

**THE CWE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION
OCTOBER 20, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. via Zoom.

PRESENT were Commissioners Kyle Bozoian, Jim Dwyer, Paul Filla, Ken Fowler, and Trip Straub; Kate Haher, Executive Director and Erica Lembo, Marketing and Communications Coordinator for the CID.

MINUTES

Kyle Bozoian moved to approve the September 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Paul Filla seconded. Minutes approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of September 2020 Financials

Kate Haher stated that September sales tax revenue was right in line with budget and that, overall, revenue is currently tracking ahead of year-to-date budget, which she attributed to an increase in use tax.

She noted that it was a fairly quiet month for expenses, and that the majority were related to special projects (like the Streatery and the retail plan).

She also noted a slight dip in the dedicated patrols line item, explaining that the SLMPD has recently moved to 12 hour shifts, which impacts the regularly scheduled CID shifts. She also advised that hours for the CID's foot patrol officers have been adjusted to 4 p.m.-12 a.m. since businesses are mandated to close by 11 p.m. and there are not many people out after midnight.

Approval of the Financial Review Proposal

Kate referenced the proposal from Stopp&VanHoy, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. She explained that even though it is not required by law, CID finances have still undergone a full audit annually for the past several years. She stated that Stopp&VanHoy had suggested the CID consider a financial review for this year, instead of a full audit. She said that the financial review would cost \$4,500 (compared to \$7,500 for the full audit). The Board agreed that the CID should move forward with the financial review for \$4,500.

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS

Halloween

Kate provided a brief update on the 2020 Virtual Halloween Costume Contest, noting that only 14 contestants have signed up. She explained that event producers believe that 20 contestants is the minimum needed to produce a quality show. She stated that the registration deadline is Thursday and that the CID will continue to promote sign-ups for the next few days on social media. She said that event organizers will regroup on Thursday and decide whether to move forward with the production on Saturday, or pivot to an online photo contest instead. She explained that contestants who have already signed up and invested time and money into their costumes would be able to submit a photo, which would be shared on the CID's website and social media channels and that viewers would still be able to vote for their favorite costumes online (on the CID's website). She said she would keep the Board informed of the decision made on Thursday.

Window Walk

Kate stated that plans for Window Walk continue to move forward and that the event will have some exciting new components this year. She explained that 12 designers have now been paired with businesses in the neighborhood and that they will begin to work together to create beautiful holiday windows. She also advised that St. Louis Shakespeare Festival is partnering with property owners in the District to create 2D and 3D displays in vacant storefront windows. She mentioned that their theme will be based on Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and that a style guide had been shared with all designers to tie the programs together.

Stretery Update

Kate reported that the Stretery continues to be successful and that participating businesses have done a great job in running their sections. She noted that weather will be the biggest factor in how long the Stretery will continue. She mentioned that heaters were allotted to businesses last week and that all were very appreciative of the CID's support. She said that the CID will continue to work with businesses and evaluate the weather week-by-week.

Fall Sidewalk Sale

Kate said that several retailers have expressed interest in the CID promoting a "retail-focused" shopping day in the neighborhood, and noted that several retailers have also reported an increase in foot traffic on Sundays (due to the Stretery taking place). She said that Erica has been working with businesses on promoting a "Shop Small in the Fall" event this Sunday, October 25. She stated that several retailers will have special deals, discounts, and events taking place that afternoon and that it will hopefully help drive traffic into the shops.

Explore St. Louis Annual Visitors Guide Ad

Kate stated that the CID typically runs a full page ad each year in the Explore St. Louis Annual Visitors Guide. She explained that while it is a large expense (\$13,017), there has always been a cost-share agreement among participating businesses. She stated that the CID typically funds half the cost, with each participating business paying a portion to have a square on the page. She mentioned that it may be harder for businesses to participate this year (due to budgets being pared-back because of COVID), but that the CID will still reach out to businesses to see if there is any interest in participating. The Board agreed that the CID should pull the ad if there's not enough business participation, citing uncertainty in the travel/tourism industry for the upcoming year.

