

THE CWE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

JUNE 14, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. at the Chase Park Plaza.

PRESENT were Commissioners Jim Dwyer, Derek Gamlin, Chris Lanter and Trip Straub; Kate Haher, Executive Director of the CWE North Community Improvement District; and Elisa Essner, Marketing & Communications Coordinator for the CID.

Chris Lanter moved to approve the May 16, 2017, minutes; Derek Gamlin seconded; the motion was approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Trip Straub began by reviewing the May 2017 financials, stating that May had been a strong month for the NCID (even without a payment from the Chase Park Plaza) and the NCID would finish its fiscal year ahead of budget in terms of net income. Kate Haher noted that there had been an unusually large amount of use tax collected — almost \$29,000 — and said she would follow up with the state to get a better understanding of why that payment was made and whether it was a one-time event or something the NCID should factor into its future budget projections.

Kate then updated the board on her recent discovery of two fraudulent transactions in the NCID's bank account. She said she noticed the issue when reconciling the accounts and had been in touch with Busey Bank's fraud department. On their advice, she had started the process to close the account and set up a new one, as well as to file a report with the police. Once those steps are completed, Busey will refund 100 percent to the account. Jim Dwyer recommended that she file her police report with Tim Kavanaugh.

The board then discussed its recommendations for three new commissioners. Kate noted that the NCID's fourth vacancy will be filled automatically by a representative from the Chase Park Plaza once it finalizes its staffing following its sale to Sonesta.

Jim stated that he had spoken to both Peter Cassel at Mac Properties and Ken Fowler at Enchanting Embellishments, and both were interested in the opportunity to serve. Jim said he and Kate had discussed the urgency of filling these vacancies, so he had reached out to Mayor Lyda Krewson for her general thoughts on the NCID's recommendations (given the absence of an alderman until mid-July), and she suggested submitting the recommendations directly to her office for review.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF 2017/18 CID BUDGET

Kate presented the proposed CID budget for the 2017/18 fiscal year, noting that there were no major changes since it was last discussed at the May meeting.

Trip noted that, as discussed, the NCID had been more conservative in its projections for 2017/18, with projected sales & use tax collections at \$800,000, due to the loss of several prominent businesses and the sponsorship challenges faced in 2016/17.

Trip highlighted an increase in administrative/overhead costs, related to reallocated labor costs from the public realm budget, as well as the possible impact of an increased minimum wage on maintenance staff salaries.

Trip also noted a healthy bump in the marketing & events budget, which Kate attributed to costs associated with Window Walk and the CWE Cocktail Party, as well as the creation of BookFest St. Louis and additional programming for the Sidewalk Sale and Make Music Day.

Kate said she had not budgeted for PR consulting services (with Jennifer Volk of Creative Entourage), but there were additional funds in the miscellaneous marketing line item which could be used for that purpose if needed, as well as for design and/or other creative services.

She noted the overall cocktail party budget would increase, while there were decreases in specific line items, adding that the baby bottle costs in the 2016 budget had not proven to be a good investment and would be pulled from future events.

Kate said she was working to schedule a Window Walk meeting within the next two weeks with St. Louis Homes & Lifestyles and several past window designers to get a better understanding of what it would cost to bring in additional window designers so the NCID can fund more extensive and elaborate window designs throughout the neighborhood. She noted that the first funding priority will be window designers and so she may need to make adjustments to Window Walk line items (ie. programming, entertainment), but would work within the approved total.

Kate explained that the public realm budget has been decreased due to reduced landscaping and maintenance costs with a new contractor. The public realm budget includes funding for resetting cobblestones around some tree wells and pulling/replacing trees within the district, striping crosswalks, repainting curbs and repainting fire hydrants.

Kate presented a resolution adopting the 2017/18 budget. Trip moved to approve the budget; Jim seconded; the budget was approved.

