

# **VEHICLE PARKING DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD**

**Meeting Minutes – September 15, 2022 at 8:15 AM**

## **A. Call Meeting to Order**

Connie Geary called the meeting to order at 8:25 a.m.

Geary informed the public about the location of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room and accessible to members of the public.

Roll call found the following Board members present: Connie Geary, Stephanie Bates, Doug Stebbing, Steven McNally (alternate), Amy Renter (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Justin Webb, Pat Carney (alternate)

Guests: Scott Adams, Andrew Colvin, Gary Bretschneider (Housing), Nathan Powell (Parks) Melissa Figueroa, and Candice Alder

## **B. Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Bates and seconded by Stebbing to approve the agenda. Roll call: Ayes: Connie Geary, Stephanie Bates, Doug Stebbing. Nays: None.

## **C. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Stebbing, seconded by Bates to approve the minutes. Roll call: Ayes: Connie Geary, Stephanie Bates, Doug Stebbing. Nays: None.

## **D. Financial Report**

### **1. Reviewed Invoices**

Board members reviewed the invoices. Alder has not had an opportunity to procure new trash removal bids, but hopes to have something for the board by the October meeting.

## **E. Old Business**

### **a. PUMA Update**

Alder presented a copy of the Downtown Survey for the VPD's consideration. Discussion was held on the need to include a question on the survey relating to the boundaries of the downtown. Bates asked if the general public is aware of the VPD boundaries and most agreed they likely do not. VPD board requested that a map of the current boundaries be included in the downtown district. Alder shared email from Brad Segal from PUMA indicating, "...to me it is more important to get a sense from stakeholders (i.e. property and business owners) within the various areas we are considering and ask them if they are or should be connected to downtown in a more formal way. This could be better achieved through meeting when we're next in town, or perhaps through some Zoom conversations in advance." Alder indicated staff has engaged with PUMA to find availability for zoom conversations that could take place ahead of November visit. Alder will share a list of stakeholders to meet via zoom with PUMA with the steering committee and request additional feedback.

**b. Downtown Digital Sign**

Amy brought concepts for a sign replacement for the downtown digital sign. Three separate quotes were provided that included new logos, replacement of the digital component with a static image, and the complete replacement of the digital display. VPD representatives asked if the complete replacement of the sign was too much money to spend on a sign with no certain future on the boundaries of the district or the direction the downtown will want to give if/when a BID is implemented. McNally indicated he would like to continue to see the digital display included and operational. Renter brought up the importance of having consistent branding in the district. It was agreed that the updating of the logo should be considered and the board asked if it was possible to get a quote for the replacement of that component of the sign until they had a better idea of how they would like to proceed.

**c. Downtown Revitalization Grant**

Alder reported on the DED Downtown Revitalization Grant. The blight and substandard study is 12 years old and the national objective for the grant funds indicate the study cannot be older than 10 years. Staff is working alongside the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District to reach out to the State of Nebraska to find out if the potential for a second round of applications will be considered for this source of funds. If so, the City would update the blight and substandard study and move forward with the application, if not, the City will be required to wait until September 2023 to apply for the funds.

**F. Board recommendation**

Geary requested the board move the recommendation of a new board member to the October meeting in order to move forward with the meeting agenda.

**G. Other Business**

**a. Downtown Trees**

Nathan was present to share that they have planned for up to 40 trees to be planted in the downtown district with a focus on trees that have reached their lifetime. Johnson Park, 73 trees will go into the park. Nathan discussed a potential terrace program throughout the community will reimburse home and business owners up to \$100 per tree for plantings that are within 10-12 feet of the terrace. Board members asked if the type of tree was up for discussion. Nathan indicated the locust trees have a root system that can survive in areas without a large surface area since the downtown has so much concrete. McNally asked who decides what other trees can be considered and Nathan indicated the Tree Board makes that decision. McNally asked if they could provide their recommendation to the VPD and allow for the board to make the decision. Renter indicated some downtown property owners have shared that the small leaf structure of this type of tree has been problematic to some storeowners. Renter asked if sidewalk heaving would be fixed by the City when new trees were put in. City staff indicated that the property owners in the downtown district are responsible for making repairs to the sidewalks when heaving starts to occur.

**b. Housing/Kensington Discussion**

Kensington – Gary Bretschneider was present to discuss the status of the Kensington. The Norfolk Housing Agency has entered into a due diligence period with Ho-Chunk who is exploring the feasibility of converting the building into a boutique hotel. Contingencies include the ability to purchase the parking lot that lies immediately north of the property.

**H. Adjourn.**

Bates made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Stebbing. The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

The next VPD meeting will be Thursday, October 20, 2022 at 8:15 a.m. at the City of Norfolk Administration building at 309 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, NE.