

**Community Improvement District
Steering Committee Meeting
September 30, 2008, 7:30 a.m.
11 S. Tenth Street**

Present:

Mike Vangel, Vangel Marketing Communications	Jack Waters, Columbia Daily Tribune
Kurt Mirtsching, Shakespeare's Pizza	Liz Tucker, Poppy
Teresa Maledy, Commerce Bank	Christina Kelley, Makes Scents
Bill Costello, Woodruff Sweitzer	Adam Dushoff, Addison's
Paul Land, Plaza Commercial Real Estate	Skip Walther, Walther, Antel, Stamper and Fischer
Blake Danuser, Bingham's	Carrie Gartner, Executive Director
Erika Kubsch, Assistant Director	

Absent:

Richard King, The Blue Note

Guests:

Arnie Fagan, Cool Stuff	Dick Walls, Boone Tavern
Paula Hertwig-Hopkins, City of Columbia	

Call to Order

Gartner called the meeting to order.

Overview of Committee's Role/Process-

Gartner stated that the Special Business District (SBD) has hired consultants to put together a restructuring plan for the organization and one thing that they recommend is to replace the SBD with a Community Improvement District (CID). Gartner stated that it is an assessment district just like an SBD, but a lot of downtowns have found that they can provide more programs and services with a CID. Gartner added that it increases the options for raising money.

Gartner stated that it is the role of this CID steering committee to look at the information to determine if a CID is right for downtown Columbia. Gartner added that this is a very long process and this meeting is just the first step. Gartner explained that if the CID committee decides that they think a CID is a good idea, then it goes to the SBD board and then they make a recommendation. Gartner added that the SBD will then do a lot of member outreach, interviews and town meetings to talk to members and make changes based on input. Gartner stated that a CID plan is essentially a contract that includes programs and services the CID will provide, a budget, and potential revenue streams. Once the plan is completed, the members and then the City Council vote to approve it. Vangel asked who Gartner is referring to when she said members. Gartner stated that only property owners vote on the plan; state statutes do not require business owners to vote, meaning it is very important to reach out to business owners during the member input phase. Finally, to actually institute any funding source there needs to be a vote of the residents.

Selection of Officers-

Gartner stated that the committee has to choose a chair and a vice chair and asked for nominations. Gartner explained that the chair is responsible for keeping the meeting moving, making sure the meeting is following the agenda, asking for public comment at meetings and the vice chair fills in if the chair is absent. Vangel nominated Jack Waters. Maledy nominated Mike Vangel for vice chair. Waters stated that he wants to be able to participate in discussions and to comment on things without feeling that he has to be impartial on things because he is chair. Vangel asked if being chair would prevent him from participating. Waters replied that he feels it possibly could. Danuser nominated Teresa Maledy for chair. Maledy stated that she has a lot of other things going on, such as the remodeling of the downtown bank, and is worried that timing would be an issue. Land asked Vangel if he would be chair. Vangel stated that he would take the position of chair. Land suggested Bill Costello for the vice chair position. Costello agreed to take the vice chair position. Land submitted the motion, Dushoff seconded it. A vote was held and Mike Vangel and Bill Costello were approved as chair and vice chair respectively by unanimous consent.

Discussion of Criteria for CID Boundaries

Rather than immediately choosing boundaries, Gartner lead the group in a discussion of criteria for what is considered "downtown."

South

Gartner asked the committee at what point do you feel that you have left downtown if you are walking south from Ninth and Broadway. Danuser stated that he feels like he has left downtown when he reaches Elm Street. Gartner asked if the area south of Elm on Ninth Street feels like downtown. Waters stated that he feels that the area south of Elm on Ninth does feel like downtown, but that is really the only street south of Elm that feels like downtown. Duschoff asked Walls (attending as a guest) and Walls stated that he has owned the Heidelberg, which is in that area, for 45 years and he does not feel like he is downtown. Vangel asked if Walls thinks the Heidelberg should be part of downtown. Walls answered that no, it should not be part of downtown because it is not and you can't make something downtown that isn't. Vangel asked if the alleyway that runs up to the parking garage could be a dividing line. Danuser stated that he thinks it is a little odd to make the dividing line at an alley, might as well go up to University on Ninth Street.

