



Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

Wednesday, July 8, 2015
Regular Meeting

Item G1

Grant Request

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity



Downtown

Grand Island

June 9, 2015

Mr. Chad Nabity
Regional Planning Director
City of Grand Island
100 East 1st Street
Grand Island, NE 68801

Dear Chad,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Downtown Grand Island Business Improvement District (BID). Currently the BID has an office at 404 West 3rd Street. This location has been kindly donated to the BID by Mark Stelk, City Council Member and General Collection Inc. owner. The BID has determined that it is the time to move our offices to a location that can be better identified as a downtown landmark at 224 West 3rd Street.

As you are aware, the Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) has been instrumental in bringing a major downtown improvement project to the Kaufmann-Cummings Park. The BID just approved the contracts for the construction and landscaping for the new Plaza. The BID has increased its investment into this project to just under \$15,000 to make the project budget workable. This new Downtown Plaza is expected to become a community gathering place for GI residents and visitors alike.

It should be noted that the CRA has already made an investment into the location at 224 West 3rd Street through a façade grant for approximately \$70,000. The building is approximately 130' x 20' and houses a commercial kitchen, event/banquet space and front office area. The event/banquet space opens out into Downtown Plaza, and can accommodate up to 66 individuals. The building owner, Carl Mayhew, is currently renting the front office area separate from the remainder of the building. Mr. Mayhew manages the event/banquet space location.

Downtown Grand Island believes that this new office location could be a great asset for the BID and for downtown. Downtown Grand Island is exploring the opportunity to relocate its office to the location at 224 West 3rd Street for a variety of reasons including:

- 1) This location could become a downtown destination by serving as a location for new and existing business/retail owners and property owners to find information on downtown updates, improvements and opportunities. Keeping current information on downtown rental space availabilities and buildings available for purchase will be a priority. Downtown Grand Island will have an office that will become a center of business and economic development activity.
- 2) The new office space creates a very real possibility of partnering with the GI Convention & Visitors Bureau. The BID will be preparing space for a downtown Visitor Center. Visitors would be welcomed to downtown and would be able to pick up visitor information material. Visitors will be informed about the dining and shopping opportunities, and may be offered a token of appreciation for coming to downtown. The GI Convention and Visitor Bureau has been positive about a new auxiliary visitor center downtown, and has offered to assist with display cabinets and brochure materials.

The Convention and Visitor's Bureau may be willing to consider provide funding to pay for a portion of the staffing expenses for office coverage. The part-time staff will be able to reference the city and regional travel brochures, downtown event information, a downtown shopping and dining guide and other visitor information. A preliminary Historic Walking Tour brochure of downtown Grand Island has already been written to encourage visitors to explore the heart of our community.

- 3) The office could be an excellent asset to support events and activities in the new Downtown Plaza. The office location could provide oversight to events in the Downtown Plaza, West 3rd Street and Wheeler Avenue. The office could also serve as a location for downtown event information and for tickets sales for downtown events. Event support and facilitation would maximize the City of Grand Island's, the CRA's and the BID's investment into the Downtown Plaza, especially in the initial years of the Downtown Plaza operation as new events are initiated.
- 4) The event/banquet space will be available to the BID for meetings and downtown social gatherings.

The new location needs to be re-modeled to create a professional and functional office. The estimated budget for tenant improvements is \$10,000 including demolition, drywall, framing, cabinetry and signage.

The estimated **Tenant Improvement Budget** includes:

Demo of Walls to expose Brick and to create smooth surfaces	\$ 1,600
Ceiling Tiles/Repairs	\$ 200
Framing/Drywall/Brick Sealing	\$ 3,200
Office Delineation	\$ 1,500
Cabinetry	\$ 1,500
Signage	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
Total	<u>\$10,000</u>

Downtown Grand Island has identified the resources for the new office location. The BID will be funding the rent for the new location at \$7,800 per year out of our operating budget. In addition, the BID will be funding office furniture, office equipment, phone and internet services. To reduce expenses, the BID will provide volunteers to assist with the office re-model where practical.

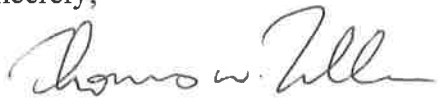
The building owner, Carl Mayhew, has agreed to reduce the rent expectation, to make necessary repairs to properly vent the building bathrooms, and to pay for paint supplies and new flooring. Note: Original rent proposal was \$600 per month plus utilities of \$380 equaling \$980 per month or \$11,760 per year.

The BID is requesting that the CRA entertain a grant request for \$10,000 to provide funding for the tenant improvements needed to increase the functionality of the space for the BID and to create an auxiliary Visitor Center in downtown Grand Island.

The BID appreciates the investment that the City of Grand Island and the CRA have made into downtown GI. There is a ground swelling of optimism from the new businesses and improvements that are on the horizon. The Board of Directors of the BID hope that the CRA will help facilitate making 224 West 3rd Street a place for downtown business activity, a place to welcome visitors and a place for downtown revitalization.

If you have any questions, please contact Christie DePoorter, Director, at 308-389-7022.

Sincerely,



Thomas Ziller
President

