

THE CWE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

MAY 19, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 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; and Jes Stevens (Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation).

MINUTES

Kyle Bozoian moved to approve the April 21, 2020 meeting minutes. Paul Filla seconded. Minutes approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of April 2020 Financials

Kate Haher reviewed the monthly financial statement for April. She stated that it was another decent month for the CID and although sales and use tax revenue was slightly below budget, overall, total income is still tracking ahead of year-to-date-budget. She acknowledged that revenue could take a big hit in the months to come as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and noted that the CID will not receive the usual \$16,000 sponsorship for Cocktail Party this year (due to current events).

She mentioned that expenses are currently focused on landscape maintenance and general upkeep of the neighborhood, and continuing the CID's safety and security patrols. She noted that event expenses are on hold until conditions are suitable for resuming events.

2020/2021 Budget Review and Approval

Kate presented commissioners with the proposed 2020/2021 budget, and noted that there are two different scenarios outlined. She explained that the Board had projected \$800,000 in sales and use tax revenue in March, but due to the COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing impact on businesses, that projection needs to be adjusted. She mentioned that the CID had sent out a survey to business owners to get information on their current sales and projections, but noted that many business owners were unable to submit any concrete budget information at this time. Kate stated that one scenario for the proposed 2020/2021 budget assumes tax revenue will be down 70%, and the other assumes revenue will be down 50%, with some adjustments for specific businesses based on information they provided.

Kate stated that she reviewed each line item in the budget and reduced or removed items that were unnecessary. She stated that the administrative/overhead budget remained relatively flat, and noted that certain operational expenses are required to keep the office and website up-and-running.

She stated that the most significant reductions were the events budgets (due to uncertainty regarding large community events), together with marketing costs associated with those events. Without event marketing, she noted that the CID's media budget was significantly reduced and now includes only media buys for general neighborhood promotion. She mentioned that she left the Summer Music Series in the proposed budget, to create an enjoyable environment throughout the summer.

She noted that costs for street cleaning services and miscellaneous maintenance had gone up slightly, but said this would ensure the neighborhood is maintained in tip-top condition.

She stated that while there were no major changes to the safety and security budget, the dedicated patrols line item had increased due to a 9% increase in TCF's hourly wage. Kyle Bozoian expressed concern at the significant increase, given the current economy. Kate and Jim Dwyer provided further clarification on a review and discussion that had occurred among all neighborhood entities working with TCF, explaining that the CWE Neighborhood Security Initiative had reviewed proposals from other security providers and it was determined that the fee was fair, especially given the overall value that TCF provides.

Kate stated that even though some line items had been reduced or removed from the proposed budget, the CID will most likely have to utilize some of its reserves at some point this year.

Trip Straub asked commissioners if they were comfortable with the expenses as laid out in the proposed 2020/2021 budget, and all commissioners agreed that they were.

Trip then asked commissioners whether they want to move forward with the proposed 2020/2021 budget projecting sales and use tax revenue down 50% or 70% (based on the original \$800,000 projection). Kyle Bozoian, Paul Filla, and Ken Fowler proposed 50%. Jim suggested the Board lean toward a more conservative assumption and suggested averaging the two and moving forward with 60% down as a projection. Commissioners agreed.

Adoption of Resolution NO. 2020 -1 Adopting the 2020/2021 Annual Budget

Kyle Bozoian moved to approve the 2020-2021 Annual Budget (projecting sales and tax use revenue down 60% from the original \$800,000). Paul Filla seconded the motion. The 2020-2021 Annual Budget was approved unanimously.

Election of Board Officers

Kate presented a resolution to elect Officers of the Board, including a Chairman (Trip Straub), Vice Chairman (Jim Dwyer), Secretary (Jim Dwyer) and Treasurer (Derek Gamlin). She asked commissioners if anyone would be interested in stepping into a new role, or if they would like to keep the same appointments from the previous year. Commissioners agreed to keep the same appointments.

Kyle Bozoian moved to approve Resolution NO. 2020-2. Ken Fowler seconded. The resolution was approved.

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS

Dining Al Fresco

Kate referred to an email she sent previously that contained an outline for "dining al fresco" in the Central West End. She stated that the City of St. Louis has created a streamlined process that will allow restaurants and bars to temporarily expand (or introduce) outdoor seating while taking prudent precautions to reduce the exposure to, and slow the spread of, COVID-19 among both staff and guests, while increasing customer table seating capacity within the prescribed restaurant operating protocols. She noted that all permit fees would be waived by the City.

