

Downtown Economy Work Group Meeting Notes



Siouxland Chamber of Commerce, 101 Pierce Street
11:00 a.m., Monday, July 18, 2016

DOWNTOWN PARTNERS SIOUX CITY
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Present: Renae Billings, Chris Bogenrief, Ragen Cote, Becca Feauto, Sarah Fish, Bob Fitch, Jim Jung, Tanya LaBahn, Dale McKinney, Erika Newton, Jennifer Rose Bass, Sam Wagner

Wagner welcomed the group and began introductions. An overview of the report completed by Brad Segal, with Progressive Urban Management Associates was covered, which provided a work plan detailing the organizational capacity, goals, initiatives and activities.

The goals of this work group are to:

1. Establish business support services that compile market & property data and provide policy leadership representing the downtown business community.
2. Mobilize “city builders” to support entrepreneurship, new businesses by marketing downtown and helping to reduce regulatory barriers that can help small businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive.
3. Work with civic partners, including the City, to create incentives for housing, entertainment & innovation niches in downtown.

Before approaching the list of activities, the group pointed out that Downtown Partners should be the place where partnerships come together and then began to focus on a few top items. One of the pressing issues now is to make sure this group brings together the right partners to help work on the City’s comprehensive plan and wayfinding. Also mentioned as an important task, is to create a market opportunity profile that will provide data on inventory and explains the historic tax credit process. Finally, the group would like to develop a plan that can identify and combine all efforts on startups, innovation and business development.

While going through the list of activities from the report, comments were expressed on the following:

- *Activity: Create and maintain a detailed downtown “market opportunity profile” and inventory of space & buildings, including key demographic stats, plus ongoing measures for vacancies, lease rates, sales, etc.*
 - This appeared to rise to the top of discussion and overall need. Inventory upkeep is important due to the amount of spaces that are unlisted and undeveloped but available. Tri-State Appraisals was mentioned as well.
- *Activity: Coach/counsel small businesses on where/how to locate in downtown.*
 - Already addressed through the City, SEDC, SBDC, Downtown Partners, etc.



- *Activity: Liaison to City to resolve permitting and regulatory issues.*
- *Activity: Coach/counsel property owners on how to structure flexible leases for retail and innovation concepts.*
 - Both of these activities speak to property motivation and how to best address issues.
- *Activity: Advocate for a city-funded revolving loan fund that aims to assist in activating downtown buildings. Eligible uses could include façade improvements, tenant finish and underwriting the front-end of leases that introduce innovate businesses with high growth potential.*
 - Discussion centered around the need for enhancements in the Historic 4th Street district and to include all of downtown in preservation, which could help start a fund, tax credits and other federal support in addition to city CIP funds that could be put aside for an upcoming year.

For the next meeting, the group plans to work through and prioritize the activities while beginning the process to create a market opportunity profile.

Next meeting: Monday, August 15 at 11:00 a.m. at Siouxland Chamber of Commerce (101 Pierce St.)
**meetings are scheduled for the third Monday of each month through the end of the year. Meeting days and times will be re-evaluated for 2017.*