



Czech Village New Bohemia SSMID Meeting Minutes May 20, 2021 Google Hangouts 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.

Commissioners Present: Jim Piersall, Craig Byers, Lijun Chadima, Ben Dillon, Stephanie Jelinek, Ana McClain, Mary Kay McGrath, Chad Pelley, and Bob Schaffer and Exoficio: Jennifer Pratt

Guests: Carol Lilly, Main Street Iowa; Steve Sovern, Connect CR; and Dale Todd, City Councilmember

Czech Village New Bohemia District Staff Present: Abby Huff & Monica Vernon

Welcome/Call to Order

Jim Piersall called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Approval of May Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved. (Chadima?/Dillon)

Approval of April Minutes

The April minutes were unanimously approved. (Dillon/Chadima)

April 2021 Financials

Monica Vernon presented financials for April 2021:

Revenue: \$13,697.40

Expenses: \$1,600

Cash on Hand: \$78,897

Vernon also put forth a list of pending expenses totaling \$9,150 that have been sent to the city to be paid. She said they would show up in the May Financials at the June commission meeting. Additionally, Vernon supplied commissioners with a schedule of payments paid and due regarding the commission's Connect CR pledge. The April financials were unanimously approved. (Chadima?/Dillon)

Renewal of SSMID – Presentation by Carol Lilly, Main Street Iowa

Carol Lilly is an expert on SSMID renewals having been through three of them in Cedar Falls and having helped other SSMIDs around the state with their renewals. She presented an informational Power Point that was a step by step guide to mounting a campaign to renew our SSMID. Lilly made some key points:

- That the minimum to pass the renewal is 25% of property owners by number and 25% of the properties by value.

- That commissioners (property owners themselves) are the best people to go talk to other property owners and get signatures.
- That staff should ask the County for a listing of property owners in the District by valuation.
- The list should be divided into 5 groups:
 - o Commissioners
 - o Likely to support
 - o New to property ownership in the District
 - o Those questioning
 - o Those against
- Materials showing accomplishments should be put together along with talking points.
- A great talking point will (hopefully) be the change in valuation from 2014 to the present day.
- Hold a property owner meeting. This will help with list of 5 groups above.

Chair Jim Piersall asked staff to prepare a timeline with actions needed in order to accomplish the renewal by next meeting. Vernon suggested that a renewal committee of the commission be formed.

City Update: Vision Plan/Land Use and Update on Connect CR

Jennifer Vernon presented to the commission on the properties available for disposition and the timing for each. Three large pieces of property were labeled “ready within the year.” Pratt also talked about plans for the Connect CR Bridge that will connect the East and West sides of the District where the old railroad bridge once was. She showed an aerial view of the bridge and shared that the design component would be finished in 2022 with construction completed in 2023 and 2024. Steve Sovern who has been a key member of the Connect CR committee (along with Dale Todd and others) spoke after Pratt and thanked the SSMID and many individuals who had long been involved and given guidance to the project. He talked about what the project can mean for the District and the City. Chair Piersall asked about whether enough money had been raised. Sovern described where all of the \$20 million is/will come from and said that the project will “live within their budget.”

Public Art Update – Mural for the Ideal Social Hall

Piersall spoke first saying the committee has two good bids to do the mural but since the deadline is today – the day of the meeting – the names and amounts can’t be discussed. Vernon added that the low bid put forward to date fit in the budget for the mural. Vernon also talked about staying in budget with the grant for paint from Diamond Vogel, and the use of the Downtown Lift. Vernon reminded the commission that the public art committee plus Jon Jelinek and Nick Jelinek examined the 9 art pieces submitted and purchased 2. They asked the artists to colorize them and then chose the Gary Kelley piece for the Idea Social Hall. The other piece will be used for a future mural. Tomorrow, Vernon will call the muralist who is the winning bidder and make plans to start the process of painting in early June.

Beautification & Streetscape Update

Abby Huff reported that flower boxes in New Bohemia and Czech Village were all planted May 13. She thanked the City and the Noelridge Park nursery volunteers for free plants; and volunteers from ImOn and HBK for planting. All the planting was done in 3.5 hours and has now been watered by mother nature several times. Vernon added that there is work going on to secure the additional 10 baskets to the light poles on the 16th Ave Bridge. Then they can be planted and the commission’s goal of more flowers in more places can be achieved. Piersall added that we have a contract for watering the flowers. Vernon said yes and the cost per hour is the same as last year.

Meet In Person at the NCSM&L for June Meeting

Piersall asked for unanimous consent from the commission to meet in person beginning with the June meeting. He said there would be a hybrid option if that could be handled by staff. Staff said yes it could be handled. Vernon said the museum was checking to see if the ballroom might be available at least for June for a little more social distancing.

New Business

- o **Czech Mural at old Western Fraternal Life building**

Western Fraternal Life Association merged with National Mutual of Wisconsin to form a new mutual called Better Life. They are selling the building at 1900 First Ave NE. However, they would like to donate a large Czech-themed mural that is in two parts and each piece is 8 ft high by 16 ft wide. Vernon said she would follow up, go see the work and find someone to store it and ultimately a great place for it to land permanently.

- o **Trolley Loop Proposal DRAFT.** Vernon reported that she is continuing her work with Jesse from the Downtown SSMID regarding a Trolley Loop proposal for a regular loop through Downtown, New Bohemia, Czech Village, and Kingston Village. The Draft proposal was sent to all commission members.

Adjournment

Chair Piersall said he would entertain adjournment. (Chadima/Dillion?) Motion passed at 9:45 am.

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 17, 8:30 to 10 am

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN PERSON at the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library

However those who cannot attend in person can log in with the below:

Google Meets meet.google.com/eby-mypi-feb

[Join by phone](tel:+19292661205) (US) +1 929-266-1205 PIN: 515 732 864#