

Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force

The Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force met at 8:30 am on October 13, 2015 in the Mayor's Conference Room in the City/County Building at 221 North 5th Street in Bismarck. Present were: John Warford, Jim Christianson, Dawn Kopp, Kate Herzog, Larry Oswald, Jason Tomanek and Kevin Ruhland. Also present were Keith Hunke, Jeff Ubl, Bruce Whittey, Sheri Grossman and Bill Wocken.

The minutes of the July 14, 2015 meeting were received and approved on the motion of Larry Oswald with Dawn Kopp seconding. All present approved of the action.

John Warford opened the meeting noting the first item of business was discussion of the Five South proposal. He asked Bruce Whittey and Jeff Ubl to give a progress report. A copy of the Development Agreement was distributed. Bruce explained the role of Bismarck Futures in the arrangement. He said all the activities were on schedule and that the housing and hotel parts of the development were progressing.

Jeff Ubl told the group that during the next month more will be known about the developers who will participate in this venture and the design review elements of the project will be completed. The Design Review Committee was presently being assembled. When the housing and hotel developments are confirmed the city will be given a commencement notice. That notice will commit the developer to completing the development as planned and will also force the city to begin design of the public improvements and the ramps. Jeff said the task force's work on the railroad underpass, Main Avenue road diet, the trail system and transit would be particularly important.

The task force next discussed branding efforts for the downtown and for the city. Jeff Ubl felt it was important for the downtown area to have a consistent brand and for Five South to coordinate its brand with that of the downtown. He urged the creation of a Business Improvement District as a major step in the development of the downtown. Much discussion followed on the topic of branding. Two approaches were discussed: waiting to see how the area developed or being pro-active and setting a brand for the community and the downtown. This subject will be discussed at the next meeting.

Two other items were briefly discussed. Bill Wocken reported no contact with the BNSF since the last letter was sent on August 26, 2015. Another effort will be made. A question was asked about any plans for to improve the pavement condition on North 5th Street north of Main Avenue. An answer will be sought before the next meeting.

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

The agenda having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 am.

Reported by Bill Wocken