The board then discussed potential public realm projects that would be funded from its reserve fund, all of which had been discussed in detail at the board's May meeting. Kate said she had reprioritized the list based on feedback from that meeting, saying the board should pay particular attention to the funds tentatively allocated to holiday lighting and electrical infrastructure. She said she planned to meet with

TGB and Jim Espy in early July to get more information about what needs to be done in order to phase in a more comprehensive lighting plan.

Kate indicated that other items on the list included streetscape projects, a parking study, improvements in the public realm outside the Racquet Club, facade lighting, installing the Burroughs sculpture at Writer's Corner as part of BookFest, and landscaping near the McPherson parking lot were all up for discussion, but that the board did not need to make decisions on all of these now.

Jim Dwyer said he felt the conversation should focus on improvements at the Racquet Club and funding the Burroughs bust, as both of these items are time-sensitive. He also recommended funding a streetscape project on York, which he felt could be a real boon for the neighborhood, but added this should wait until more information about Koplars' new hotel project was available.

Trip Straub asked for more information about the scope of the Racquet Club project and a better understanding of the portion of the project on the public right-of-way. Jim said he thought the club had backed off on its initial proposal and was looking for assistance to pave the alley between Kingshighway and the parking lot, complete minor sidewalk repairs and adjust curb cuts. Trip said the CID needs to be clear and firm with regard to the public right-of-way aspect. The board was supportive of the project but requested additional bids for the work. Trip moved to approve a maximum of \$30,000 for improvements in public areas outside the Racquet Club; Jim seconded the motion.

The board was also in favor of funding the installation of the William Burroughs sculpture to complete Writer's Corner in conjunction with BookFest (Sept. 23) and of funding holiday lighting once more information was available about the necessary electrical infrastructure.

Trip said he was opposed to funding a streetscape project, parking study and facade lighting plan at this time, noting in particular that he felt facade lighting would require spending a lot of money on enhancing private properties and it would be cost prohibitive to extend it to every corner and defend it to CID businesses. Kate said she felt the CID should move forward and complete its current phase of the facade lighting project, and look at the mockup designed by Randy Burkett's team. Jim said he was supportive of a sophisticated architectural lighting plan and the design work being done by Randy Burkett's team would be valuable now and in the future. He and Trip agreed adding electrical infrastructure and the capability to light trees district-wide was more universally valuable for the CID and its public realm.

The board also debated the merits of funding landscaping outside the McPherson parking lot. Jim said he felt the project was important and would reinforce the extent of the district. Chris agreed, adding that more people will be impacted by improvements to the McPherson lot than those outside the Racquet Club. The board felt the \$50,000 price tag seemed high for the scope of work, and \$30,000 might be more appropriate. Jim and Kate said they would follow up to get more accurate numbers for the project.

Derek Gamlin said he was in favor of a parking study focused on maximizing parking in the neighborhood. Jim said he agreed it would be valuable for the CID to identify every available spot and get an understanding of potential opportunities (citing, for example, subterranean parking at Bank of

America). Trip said he felt the CID would need to be very specific about what this study would accomplish, and that it was not imperative to spend \$10,000 on this project, indicating instead that surveying the neighborhood and counting spaces is something the CID could manage internally. Kate said she would draft an RFP for review and present additional information.

MARKETING & EVENTS

Kate provided a brief review of the Cocktail Party, saying she had spoken to many of the businesses and received positive feedback about the event.

She also provided an update on planning for BookFest STL, saying she and Elisa planned to meet with the team at Left Bank Books later in the week to develop a plan to launch and promote the event.

Elisa said she was setting up a meeting with Explore St. Louis to learn more about co-op advertising opportunities for the neighborhood, which would provide more cost-effective ways for CWE businesses to advertise to the tourist market via Explore St. Louis' Visitors' Guide and annual map.

Jim said that, in addition to the planned events, he would like to see additional programming for Small Business Saturday, which has been a successful day for many merchants in the neighborhood over the past few years, and noted that it might be a good opportunity to collaborate with the south CID. Chris Lanter recommended reviewing the American Express site early to get a sense of what marketing materials they're offering that could be used in the neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JAMES DWYER, SECRETARY