Chairman; Birnie Pryor, Rodney Ghan, Bennie Westphal arriving late and Phil White. Staff: Jayne Hughes. Absent: Bill Hanna.

**Others in Attendance:** Ben Boulden, Michael Tilley, David Overton, David Kerr, David Harris, Erik Arthur.

#### **Call to Order:**

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

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from the October, 2008 retreat were presented. The motion to approve the minutes as written was made by White and seconded by Pryor. Motion passed by a 5 for, 0 opposed, vote.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. Sicard. White made the motion to approve and Ghan seconded. The motion was approved by 5 for, 0 opposed.

#### **Director's Report:**

Hughes thanked the commissioners for attending the retreat and stated that it gave a fresh outlook for additional projects within the new footprint of the district. A map will be created to reflect the plans for possible sites for potential projects including additional retail, residential, commercial and corporate offices.

A project requiring a temporary revocable license for an ADA ramp along 4<sup>th</sup> Street was presented for a recommendation to the City Board. The project was for a ramp along 4<sup>th</sup> to service the Public Defender's office. Architectural drawings and a photo example were submitted for the construction of the ramp. The motion to recommend that the Board approve the request for an ADA ramp at 40 South 4th was made by Griffin, seconded by Pryor and a 6 for, 0 opposed vote occurred. The street vending ordinance was approved at the Board of Directors meeting Tuesday night on the basis that the CBID would create a document listing what would be acceptable for sidewalk vending. An open discussion occurred. Sidewalk sales and the Farmer's Market are excluded from this ordinance. The commissioners agreed to allow the existing zoning ordinances to prevail and allow staff the ability to review each street vendor on a one on one basis. The motion to recommend we allow the existing laws and ordinances to prevail with staff and planning overseeing each application to prevent items not suitable for sale in the district was made by White, seconded by Pryor, and passed 6 for, 0 opposed vote. The property maintenance code supervisors will be notifying the CBID and staff on each communication to the property owners. It was discussed during the retreat that we needed more interaction with the property maintenance codes. Hughes reminded the commission that we need to make some changes to the maintenance code adding requirements on awnings and the canopies attached to the buildings within the CBID. A motion for a recommendation begin the process to amend and add to the property maintenance code certain requirements for the upkeep of awnings and canopies was made by Griffin, seconded by White. The motion passed by a 6 for, 0 opposed vote.

Captain Overton was present to discuss the police presence in the Downtown area. It has been a problem keeping a bike patrol person in the area on a daily basis. We have requested the Police Department look into the scheduling of a permanent person to patrol the area Monday – Friday 8-5.

The Design Guidelines were discussed. Discussion about the guidelines in reference to paint colors took place since there is not a permit required for painting a building. It was a concern about the Advantage Credit building in the 500 block of Garrison and the building on Towson. Currently the Design Guidelines were discussed and the need for the updates to include the new boundary. The Guidelines need to be reviewed before the next meeting then additional discussion will take place. The commissioners asked staff to address the building at 513 Garrison by contacting the property owner with reference to the current unacceptable paint color.

The State Historic Tax Credit has gained substantial momentum throughout Arkansas. It seems that this will have a great chance to pass this session in January. The Commissioners may need to attend a hearing and testify for the Tax Credit.

Mr. White and Ms. Hughes attended a meeting with Tracy Pennartz to discuss this further and to plan an additional bill which would allow CBID's a tax credit as well although they may in part be outside a Historic District. This bill would also include new construction.

Advertising is strong right now. Ads have appeared in e Fort Smith, on the web and soon will appear in Arkansas Business. Plans for advertising in the SWTR in December are in the works.

Mr. Griffin brought up the Grand Avenue entrance. He addressed the need for additional lighting and also Christmas lights in the future. This should be scheduled and prepared for the 09 season. We should request bids for the work after the first of the year.

### **Commissioners Forum**

#### **New Business:**

Rodney Ghan presented his plans for the Condos on 9<sup>th</sup>. The balconies which will overhang on the public sidewalk in the area were shown in the drawings. This will require a temporary revocable license and needs the recommendation from the CBID to the City board. Mr. Ghan was also asking for the approval from the CBID on color of windows and the recommendation to the board for the temporary revocable for the project. Lighting and landscaping was also discussed. A motion to recommend a temporary revocable license for the balconies at 14 South 9<sup>th</sup> be approved by the Board was made by Pryor, seconded by Sicard and passed by a 6 for, 0 opposed vote. The window color being within the guidelines does not require a vote.

Mr. Griffin stated that developers should seriously take in consideration applying for the federal historic tax credits. He will be making an application for the renovations at 309 Garrison. Mr. White asked for tasks to be handled in the first 20 minutes and allow for more time to do the creative goals that were made during the retreat. It was suggested to have all materials to the commissioners before the meeting. The commissioners should plan for a two hour meeting and then possibly lunch will be served to extend the creative work.

Ms. Hughes gave an update with the botanical garden efforts. Hazel Brown with Ramona Roberts Realty along with Karen Shaw met with Hughes and Matt Jennings yesterday about their next steps in the process of organizing an advisory board. We would like to encourage them to locate this project in Downtown along the river front.

#### **Old Business:**

Mr. Ghan and Mr. Griffin gave an update on the R.A. Young building, located at 301 South 10<sup>th</sup>, which has been discussed during the retreat. Due to the legal issues of the organization the Alamo Foundation, owners of the building, they are not willing to discuss a sale. Judge Hudson mentioned to Mr. Griffin that the County might be interested in the property. It has been suggested that they already are in need of additional parking and the parking in the area will be more of an issue once the take home cars for the Police Department are no longer a benefit. If the CBID were to handle the deal, bonds and a revenue stream will need to be identified. Both the County and the City will need to be a part of this discussion. It was suggested to have preliminary costs for the demolition and environmental surveys be performed on the building. This is certainly a worthwhile project for the CBID to continue with. Whether this would be a parking lot or not, if the CBID were to purchase the property, it would be a good piece of property to have for development.

Mr. White gave an update on an item presented at the retreat in reference to additional residential and the possibility of more University involvement in Downtown. A discussion with Dr. Beran and Mr. White took place and Dr. Beran discussed the need for additional residential living for the students off site in Downtown. Dr. Beran, Dr. Breaux and Mark Horn were invited to attend the CBID meeting and they will attend in December. A letter will be sent to Mr. Sicard stating the University's interest in Downtown housing. A lease back project could be used similar to how the State Office Building came through. The commissioners were very positive about additional residential for students at the University. Mr. White challenged the property owners to begin thinking about areas for this use. They did not want to be on Garrison but in the Downtown District. Transit will need to run the Downtown route to the University. This housing would need to be suitable for 21 and over or married couples. The possibility of fraternity housing was also mentioned. If we could obtain the site plans they use now it might be useful to us to locate possible sites in Downtown. However, it sounded like they want a different style not the quad style currently being used on University property. Once the letter is received by Mr. Sicard he will send all of the commissioners a copy. Bonds will need to be discussed with legal counsel as a first step after the letter is received.

Mr. Sicard announced his retirement from the CBID. The December meeting will be his last official meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jayne Hughes