



Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2016

Present: Steering Committee: Kevin Trevillyan, Rick Messerschmidt, Kevin Crowley, Tamara Kenworthy, Jim Miller, Debbie Westphal Swander, Bobbie Bishop, Colin McBee, Nick Valdez, Shauna Fessler, Vicky Long-Hill, Naomi Hamlett, Christine Gordon, Sally Ortgies, Brian Hemesath, Althea Holcomb, Lynne Twedt, Zack Young

Consultants: Mike Hoffman, Diane Williams
Next meeting: May 10, 2016

1. Introductions/Outreach

All present introduced themselves and who they represented. Mike Hoffman provided a quick update on community engagement activities, including 1,500 unique visitors to the project web site www.HistoricWDM.com and 50 app downloads. He encouraged the Steering Committee to continue to pass the word about the App as it is a great tool to keep people involved in the planning process given the push notifications. Key items raised on the idea chalkboards include more restaurants, a bookstore, and improved bike and pedestrian accommodations – particularly a better connection across Railroad Avenue. The Today and Tomorrow Community Workshop was also summarized (see PowerPoint Presentation).

2. Survey Summary

Glenn Lyons provided a summary of the on-line consumer awareness, attitude and use survey his firm Neighborhood Development Corporation, along with Revelations Research Consulting and Marketing Matterz completed. The survey had a great response (1,060) rate. Focus groups were also conducted, including young adults, empty nesters and retirees, those living and working in the area, and frequent visitors. In general, attitudes and opinions were very consistent across groups – with words like quaint, unique, historic, fun, old and friendly used to

describe the area. Areas suggested for improvement include more local shops and places to eat, easier parking – especially during events, and improvements to the older commercial and residential buildings. When asked if they were interested in living in HWDM, 20% of local workers are extremely likely to live in HWDM in the next 5 years, versus 8% of the total survey group. Shauna Fessler noted that one of the reasons she and her husband moved to the area was the community feel of HWDM (see PowerPoint for additional survey details).

3. Economics 101 Preview

Diane Williams provided an overview of her research regarding the market potential of the area, including key consumer trends and the significant buying power of the study area, neighborhood, and region. She noted the high retail mix of the area vs. competing areas, and the lower restaurant and office uses. (see PowerPoint slides for additional details).

4. Opportunity Sites

Mike Hoffman reviewed the draft Opportunity Sites Map. These are properties identified by the consultant team that have potential for redevelopment. Mike noted that the map does not show individual homes within the neighborhood, although he is aware that some properties do need renovation. Lynne Twedt noted that the City had received inquiries regarding self-storage/mini-warehouse use on Site 23, and immediately south of Site 22. Such use is permissible under existing zoning. Several steering committee members noted concern with this use, as it would not contribute to the vitality of HWDM and would be a lost opportunity on one of the larger available sites for development. The former HCI Hospice Care building, now vacant and for-sale at the northwest corner of 4th Street and Railroad Avenue would offer a good redevelopment opportunity. Jim Miller noted the property had a high asking price, and would be expensive to convert into a restaurant. This site will be added to the Opportunity Site Map. Rick Messerschmidt suggested consideration of expanding Site 1 (Bridges of Iowa) to include the commercial property to the north along Grand Avenue (The Picker Knows Antiques and Collectables). Some members noted that this business is doing well, and the property along Grand Avenue is outside of the project study area. Nick Valdez noted the importance of redevelopment of Site 3 (former Scott's convenience store) as an anchor to the north end of the business district.

5. Next Steps

The "Economics 101" Community Workshop is planned for tonight at 7pm. The next Steering Committee meeting will be May 10th at 4:15pm (location to be determined), followed by a third community workshop – Design for Life focused on streetscape and neighborhood issues on.