She explained that, as proposed, the CID would be responsible for managing all street closures and logistics, placing barricades and signage for street closures, providing trash cans and staff to clean trash from the common area, and providing portable hand washing stations and signage (with rules and guidelines) at each entrance to the area. She also stated that the CID would be responsible for establishing guidelines for participating businesses, and noted that businesses must remain in compliance with all City and CDC guidelines to participate.

She stated that participating businesses would be responsible for their expanded footprint and that they would manage the space just as they would inside their restaurants.

Kate stated that 10 businesses in the District have expressed interest, and a handful are possibly interested. She noted that many businesses are still working through their reopening timelines and don't yet know when they will be back up-and-running. She mentioned that the CID sent out a survey for feedback on days and times that businesses would like this program to run. She stated that the most popular choices were Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday lunch, and Saturday dinner. She noted that Saturday daytimes could give retailers an opportunity to participate as well.

Kate mentioned that Alderwoman Heather Navarro has reviewed the proposal and is supportive of the program. She stated that the City application has just been released online, and noted that there is a one-to-two week turnaround for approvals.

Jim stated that the CID should create signage at each entry point clearly stating all safety requirements and guidelines that must be followed. Paul Filla asked if the CID has conferred with legal counsel for input. Kate stated that all messaging could be reviewed prior to the event. She mentioned that if safety becomes an issue and people aren't following the guidelines put in place, that the CID could cancel the program and not close the streets.

Gift Card Program

Kate stated that May 15 was the last day for people to participate in the CWE rewards program. She mentioned that she and Erica are now organizing gift cards from businesses in the District, and will be distributing them to participants who stop by the CID office for pick-up (over the next four weeks).

Meal Donation Program

Kate said that the meal donation program ended on May 8. She reminded commissioners that the CID had allocated \$32,000 to the program, and that meals were delivered three times a week to BJC and City Hope STL. She stated that the CID had promoted an opportunity to contribute to the meal donation program on its website and had raised \$7,425 from local community members. She also noted that participating restaurants were very pleased with the initiative.

Jim asked Kate whether there is an ongoing need to continue the program. Kate stated that while hospital employees appreciate the gesture, meals are not necessarily "needed". She did note that there is always an ongoing need for meal donations at local homeless shelters. She also mentioned that the CID could consider funding meals for local restaurant employees who had been laid off due to COVID-19. Jim asked Kate to reach out to participating businesses to see if there is interest in continuing the program. He said he thinks this is something for the Board to consider further.

PUBLIC REALM

Pilot Streetscape Project Discussion

Kate stated that the CID's streetscape committee met (via Zoom) last week to discuss the 14 parking meters that would be eliminated by the pilot program. She reminded commissioners that the project has been in a holding pattern as we waited for a response from the Treasurer's Office about the cost to obtain those meters for the pilot program. She stated that she had recently received revenue data from Jared Boyd regarding (54) parking meters near Maryland and Euclid. She said that, according to their records, this area generates approximately \$300,000 a year in revenue. She noted that the Treasurer's Office had not provided a specific fee or formula for the CID to use to calculate the cost for just the 14 affected meters. She stated that the streetscape committee determined that the CID should offer the Treasurer's Office \$35,000 a year to lease the 14 meters, for up to 18 months (to be paid on a quarterly basis).

Kate stated that she had contacted the CID's attorney, David Richardson, to draft a proposal to the Treasurer's Office and added that he is conducting research to find any additional information regarding meter negotiations they have had in the past.

Building Lighting Update

Kate mentioned that the RFP for the building lighting design project had been sent out to bid and that the CID had received proposals from three electrical contractors. She noted that the CID now has a better idea of the costs associated with the project, and when the time is right, can begin to evaluate next steps.

OTHER BUSINESS

Kate said that the CID has arranged to have all ground floor exterior windows cleaned for the businesses in the District. She mentioned that as businesses begin to reopen, the CID will continue to do what it can to help the CWE shine. She said the windows should be completed by the end of the week. She also mentioned that American flags are now up throughout the District.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JAMES DWYER, SECRETARY