



FARMINGTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING – ANNUAL RETREAT
Chamber of Commerce Board Room

9:10 A.M.

SATURDAY

March 3, 2008

A special meeting of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority was called to order by Board President Cowley at 9:10 a.m.

Present: Cassidy, Cowley, Freeman, Kuiken, Pastue, Rock, Schneemann, Ziegler

Absent: Batzloff, Cornwell, Mazzoni

Also Present: Annette Knowles, Krista Wolter

Review of Mission and Vision Statements

Members present concurred that the language contained in the Mission and Vision statements remains relevant. No language changes were recommended.

Review of Core Themes and Objectives

In December, 2007, as a precursor to the Board Retreat, the DDA board and the City Council of Farmington met to develop core themes and objectives that would guide the work planning effort. Previously, work plans were created based on committee, rather than by core theme. It is hoped that this process will lead toward all committees working toward the same ends.

At the December meeting, the core themes identified were walkability, creating the downtown as a destination (increasing awareness) and increasing the commercial job base. Objectives under each theme were included. Today's objective is to examine the proposed activities/tasks and to establish priorities for allocation of funds.

Core Theme - Walkability

The proposed activities include the Grand River and Grove Street Streetscape Improvement Project. The City of Farmington has asked the DDA to consider a contribution to the project in the form of assumption of the first two years' bond debt retirement. The project planning is progressing through the Design

Committee, as the anticipated construction schedule demands. During the course of project planning, the Committee has identified areas on the original plan that they feel need embellishment, to turn a basic project into a showcase. In order to include these features, additional funding from the DDA may be necessary. The anticipated additional cost, not included in the original project budget, may amount to upward of \$400,000.

The Economic Restructuring Committee continues its efforts to promote a clustering strategy and to plan for corresponding parking management. With the anticipated parking study results, a plan will be devised to address short- and long-term needs, which might require land assembly activities.

The Marketing and Promotions Committee intends to incorporate a more pedestrian-minded approach when events are planned. Additionally, any reprint of the downtown business locator map will have walking features incorporated into it. The Committee would like to see static displays of holiday decorations and on-street entertainment to improve the pedestrian orientation in downtown.

Core Theme – Increase Commercial Jobs

In cooperation with each other, the Economic Restructuring Committee would like to institute Façade and Sign Incentive Programs that are under development, with the review process of applications to be managed by the Design Committee. It is hoped that these incentives, coupled with the Grand River project, would attract further reinvestment into the downtown.

Along those lines, ER will be working to develop an additional incentive program for redevelopment, whereby new funds generated by the redevelopment may be provided to key or signature projects for infrastructure and site improvements.

Core Theme – Destination Downtown (Increase Awareness)

The Design Committee will serve as researchers and reviewers for future enclosures or storage constructed at the Pavilion. Funds for the improvements shall be derived from donated monies.

Design will work on maintaining and improving the appearance of downtown by developing a comprehensive maintenance program and by continuing coordinated flower plantings. Maintenance responsibilities will increase with the anticipated TIF reauthorization and the Grand River project.

Economic Restructuring has been working with a company called MapInfo to test the business recruitment waters. If these initial efforts are successful, the Committee would expand its efforts and will require print quality recruitment materials. A subscription to an online demographic service is desired. Additional business retention and recruitment efforts may take the forms of a familiarization

tour for commercial real estate agents and/or conducting seminars for current businesses to assist them in strengthening their business.

The Marketing and Promotions Committee requests a full range of activities to build awareness of the downtown. An annual calendar of events has been a strong point of previous efforts. Examples include, Discover Treasures, the concert series, the farmers market (and associated programs) and Holly Day. The Committee will encourage other organizations to take advantage of venues in the downtown to increase the number of events, without relying on the committee to manage them. With the addition of the Marketing and Promotions Coordinator, an annual Marketing Plan is in the works, with activities that may include image-building, cooperative and other advertising, creation of marketing materials, additional holiday decorations, alterations to the web site and a loyalty card program.

The Organization Committee will contribute by continuing progress toward implementing a full volunteer management program and producing a communications plan that includes or may include the newsletter, press releases and community forums.

Prioritization of Proposed Work Plan

Without question, the priority for the upcoming fiscal year was determined to be the Grand River project, along with funding a marketing plan during construction. Complementary programs for parking improvements and incentive programs also ranked high.

Although the emphasis on events in the past has been high, with the introduction of marketing efforts previously not completed, the availability to fund events at previous levels is not possible. Individual events may have budget reductions or be eliminated altogether.

Overhead costs for staff, office operations and similar functions will account for half of the nearly \$450,000 anticipated revenue in 2008-9.

It was discussed that funds available in fund balance would be dedicated to the Grand River project and to fund proposed incentive programs, until exhausted to the desired level of \$200,000. The remaining current revenue anticipated would be allocated to the remaining projects.

Projects to be funded under "walkability" include: the Grand River project, clustering/parking strategy/land assembly and a business locator map (reduced). Static displays and sidewalk, while important, will not receive funding this year.

Projects to be funded under “job creation” include: façade and sign incentive programs and a redevelopment incentives program, to be researched and proposed.

Projects to be funded under “destination” include: maintenance, business recruitment (reduced), annual flower plantings, annual events calendar (funding for the farmers market and Holly Day reduced), an annual marketing plan and a lump sum (reduced) for volunteer management and communications. Projects eliminated include retention seminars, a commercial brokers fam tour, the scarecrow building contest and Discover Treasures.

The next step in the process is the development of the budget in accordance with this direction provided.

TIF and Development Plans

Materials were distributed to the board members to familiarize them with the requirements of tax increment financing. During the next several months, the TIF and Development plans will be under examination so that the council can be petitioned to amend the plans to extend them past 2008. Participation from committees, mainly Design and ER, is anticipated. Please start to think about the projects and programs that we might want to include in the development plan. TIF funds may be used for a variety of purposes, including administration, promotions, business development, maintenance and capital improvements, although the emphasis usually is capital improvements.

The retreat was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.