

Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force

The Downtown Bismarck Sub Area Plan Implementation Task Force met at 8:30 am on December 8, 2015 in the Mayor's Conference Room in the City/County Building at 221 North 5th Street in Bismarck. Present were: Brenda Smith, John Warford, Jim Christianson, Dawn Kopp, Kate Herzog, Jason Tomanek and Andrea Travnicek. Also present were Sheri Grossman, Keith Hunke and Bill Wocken.

The minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting were received and approved on the motion of Jim Christianson with Dawn Kopp seconding. All present approved of the action.

Brenda Smith opened the meeting with a continuation of the discussion on branding. She said she had met with Commissioner Askvig who supported a re-branding effort so long as it was city-wide in scope. John Warford said he had visited with Mayor Seminary who did not support a re-branding effort at this time. Sheri Grossman said she had discussed a re-branding project with The Chamber and BMDA presidents and did not get a positive reaction from either.

Sheri said the CVB was undergoing a re-branding effort. Odney Advertising had responded to the RFP and was selected to do the work. They were doing the research and input process for \$30,000. Any artwork or logo design would not be included in this phase of the project. Sheri said most firms want \$50,000 to \$60,000 for this type of work, not including artwork.

After more discussion, the task force concluded that any rebranding effort should be city-wide and that it needs to be widely supported. The group felt that any movement to rebrand should be initiated outside the task force.

Brenda Smith asked if there had been any progress on the development of a Business Improvement district (BID). Kate Herzog shared that the Downtowners are still discussing options for a BID with Bruce Whittey and the Five South development group. These discussions are continuing but the discussion is in its very early stages.

The group discussed the opportunity for a pedestrian underpass under the railroad on the west side of 5th Street. Andrea Travnicek had made contact with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. The railroad had provided information about the building of underpass and overhead structures on railroad right-of-way. Bill Wocken said he had contacted the city traffic engineer to take a summary look at the standards the railroad had provided. From the initial discussion and first look at the railroad standards it appears a shoofly will be required if an underpass is built.

The possibility for an overhead crossing in place of the tunnel was discussed. Skywalk construction was also discussed briefly. It was agreed the overhead crossing option has merit. Mel Bullinger and Mark Berg will be invited to the next meeting to discuss this topic.

Jason Tomanek told the task force that Bis-Man Transit has a new director. He said the transit director was looking into ways to increase system ridership. He was also looking for a location for a downtown hub. He said a task force was being set up to increase ridership. Anyone who wished to participate was welcome.

Kate Herzog reported that the rail trail project was underway and that the project group had narrowed its options to four possible routes. It was hoped that soon the list could be pared to two routes. The Park District was working with the group.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for January 12, 2016.

The agenda having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 am.

Reported by Bill Wocken