

February 2, 2011 CBID Retreat Overview

Due to weather related issues a slight delay occurred during the morning. The 2011 CBID Retreat took place on February 2 at the River Park events building west. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. The only official business was to pass a resolution of support for the HB 1118 otherwise known as the Tax Credit Bill for Central Business Improvement Districts. Hughes explained the bill and each commissioner received a copy of the actual proposed bill. White made the motion with Westphal giving the second to approve the resolution of support.

The commissioners took the first part of the agenda and discussed their expectations for the day and began talking about the successes of 2010. In their packets they received the 2010 list of accomplishments that staff had sent to the Board of Directors.

With this in mind the commissioners boarded the tour bus and began by going north on Clayton and eventually touring most of the CBID boundary at least as much of it that time would permit. They returned to Riverpark about 10:30.

They began by talking about what they wanted to see in 5 years for Downtown.

- United States Marshals Museum
- Corporate Headquarters on the Riverfront
- A Sports Facility or complex just outside the boundary on the east side of Clayton
- A new construction project at 5th & Garrison
- More parks, improvements at Compass Park
- Additional residential units
- Additional project to the south of the West End Lofts

The group also discussed what they noticed when visiting other “cool cities”.

- Walking trails
- A downtown market
- A sense of quality of place
- Great retail
- Street art

Excellent discussion on the need for more precise data took place throughout the day. It developed into a consensus by the commissioners to create an overall package to help them or others discuss the accomplishments of the district as well as where we want to be in the future. This can be used as a tool in recruitment of outside investors and also to attract new businesses. Hughes showed the group the annual report just printed for Chaffee Crossing. Something similar will be very helpful for the commissioners to use when needing numbers about growth and investment which has taken place over the last 5 years.

The importance of a City Hall in downtown was discussed. The Commissioners role in keeping this project alive was brought forth as well as the discussion of the need for the CBID to have a funding

source. If the CBID became the landlord in this project or other projects a spread between the cost of the note to do the project and the tenant payment could be established. Similar to how the 30 year note with the State was drawn up. Other funding sources such as raising the funds from property owners for a specific purpose were discussed.

The commissioners revisited the topic of renaming Clayton Expressway. They decided that Riverfront Drive would be their choice as it relates to what we would be selling to possible investors which is the river front. It would also not highlight any particular project but focus on the river as an asset. In addition locals and tourists would not be so inclined to think it was a road in order to drive fast like in the term expressway.

During lunch Mike Alsup, Director of Parks attended and there was substantial discussion about the possibility of developing the 50 acres just outside the district on the east side of Clayton. Serious points were brought up about funding and how the previous bond initiative had failed.

The topic of street art was brought back up with Commissioner Sicard stating that he felt that the CBID needed to be a major player in the fundraising effort for the Bass Reeves Monument which is planned to be placed at Pendergraft Park. He said that the fundraising efforts had come to a standstill and that they still needed another \$80,000.00. He asked for the commissioners to help with the fundraising efforts and place it as a priority. He also mentioned that the CBID should possibly make a donation to the Reeves Statue.

Housing for UAFS was also revisited. Griffin reminded the Commissioners that they were about 6 months out to discuss this again with the University. At that time another survey will be conducted by Dr. Beran. The CBID should be prepared with a draft concept of what this housing could look like and where it would be located as well as the costs involved.

Reducing blight continues to be on the commissioners minds. It was suggested that they each take it upon themselves to email or call neighborhood services at the City offices to report any structures that appear as though they are not conforming to the property maintenance code. This is an easy process through the City's website. www.fortsmithar.gov.

The Community Center for the parking lot at 2nd and Garrison was discussed. Again identifying funding sources was the issue.

The group moved forward by setting their short term goals with items they felt could be completed in 12 months.

- Assisting in the fundraising efforts for the Bass Reeves Legacy Monument
- Developing a plan to have when recruiting new business and investors
- Compass Park – Splash Pad
- Continue to reduce the blight – moving into the Towson Avenue area
- Work on identifying revenue streams for the CBID

The group then identified items for a long term focus.

- Work on new strategies for the downtown City Hall project
- A corporate headquarters for the riverfront
- Focus on more retail
- Work on side street landscaping and street scape
- Keep the possibility of creating a sports facility along the eastern side of Clayton alive
- Continue with different ideas for street art including the plaque program

The retreat adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jayne Hughes