

Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force

The Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force met at 8:30 am on November 18, 2014 in the Mayor's Conference Room in the City/County Building at 221 North 5th Street in Bismarck. Present were: Members Andrea Travnicek, Dawn Kopp, Kate Herzog, Jason Tomanek, Kayla Ver Helst, Kevin Ruhland, Kelsey Ruhland and Jim Christianson. Also present were Mayor Mike Seminary, Keith Hunke, Jeff Heintz and Bill Wocken.

Bill Wocken opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. The minutes of the October 14, 2014 meeting were received and approved on the motion of Jim Christianson with Kayla Ver Helst seconding. All present approved of the action.

Mayor Seminary addressed the group. He said his vision for the downtown of the future included the managing of parking choices for consumers. He said he believed there would be parking meters that could be operated by smart phones. He also felt the city would hire a business development director. He thanked the task force for its work.

Jeff Heintz, Director of Bismarck Public Works Service Operations, met with the group regarding street furniture in the downtown. He said the existing furniture was placed as a result of previous downtown studies and the downtown initiative project. Recently Public Works had been attempting to repair the existing furniture as a safety issue. Kate Herzog suggested the area in which the street furniture was placed needs to be enlarged and that bike racks are sorely needed. Jeff suggested a possible design competition for downtown street furniture. If new furniture is purchased it will be heavy and bulky. So as to maximize the investment in transportation, Jeff suggested purchasing a large quantity when a purchase is made. He suggested some camera locations were needed in the downtown. It was also suggested that a man-made material be used for the seating surfaces.

Trash in the downtown is picked up weekly. A question was asked about the maintenance of the 16th Street Mall in Denver with respect to frequency of pickup and funding used for maintenance.

A discussion about bike racks followed. It was decided that the general need for bike racks and the locations in which they are needed had to be determined before design of the racks or placement concerns could be addressed. The Downtowners will survey their members for locations in which the racks would be most successful. The MPO has a bicycle study scheduled for the near future. A copy of this study information will be requested.

Jason Tomanek reported that the downtown design standards had been delayed a month. The Renaissance Zone Committee had agreed to conduct the design review but they had not yet had an opportunity to have input into the standards.

Jim Christianson shared a contact he had recently had with Ms. Tammie Wagner of the Federal Railroad Administration. Ms. Wagner had informed him that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad would be doing some siding work in the state but not a second line. This should help keep the quiet rail project on its current timeline. Mr. Wocken will ask the quiet rail consultant to try to keep the project moving.

Andrea Travnicek and Kayla Ver Helst discussed the most recent round of Outdoor Heritage grants. While the present grant round was closed, plans were discussed to submit an application in early 2015. This item will appear on a near future task force agenda for further discussion.

A brief discussion followed on the condition of concrete pavement in the downtown. This is a problem with great cost and a wide incidence of occurrence. It merits further discussion.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for December 9, 2014.

The agenda having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am.

Reported by Bill Wocken