



**Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2020 | 9:30-11:00 a.m. | Zoom Meeting**

The Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Commission met virtually in regular session. Those present are listed below. The meeting was held as an electronic regular Commission meeting because a meeting in person was impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Commissioners, staff and the public presented by COVID-19.

Present: Craig Byers, Lijun Chadima, Ben Dillon, Stephanie Jelinek, Ana McClain, Mary Kay Novak McGrath, Chad Pelley, James Piersall, Bob Schaffer

Guests: Abby Huff & Monica Vernon – Main Street, Jennifer Pratt – City of Cedar Rapids, Ali Hval – Mural Artist, Nick Ludwig – Murals + More

Economic Alliance Staff: Ellen Bardsley, Jessica Komisar, Doug Neumann, Tyanna Stephenson, Phil Wasta

Welcome and Call to Order

Piersall welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Chadima moved approval of the agenda with Byers seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Byers moved approval of the May & June minutes with Pelley seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Neumann clarified the \$4,208.46 under accounts payable are for bills that we haven't written checks for yet which has been done intentionally as the City wanted a clean bill of goods to move our financials in-house which was delayed due to COVID. Neumann said admin fees would also be paid monthly or quarterly and we will get caught up on those when we finalize the financial arrangements with the City. Byers moved approval of the financials with Pelley seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Commission Members

Dillon and Novak McGrath have been appointed to the CVNB SSMID by the Mayor with terms beginning on July 1. Piersall suggested we send a thank you letter to Pam Lewis who was not re-appointed to the SSMID for all her work. Piersall will be in touch with Dillon and Novak McGrath to review bylaws and SSMID structure.

Public Art Update

Design & Location

Piersall thanked those involved in the mural project including Chadima, Byers, Vernon, Ludwig, Hval, Pratt and Janelle McClain. The final sketch and color scheme drawings were presented to commissioners. There was discussion about the location of the mural potentially being blocked by trees that are in the grass lot next to the mural. When Hval traces the sketch onto the building, she will be sure it is in-between the trees and the Mucha woman will not be blocked. Schaffer asked if we are clear on any copyright issues. Piersall and Vernon said they have done the research numerous times and the Mucha design and "Czech Village" font are in the public domain. Commissioners were pleased with the mural sketch and colors, McClain said it is very tasteful, an Hval will move forward with the design.

Finances & Donations

Piersall reminded commissioners they have authorized up to \$20k for this project and we are negotiating the final price with Hval and finalizing the contract. Piersall said we have already received \$4k in donation pledges from himself, Janelle McClain, Kim & Pat Loeffler, Jim & Sue Novak and Murals and More. We have also received financial support from Diamond Vogel for the majority of the paint supply. McClain suggested we create a virtual fundraiser to raise more funds from the community and others on the commission and said she can help with the creation of it. Piersall stated that while one could donate less than \$500, that should be the minimum to get name recognition on the wall.

Base Coat Painting & Lift

Hawkeye Area Labor council and the Building Trades Union have agreed to provide union painters to paint the base coat on the entire side of the building where the mural will be and we have already received permission to do so by the Novaks. The base coat will begin after the wall has been power washed and dried – which is scheduled to be within the week. Piersall said we were notified that the lift we originally secured for this project will not operate in grass. Pelley said they might have a boom truck but will have to look into the availability and operations of it. Wasta asked if it would be possible to line the grass with plywood. Hval said if the surface is uneven, she's not sure if that will work properly. Novak McGrath said they have a lift that gets used quite a bit at the dealerships, but she can look into it. Neumann said this isn't for a one-time use for power washing and we would need this equipment for power washing, base coat painting and mural painting.

Timeline & Contracts

Piersall said once the wall is power washed and has the base coat applied, Hval would start around July 27 and would hopefully be complete by August 31 and we could have an un-veiling mid-September.

Piersall said the contract between the SSMID and Hval is out for Hval's final review and we can't start the mural until that agreement is in place. The MOA with the City was approved at last week's Council meeting. The MOA indicates that if anything is built on the adjacent lots to the mural in the next 10 years, the City would pay the SSMID back of its mural expenses. In return, the SSMID would be responsible for mowing the grass in the lots and removing snow and ice in front of them and will be obligated to obtain an insurance policy on potential liability (around \$300-\$400/year). The SSMID would also be able to place benches, trashcans and planters in the lot. There is a provision in the MOA that if the SSMID doesn't get renewed in 2 years, the SSMID can assign its rights to another entity to be approved by the City.

Piersall has created a façade easement with the Novaks which has been provided to them for their review and signature. This easement would be effective through September 1 of 2030 and during that period, they will not do anything to the mural or make changes to the building that would alter the mural. The easement will run with the property so if they sell it during the 10-year period, the new owner would be bound to the same terms.

Piersall asked for a motion to approve himself signing the final contract with Hval. Chadima moved to approve with Dillon seconding, the motion was unanimously approved.

Piersall asked for a motion to approve himself signing the MOA with the city. Byers moved to approve with Chadima seconding, the motion was unanimously approved.

Piersall asked for a motion to approve himself signing the façade agreement with the Novaks. Chadima moved to approve with Byers seconding, the motion was unanimously approved.

Beautification Committee

Novak McGrath volunteered to step into the beautification committee Chair role, formerly organized by Pam Lewis. Huff said she would also like to be a part of that committee as well.

Pandemic Recovery Committee

Chadima presented her proposal to create a CVNB SSMID District Pandemic Economic Relief committee and to use \$15k of SSMID reserves to supplement the Main Street COVID-19 Relief Grant Program. Chadima said out of the 195 businesses in the district, 30 of them received IEDA grants ranging from \$1k to \$25k. Main Street has a forgivable loan program for district businesses which includes an application and committee review and selection process based on

various criteria which were documented in Chadima's written proposal. Chadima said Main Street has received 25 applications for assistance and they have already awarded approximately \$15k of their existing funds to 6 businesses – Almost Famous Popcorn, Next Page Books, Pinoy Café, Frolics, Shops at 208 and Moss. Huff said when a business applies, they have to indicate what the funds will be used for and they sign a contract that they will spend the funds within 60 days and provide receipts or invoices for what was paid for by December 1. The business also has to disclose on the application if they have received other funds. The selection committee ranks the applications based on a matrix and criteria.

McClain said she has concerns about funding this program and said when the SSMID was formed, it was for capital improvements and the funding should not be for forgivable loans. McClain said we could come up with other creative solutions for district businesses such as providing more outdoor seating for restaurants to utilize. Neumann said based on the Iowa Code Chapter 386, the SSMID does have great discretion and freedom on how to spend the money and we could contribute to this fund but proposed the question if it's more about optics and what the SSMID's other priorities are. Pelley said he liked the idea but as a property owner, he would have a difficult time taxing himself to fund other businesses that may or may not have received other support and that it's not one of the SSMID's top priorities. He also expressed concern over the Commission being in a position to pick winners and losers.

The commission decided to table any sort of motion for this proposal until it can be further discussed at the September meeting along with the other funding requests the SSMID has received thus far.

Strategic Plan & 2021 Budget Process

Neumann suggested we use the September meeting to focus solely on the 2021 budget and strategic plan and to discuss project funding requests including Chadima's pandemic recovery, kolache benches, district bike loop, additional streetscape elements, the City art walk, parking lot fund and decorative lighting. By having this conversation one month earlier than last year, we will be able to get funding immediately for some of these requests and to allow ourselves extra time.

Adjourn

Byers moved to adjourn the meeting with Pelley seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.