East

Gartner asked when you are walking east when do you feel that you have left downtown. Danuser, Maledy and Dushoff all said College Avenue. Dushoff stated that when you are on Broadway, but maybe not on other parallel streets, it feels like downtown until College. Gartner asked if the committee how they feel about Hitt Street near Bambinos and Athena, does it feel like downtown. The committee agreed that that area does feel like downtown. Gartner asked if the residential area between Hitt Street and College that is south of Broadway feels like downtown. Kelley stated that she has employees that live over there and they say that they live downtown; she also said she thinks of Lee School and Sacred Heart as downtown.

Gartner reminded the committee to think about the programs and services that were asked for in the restructuring process and to think about it those are things that can be provided to these extended areas.

Costello asked how much more of Stephens would be pulled in if the boundaries were expanded to College. Maledy listed Columbia and Wood Hall, Senior Hall, the building that CIS is currently in. Maledy asked if there are issues with having schools included in the boundaries. Gartner stated that they would not be contributing to the CID funding because they are not taxed. Land stated that the CID could ask them for a contribution since they are receiving services. Gartner stated that currently MU voluntarily pays what they would be paying if they were taxed.

Land asked what the threshold for the CID to pass. Gartner stated that there are two different votes, it has to be voted yes by 50 percent plus one of the number of property owners and 50 percent plus one of the assessed value, which is a weighted vote, so the more property you own the more your vote counts.

Dushoff asked if there is a reason the CID should be expanded down to College. Dushoff stated that he considers the downtown organizations to be aimed at helping business and most of the area that would be added is residential. Gartner replied that it is very important to look at if services can be provided to these areas. Waters asked what the benefit of inclusion of this area is. Danuser stated that he believes this committee should look into the future and not just focus on what the land is used for today. Kelley stated that increasing residents is a goal of the organization and by offering services to that area, maybe the houses that have been divided in apartments will be turned back in to single family homes and it will be a nicer area.

Gartner asked if the committee thinks that the CID should expand to include residential areas that aren't already in the SBD. Costello stated that it goes back to the scope of services the CID is willing and able to provide. Maledy stated that she feels that the committee should be looking at the long term and that this is not a process that should have to be done again in five years because the boundaries were not made large enough. Gartner stated that the CID contract is valid for 5 years and then after that you have to get it re-approved so you changes can be made then. Gartner stated that Saint Louis actually cut their district back after 5 years because they realized they couldn't adequately provide services to the whole area.

Danuser asked if there is any immediate problems with expanding north because of the North Central Neighborhood/Business Associations. Gartner stated that it is tough because there are a lot of things going on up there and there are already two organizations for the area. Land stated that they respect SBD and if the plan made sense and was rational they would probably allow it.

Vangel asked if the borders are flexible if there is resistance from certain property owners. Gartner responded that the boarder has to be contiguous, but that it could be flexible. Hertwig-Hopkins pointed out that the CID might not want to take in too much new area because it might cause a failed ballot and once something fails once, it is really hard to get passed. Dushoff asked wouldn't it be easier to have similar boundaries to the SBD and then expand after 5 years if it seems necessary.

North

Land stated that he feels the boundary should expand up to Rogers. Maledy said that she thinks it seems appropriate to keep it at Park today, but in the future Rogers would probably make more sense. Maledy asked if both sides of the road are included in the boundaries. Gartner stated that that is up to the committee. Danuser stated if both sides of the street are included then we could ask Columbia College for an in-lieu-of taxes payment since they would receive services.