PUBLIC REALM

Streetscape Update

Kate stated that the CID's request (along with a memo from John Hoal) had been submitted to the Streets Department a few weeks ago. She stated that this letter described the importance of the CID's streetscape project and why the CID is requesting that the 14 meters at Maryland and Euclid be deemed a "no parking zone". She stated that the goal is to hopefully roll out the temporary streetscape pilot program next Spring and mentioned that she will be meeting with John Hoal, Alderwoman Heather Navarro, and the City Streets Department to discuss next steps and expediting the permit process. She also said that she will be setting up another meeting with the Streetscape Steering Committee to revisit design plans/implementation for the pilot program.

Retail Plan Update

Kate reported that H3 Studio and Partners for Economic Solutions are wrapping up Phase 2 of the CID's Retail Vision Plan. She mentioned that resident meetings are now being scheduled, as well as a second Steering Committee meeting. She stated that the CID should receive a report by the end of November, and reminded the Board that Phase 3 will include the retail development strategy.

Kate stated that John Hoal has expressed concern about onsite research and the value it would bring. Due to COVID-19, she explained that the District doesn't have the same traffic/customer base visiting the neighborhood as before. She stated that the total cost of the project is approximately \$50,000, and that this specific line item regarding onsite research is \$9,000. She asked the Board if they still believe user research in the field is necessary, or if they are comfortable reducing the scope of work. The Board agreed that (due to COVID) there might not be the right representation of data in this research, and that the CID should remove this scope of work from the project.

Paul Filla asked if H3 Studio and Partners for Economic Solutions could use a different method for their research. Kate explained that the process included many aspects of research, which were underway or complete, and this was just one aspect of the data collected.

Kate also noted that the research phase of the McPherson project coincided with the research portion of the retail plan, and stated that H3 Studio will now start working on the conceptual streetscape design plans now that the research is complete.

Curbside Pick-up Parking Spaces

Kate stated that several businesses in the District have requested dedicated parking spaces for curbside pick-up and deliveries. She mentioned that she had put in a request several months ago with the City Street Department, indicating approximately 11 parking spots in the District that could be designated for curbside pick-up and be utilized by multiple businesses, but she hasn't yet received a response. She said that she and the Alderwoman had been discussing and pushing the City for a process, as this will be very important over the next 6 months.

Maryland Plaza Fountain

Kate reported that she had contacted Sam Koplars to inquire about the Maryland Plaza Fountain and the general routine maintenance it requires. She mentioned that while there have not been significant repairs in the past, the Koplars typically do a monthly filter change and a complete system check at the beginning and end of each season. She noted that Nathan Ambus (Koplars's head maintenance employee) has had to complete minor repairs periodically, but that he wasn't able to provide an exact budget number.

Kate said that before she pursues more discussion with the Koplars, she would like to understand how the Board defines the CID's role in maintaining the fountain. Jim Dwyer said he believes that it should be a partnership between the CID and the Koplars, and noted that if the CID is making an investment, it should have a voice in determining programming at the fountain. Kyle Bozoian agreed. Jim suggested that Kate reach out to Sam and ask him how he sees this relationship moving forward.

Writers Corner Art – Insurance

Kate stated that the Central West End Association has requested the CID's assistance in funding insurance coverage for six sculptures in the District. She explained that the CWEA does not have the funds to pay for the premium right now, and that it would cost the CID \$400 for a partial year or just under \$900 for the full year. Following discussion, the Board concluded that it is not the CID's purpose or role to fund the cost of insurance for the sculptures.

OTHER BUSINESS

Kate mentioned that Brake Landscaping has advised that they will be increasing their fees in 2021. She noted that it's been a couple of years since the CID last issued an RFP for these services, and that she intended to put a request for proposals. She said that she will begin drafting the RFP and will send it to the Board to review.

She also said she would be speaking to Pete Rothschild later this afternoon to revisit the CID's building lighting project. She reminded the Board that she had approached Pete a few months ago to determine if he was interested in funding 50% of the project at McPherson, which he declined. However, she said he is now interested in revisiting the conversation. She asked the Board if they would consider entering into a possible repayment plan with Pete (with the CID funding the building lighting project 100% up front, and being repaid by Pete 50% over time). The Board declined.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JAMES DWYER, SECRETARY