

Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force

The Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force met at 8:30 am on January 13, 2015 in the Mayor's Conference Room in the City/County Building at 221 North 5th Street in Bismarck. Present were: Members John Warford, Dawn Kopp, Kate Herzog, Larry Oswald, Jim Christianson and Jason Tomanek.

John Warford opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. The minutes of the November 18, 2014 meeting were received, all present approved of the action.

A discussion was held regarding the conversion of the one-way streets in Chancellor Square to two-way traffic, the modification of Main Avenue from a 4-lane street section to the recommended 3-lane street section and the improvements to 5th Street south of Main Avenue. It was noted that during the 2014 annual budget meetings funds were allocated to the Administration Department to allow for a 2015 study of the Main Avenue road diet. It was the general consensus of the Task Force to invite Traffic Engineer Mark Berg and City Administrator Bill Wocken to the February meeting. John Warford asked Jason Tomanek to meet with Mr. Wocken and Mr. Berg to request the development of a timeline for the implementation of the recommended improvements to Main Avenue that can be provided to the Task Force during the February meeting. It was the general consensus of the Task Force members to help find a solution and to see this project implemented this year in an effort to be proactive and to continue making progress.

Dawn Kopp and Kate Herzog will work with City Forester, Jackson Bird to install trees in the empty tree pit areas around the downtown area. The Downtowners will provide a report of their discussion at the February meeting. The general consensus of the Task Force is to have the missing trees replanted in 2015.

Jim Christianson suggested the Downtowners find or develop a sustainable program to have a third party or individuals to help care for the trees, planters and flower beds in the downtown area.

Jason Tomanek updated the group on the efforts to develop design guidelines for the DC – Downtown Core and DF – Downtown Fringe zoning districts. Jason said that he has completed the first draft of the design guidelines and has asked Carl Hokenstad, Community Development Director and Kim Lee, Planning Manager to review the draft. Jason said he would like to also have the Task Force members, the Renaissance Zone Authority and the professional architects and landscape architects in the community review the draft and provide feedback. Jason continued by saying that it is likely that the design guidelines will be scheduled for a public hearing with the City Planning & Zoning Commission at the February 25, 2015 meeting and with a favorable outcome of that meeting, the guidelines would be forwarded to the Board of City Commissioners for

their meetings in March 2015. John Warford suggested that the design guidelines be provided to the Task Force members by the last week in January to allow for adequate time for review by the members. Jason indicated he would provide the document to Bill Wocken for distribution to the Task Force members by January 27, 2015.

Jason reported that a meeting had been held between City staff, Andrea Travnicek and a representative from BNSF regarding the implementation of a pedestrian underpass and the need for a shoo-fly to allow rail traffic to continue during the construction of the pedestrian underpass. Jason stated that the message from BNSF is that a shoo-fly may not be necessary as boring under the railroad tracks may be an option to allow construction and rail traffic to occur simultaneously. It was the general consensus of the members present that a shoo-fly is not a desired outcome and the Task Force encourages the further exploration of construction alternatives. It was also the opinion of the Task Force to support the design of the pedestrian underpass as proposed in the Downtown Sub Area Study to encourage pedestrian traffic and a safe environment. Mr. Warford recommended providing a copy of the design to BNSF so there is a clear understanding of the City's intent. Mr. Warford also asked that the City Administrator or Andrea Travnicek continue to work with BNSF and to keep meeting on this topic to help the momentum move forward. In Mr. Wocken's absence, Jason was asked to speak with Bill on this topic.

A discussion was held regarding the application for a grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The next application deadline is April 11, 2015. The members present felt it would be appropriate to apply for a grant to help promote tree plantings in the downtown area. Kate Herzog indicated she would work with City Forester Bird and Andrea to assemble an application prior to the April deadline. Dawn Kopp added that it may be helpful to research opportunities with the Arbor Day Foundation to help fund tree projects as well.

Jim Christianson suggested that the group revisit the initial list of initiatives set forth by the Implementation Task Force during the early meetings. John Warford asked Jason to assemble a spreadsheet with the initial list of initiatives to help keep track of the progress and the individuals working on each project. John continued by saying that the spreadsheet should be maintained monthly and utilized to help Kayla Ver Helst with her regular reports to the Board of City Commissioners and to show the progress of the Implementation Task Force in conjunction with a public input meeting.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for February 10, 2015.

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

Reported by Jason Tomanek