

Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force

The Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force had its first meeting at 9:30 am on April 15, 2014 in the Mayor's Conference Room on the 4th Floor of the City/County Building at 221 North 5th Street in Bismarck. Present were: Co- chairs Commissioner Brenda Smith and Mayor John Warford along with members Larry Oswald, Kevin Ruhland, Kate Herzog, Jason Tomanek, Jim Hill, Dawn Kopp and Jim Christianson. Not able to attend were Kelsey Ruhland and Kayla Ver Helst. Also present were: Mike Seminary, Keith Hunke, Kelvin Hullet, Bruce Whittey, Jeff Ubl and Bill Wocken.

Mayor Warford welcomed the committee members and thanked them for agreeing to serve. He talked about the importance of the work the group will be doing and expressed the need for continued downtown development. Commissioner Smith expressed her thanks to the committee members for their service. She underscored the importance of the task force in taking the downtown "to the next level". Commissioner Seminary expressed his gratitude to the members as well. He said the economic development activity that the task force will foster is essential to the economic vitality of the downtown and the city.

Task force members then introduced themselves and explained their interest in the downtown and the importance they placed on the success of the task force. Others in attendance shared their hopes for the success of the group. Everyone agreed that the task force would work to further development projects in the downtown with a close reporting relationship to the City Commission. The group also tasked itself to collaborate with the private sector on development projects.

Task Force meetings will be open to the public and advertised. A set monthly meeting date was suggested with meetings convening at 8 or 8:30 am in the Mayors Conference Room. Meeting notices will be electronic.

Mayor Warford suggested the task force might form working groups to develop issues and projects using member interests and background knowledge of topics. Mike Seminary stressed that while gamechangers will be important to the downtown we cannot lose sight of the importance of policy and ordinance development or amendment. Jeff Ubl offered to provide some issues with the present zoning ordinance he felt may be of interest. He also suggested design standards be adopted for the downtown. Kelvin Hullett reminded the group that the current venue study may uncover additional gamechanger projects.

The task force then discussed some immediate activities for itself. It was agreed a progress report will be made at the next meeting for the following topics:

- City Staff begin review of zoning and planning policy and standards – Jason Tomanek
- Web page and social media coverage for downtown study – Bill Wocken
- Press release on inaugural meeting of the task force – Bill Wocken
- Progress of TIGER grant application – Keith Hunke
- Meeting of City Engineering, Downtowners, Public Works regarding traffic patterns, especially on Main Avenue as well as over and underpasses - Bill Wocken
- “Low hanging fruit” in downtown plan – Dawn Kopp and Kate Herzog
- Public financing alternatives for downtown projects – Jim Christianson and Jim Hill
- Underpass and overpass contacts – Mike Seminary and Jim Hill
- Methods to encourage housing development downtown – Kevin Ruhland
- Parking issues and solutions – Jim Christianson
- MDU downtown plans – Larry Oswald

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am

Reported by Bill Wocken