West

Costello pointed out that if the boundary extends to Providence Road that Douglass Park is brought into the boundaries. Gartner asked if the committee thinks the Columbia Housing Authority should be included. Danuser pointed out that the committee might be criticized if it was excluded. Gartner stated that it is governed by a separate organization and board. Vangel asked if there was a Park Avenue project a couple of years ago where a group was looking at new housing. Hertwig-Hopkins pointed out that both she and Gartner were on the committee for that project. Gartner asked if the committee thought it would be appropriate to include half of public housing. Kelley stated that yes it is because Providence is such a natural boarder. Waters asked what services the CID would be able to offer to public housing. Costello asked if there would be a duplication of services in the area. Waters suggested possibly having a different level of service for that area since they already receive some benefits from the Columbia Housing Authority. Gartner asked how many people would include the Columbia Housing Authority. 7 answered that would, while 3 answered that they would not.

Danuser stated that if both sides of the street are included, most of the desired properties will be included on Providence. Gartner asked if the Taco Bell, Streetside Records, Walgreen's on Providence feel like downtown. Maledy responded that the businesses over there do not feel like downtown businesses. Kelley agreed and added that since they are big corporate businesses that they do not feel like downtown. Kelley added that there is not the walkability over there either, that crossing Providence is really dangerous. Waters stated that the old Osco isn't being used right now, but it probably will be in the future and that is something that should be included. Mirtsching stated that the area over there does not feel like downtown now, but it could in the future. Land stated that the properties across Providence don't feel like downtown, but they do feel like downtown more than Douglass park does. Land stated that if the boundary goes across Providence it should expand all of the way to Garth, otherwise just stop it on the east side of Providence.

Waters asked if a master plan could include design characteristics. Gartner stated that the Downtown Leadership Council (DLC) is currently looking at design guidelines and basing it on tax incentives. Gartner stated that the DLC's boundary does go up to Garth on the west. Gartner asked how many people thought the boundary should expand to west of providence. Everyone agreed that the boundary would go up to Garth.

Gartner went over the boundaries that the committee has tentatively talked about.

West – Garth (include both sides to include the library)

North – Worley/Rogers

South – Elm/University

East – College

Gartner also stated that the committee also has no problem including more residential or non assessed properties. Gartner added that the committee wants to look to the future to choose boundaries. Gartner stated that the committee wants to start with a big area and reduce the size if necessary.

Gartner stated that Mark Stevenson owns a lot of these little residential parcels, so if he isn't on board, the boundaries get pulled back. Land asked what benefit a CID would be to Mark Stevenson because he will probably only see that taxes are going to be increased, not what services he gets. Gartner stated that she has been trying to talk about the increase in programs and services, and the fact that any possible tax increase or change would be the result of the programs and services requested. Land asked if the properties that are included in the CID will be zoned differently. Gartner stated that the DLC is currently looking at downtown zoning. Danuser stated that zoning is an entirely separate issue from the CID. Vangel asked how the work that the DLC does impacts the CID. Gartner stated that the DLC is working on big picture issues and our organization needs to fill in the blanks.

The complete list of criteria created from the discussion include:

1. Include residential (traditional homes, apartments, dorms and federally subsidized housing)
2. Include non-assessed properties
3. Plan for future developments
4. Ensure that the level of services and programs can be maintained throughout the district
5. Be mindful of the number of residents included in the proposed district
6. Be mindful of "new" constituents v. those already familiar with the SBD and how it works.
7. Remain flexible - start big and reduce if necessary

Public Comment

Fagan asked if he has a specific question, can he ask it during the meeting? Gartner stated that all meetings will have a public comment section and that other types of questions are at the discretion of the chair. Vangel agreed and asked that he pass a note to the chair if he has a question.

Dushoff stated that Don from Downtown Appliance voiced his concern to him about a CID, specifically because of a sales tax increase. Gartner stated that a sales tax increase might not be the best answer for us and members may ultimately choose to have no tax increases with the understanding that the related programs and services could not be provided.

Vangel adjourned the meeting.