

City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Monday, December 21, 2015

Regular Meeting

Item Reports4

Council to receive and take action on the Business Improvement District recommendation regarding the downtown development.

Staff Contact: Annie Folck, City Planner

Agenda Statement

Item No.

For meeting of: December 21, 2015

AGENDA TITLE: BID Recommendation for Downtown Plaza

SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION:

PRESENTATION BY: Neal Blomenkamp, BID Chairman

SUMMARY EXPLANATION: The BID board has spent a significant amount of time considering the best use of space in the 18th Street plaza and has written a letter to Council outlining their recommendations. They are recommending that the two buildings along 18th Street be torn down to create an open gathering space for events, and that 18th Street be closed off between 1st Avenue and Broadway. This would create just over an acre of space for downtown events, located directly on main street. The BID board is continuing to research funding opportunities to add improvements to this area, such as public bathrooms, a stage, landscaping, and resurfacing. In the meantime, they recommend putting a simple crushed concrete surface where the two buildings currently stand, creating a much more usable space for large-scale events. The alley would remain open for deliveries, trash removal, and emergency purposes.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: See attached letter

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

EXHIBITS

Resolution ☐ Ordinance ☐ Contract ☐ Minutes ☒ Plan/Map ☐

Other (specify) ☒ Letter _____

NOTIFICATION LIST: Yes ☐ No ☒ Further Instructions ☐

APPROVAL FOR SUBMITTAL: _____
City Manager

Rev 3/1/99CClerk



2525 Circle Drive

Scottsbluff, NE 69361

308-632-4136

December 16, 2015

Scottsbluff City Council
2525 Circle Drive
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of the Business Improvement District (BID) board, I would like to make some recommendations regarding continued improvements to Downtown Scottsbluff. As business and property owners in the downtown, we believe that the downtown revitalization efforts have greatly enhanced the business district; however, there is still a lot of work to be done. There continue to be many vacant buildings throughout the downtown, and we are still lacking a dedicated gathering space for large-scale events, which we believe will be vital for attracting activity to the area.

We are very excited about the area on 18th Street that the City has set aside for a downtown plaza. In the past couple of months, we have spent a considerable amount of time discussing and considering the best possible use of this space. In order to make a more informed recommendation, we met on site, touring the two buildings that make up a portion of the plaza area. We have determined that in order for the space to be used to its maximum potential, it would be best to demolish the two buildings located at 15 E 18th Street and 23 E 18th Street. The locations of these two buildings divide the space and would make it much less functional for the type of large-scale events envisioned for the area. While there is over an acre of space available for the plaza, it is so divided that many people are under the impression it is much smaller.

It is always difficult to justify tearing down buildings that are still functional. We spent a great deal of time discussing whether or not uses could be found for the buildings. The building at 15 E 18th Street was found to be in a state of disrepair and we do not believe that it would be a good use of the City's money to try to rehabilitate it. It does have some architectural features that give it character. We would suggest saving some elements of the building if it could be done at a reasonable cost. For example, the glazed tile around the windows could possibly be saved and incorporated into a plaza design feature. The building at 23 E 18th Street is in somewhat better condition. The layout of the building is not well suited for public use. Furthermore, the overall plaza design will be greatly enhanced by removing these two buildings. It may be possible to find uses for these two buildings, but we believe that utilizing them for other purposes would come at the cost of losing the effectiveness and long term functionality of the overall plaza area.

The overall concept for the plaza also requires the closure of 18th Street between Broadway and 1st Avenue. This increases the available space for the plaza by roughly 50% when compared to the space already available in the parking lots and where the buildings stand. We propose that at the time the bulb-outs are constructed along Broadway, 18th Street could also be closed off with a continuous curb. This will help establish a more permanent space for events while ensuring that any work done on the 18th Street intersection fits well with



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the overall plan for the area. This will help us avoid making improvements to the intersection just to redo them in a few years. If this was also done at the same time as the building demolition, it would minimize disruption in the area due to construction and could potentially reduce costs. While the street would be closed off, the alley should remain open to accommodate deliveries and emergency access to nearby properties. Once the buildings have come down, the area where they stood could be covered with a simple gravel or crushed concrete surface. This would provide an expanded, contiguous space for the Farmers Market and other large-scale events.

Once again, we would like to thank Council for their interest in continuing the downtown revitalization efforts. In the coming months we will be researching possible funding opportunities to help this project come to fruition. This project is extremely important to us as business owners and to the community as a whole, and we are very excited to see it move forward.

Sincerely,

Neil Blumenkamp
Chairman
Business Improvement District Board

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Regular Meeting
December 16, 2015

The Scottsbluff Business Improvement Board had a meeting on Wednesday morning, December 16, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at City Hall, 2525 Circle Drive, Scottsbluff, Nebraska. A notice of the meeting had been published on December 11, 2015 in the Star-Herald, a newspaper published and of general circulation in the City. The notice stated the date, hour, and place of the meeting, that the meeting would be open to the public, that anyone with a disability desiring reasonable accommodation to attend the Business Improvement Board meeting should contact the Development Services Department, and that an agenda of the meeting kept continually current was available for public inspection at the Development Services Department office; provided, the Business Improvement Board could modify the agenda at the meeting if it determined that an emergency so required. A similar notice, together with a copy of the agenda, also has been delivered to each Business Improvement Board member. An agenda kept continuously current was available for public inspection at the office of the Development Services Department at all times from publication to the time of the meeting.

Item 1: Vice Chairperson, Roger Franklin presided over the proceedings. The following Business Improvement Board members were present: Ron Schluter, Rick Wayman, Melissa Schneider, Donna Hessler, and Roger Franklin. Members absent (excused): Beckie Rodgers, Angela Kembel, Nancy Dillman (alternate) and Neal Blomenkamp. Members absent (unexcused): none. City officials present Annie Folck, City Planner, Annie Urdiales, Planning Administrator, and Liz Hilyard, Finance Director.

Item 2: Franklin informed interested parties, a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted in the back of the City Council Chamber.

Item 3: Roll Call.

Item 4: Notice of changes in the agenda: None

Item 5: Citizens with items not scheduled on regular agenda: None.

Item 6: Minutes of 11/18/15, were reviewed a motion was made by Wayman and seconded by Schluter to approve the minutes. "YEAS": Wayman, Schneider, Schluter, "NAYS": None. ABSTAIN: Hessler, Franklin. ABSENT: Kembel, Rodgers, Dillman, & Blomenkamp. Motion Carried.

Item 7A: A letter from the BID to City Council making formal recommendation regarding the two buildings at 15 & 23 East 18th Street which the City owns and will be used for the future Downtown Plaza was reviewed and approved with the recommended changes - the addition of language regarding alley access to accommodate larger deliver trucks and emergency vehicles. One of the Business Improvement Board members will be at the Council meeting on December 21st.

Conclusion: A motion was made by Hessler and seconded by Schluter to approve the changes and forward letter with formal recommendation to City Council for removal of the two buildings located at 15 and 23 E 18th Street. "YEAS": Hessler, Wayman, Schneider, Schluter, and Franklin "NAYS": None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Kembel, Rodgers, Dillman and Blomenkamp. Motion Carried.

Item 7B: Annie Folck answered questions from the last meeting regarding the Enhanced Employment Area (EEA) tax. A City of the first class can levy a general business occupation tax

upon a business and users of space within an EEA for the purpose of paying all or part of cost and expenses of redevelopment within the area, the first few years the money collected would most likely go for the Downtown Plaza project. The boundaries we can use for Broadway is the existing Blighted area north of the Railroad track up to 19th Street on the east side of Broadway and 18th Street on the west side of Broadway.

Questions the Board had were can all businesses be taxed – Services are not taxed, there are several business offices in the downtown area that are considered services and not retail. Businesses like Pella Windows would be taxed depending on where the delivery is. How is the money tracked and who is responsible for how the money will be used? The City Council has final authority and can appoint the BID to review and make recommendations to them on how the money can be used – Downtown Plaza, infrastructure, facades for downtown businesses, also further on down the line daily maintenance and events.

Another question asked was whether the tax information is public information. Legal advised us that this is public information and if someone would come in and ask to see it we would have to provide the information because of the way State Statute is written. The City will keep this low key and not broadcast information.

The Board asked for a list of talking points they could use to approach other businesses on the Enhanced Employment Area Tax, to let them know this is something the City is considering and to see if there is interest. Annie Folck will provide information on the EEA tax how it works and how it can be used at the next meeting in January 20, 2016.

Other discussion: the Board again discussed the litter problem for the parking lot located on the NE corner of 17th Street and Avenue A.; the trash receptacles are not being used, a group of people are hanging out there in the evening creating the problem, the parking lot does not have adequate lighting, more lights could possibly help. Staff will check with the Police Department to see if they can patrol the area more closely during the late evening hours.

Item 8: Unfinished Business: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Vice Chairman, Roger Franklin

Attest: