

Business Development Commission (BDC)

MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Thursday, June 28, 2018
LOCATION: City Hall
CALLED TO ORDER: 8:00 AM
MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:05 AM
NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 31, 2018

Name	Present	Absent
Jon Spiesman (Citizen at Large), Chair	X	
Mike Pincus (Citizen at Large)	X	
Pam Neihaus, Vice Chair (Citizen at Large)		X
Robin McNabb (Yorkshire Business)	X	
Jennifer Starkey (Business Owner Rep.)	X	
Rebecca Now (Chamber of Commerce)		X
Tim Delanty (Old Webster)	X	
Mary Jane Armstrong (Old Orchard)		X
Vacancy		
Frank Janoski, Council Liaison	X	
Joan Jadali, City Manager Designee	X	
Mara Perry, Staff Liaison	X	

Also in Attendance

Ellie Wharton – Webster/et al. Chamber of Commerce
Bud Bellomo – Council Member, City of Webster Groves
Mayor Gerry Welch – Mayor, City of Webster Groves
Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the May minutes was made by Robin McNabb, seconded by Mike Pincus and unanimously approved.

BDC STRATEGIC PLAN

Discussion continued on further clarifying the scope of work outlined in the BDC Strategic Plan as well as clarifying the pieces of the initiatives and actions (see Appendix A for the text of the PowerPoint presentation).

▶ **OBJECTIVE A:** Market the City of Webster Groves

Initiatives and Actions

#1. Create a year-round City marketing and communications plan and a calendar of community/business events

▶ **OBJECTIVE B:** Sustain a Thriving Business Community and Attract New Businesses

Initiatives and Actions

#1. Maintain healthy vacancy rates, identify and solve stubborn commercial vacancies

#2. Integrate current and future development planning

#3. Seek and Listen to the Voice of Businesses and the Community

OBJECTIVE A, #1 – Calendar

Process to submit events for the calendar:

- Currently, there is a submission form on the City’s website. An email message to all the businesses for which the City has an email address can be sent out with instructions on how to access and fill out the form as well as what types of events qualify to be included on the City’s event calendar.
- The social media consultants that handle the Explore Webster Groves Facebook page are looking into options to submit events thru Facebook, but there doesn’t appear to be a clean way to do so. One possible option is with an app to connect to the event submission form on the City website, but that doesn’t look clean either.
- There is also a closed business-owner Facebook Group that targets the three business districts where event submissions could potentially be posted.
- Once the cleanest method is determined, the submission process will be put on the agenda of all three business districts and emailed out to all businesses.

OBJECTIVE A, #1 – Communication

How has communication taken place in the past/currently taking place:

- **Past/Discontinued:**
 - Monthly Planning & Development Department one-page email newsletter of zoning petitions, projects under review, list of new businesses – it’s opt-in mailing list was very limited and newsletters were rarely opened so it was discontinued
 - Bi-Annual Event Listing/Flyer produced by a PR Consultant hired by the City – was put inserted into the bi-annual Rec Center catalog, discontinued when the flyer was sent directly to all households
 - Event Listing/Flyer produced by the PR Consultant hired by the City – sent directly to all WG households, was discontinued when the contract with the PR consultant was not renewed.
 - Regional public relations/marketing reach on television, magazines, radio – handled by the PR Consultant hired by the City until their contract completed, PR activity continued however after contract was not renewed.
 - Invited-speaker events for businesses held at the Rec Center – attendance was low so discontinued
 - Monthly Constant Contact e-mails with five important items/events to the city-wide business email list – the opens were few and unsubscribes increased so discontinued
 - Constant Contact Mailings to BDC – Opens were low (less than 5%) and there was no discussion surrounding them so it was discontinued
 - ◆ Monthly bullet points of key items & Business District updates
 - ◆ Monthly bullet points of key items included on BDC agenda
- **Ongoing:**
 - Quarterly City-wide print “Inside Webster Groves” newsletter from the Mayor and other players mailed to all WG households of City Department happenings and community/business events – ongoing
 - Monthly “Community Connection” full-page piece in Webster-Kirkwood Times of highlighting various events, recognitions, department happenings and information – ongoing
 - Quarterly and Annual Reports – available on the City website; ongoing
 - Monthly Opening and Closing Businesses Report to a select mailing list – ongoing
 - (Frequency?) Social Media postings on the Explore Webster Groves Facebook page – ongoing

- **Need to further define the Communication Plan:**
 - Who is the target audience?
 - ◆ Region
 - ◆ Residents
 - ◆ Business Districts
 - ◆ Businesses City-Wide
 - What is the type of media/distribution channel should be used for each target?
 - What types of information should be included?
 - An immediate pressing challenge is to improve the communication to and between the business districts and getting feedback from them.
- **Communication items and ideas discussed included:**
 - **PR Sub-Committee** – A lot of work was previously been done by the BDC PR Sub-Committee. What they learned and the input they received from a marketing consultant should be included in the communication plan.
 - **Flip-Print Catalog Idea** – Add to the Rec Center catalog with information from the Inside Webster Groves Newsletter and type of info that was previously in the Event/Flyer. The Rec Center information is printed on half the catalog in one direction, flip the catalog and print the newsletter et al. info on the other half.
 - **Facebook Demographics** – Demographics from Facebook would show who's engaged from outside of Webster Groves. We could use that information to expand our external facing opportunities to push out information. At the least, we should start with those communities that border Webster to tell people what events are taking place and bring them into Webster.
 - **Demographics Tie In** – Demographic information ties into the outward facing exposure to not only bring patrons in, but also attract new business into the Webster.
 - **Social Media** – What type of social media information should we provide to the business districts to show them the reach and the benefit they are receiving from their investment? Our social media consultant, Jennifer Volk with Creative Entourage, will be invited to a future meeting to share and explain information about our social media activity and then a decision can be made on the type of information to supply to the business districts and how often.
 - **Business Exit Interview/Survey** – Does the BDC want to do exit interviews when a business leaves or closes? It would be valuable information to have. How do we capture that and who would do it? A process would need to be put in place. What questions would we want to ask in an exit survey/interview? For example, did the business close because the owner retired, the rent was too high, they didn't like their landlord or the landlord won't renegotiate their lease? What would the BDC want to learn from the exit survey? Seeing a common theme to why businesses are closing or leaving would be valuable information. What benefits would be received from the exit information that would justify the resources needed to capture it. *NOTE:* The City doesn't get advance notice when a business is closing; there's no requirement for them to inform the City.
 - **Business Entrance Interview/Survey** – Perhaps we should do entrance interviews to find out why people chose to open a business in Webster Groves. What was their thought process in choosing Webster? That's a much easier piece of information to capture. Mara Perry could add that to her existing opening a new business process.

Communication Decisions Made

- Event Listing/Flyer – **MOTION:** Jennifer Starkey made a motion to have Pam Neihaus investigate the print event/flyer and bring back a recommendation to the BDC, Tim Delanty seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- Quarterly City-wide print “Inside Webster Groves” Newsletter – **CONTINUE**
- Monthly “Community Connection” in Webster-Kirkwood Times – **CONTINUE**
- Monthly Business District Commission approve minutes to BDC – **START**
- Monthly Business Opening and Closing report provided to BDC – **START**
- Quarterly Facebook Demographics provided to BDC – **START**
- Quarterly Entrance Interview/Survey summary provided to BDC – **START**

OBJECTIVE B, #1

- **New Business Process Feedback** – Contact recent businesses to get feedback on the process of starting opening a business in Webster Groves:
 - Mara will draft some questions to ask.
 - Questions will be sent out to these businesses under the name of the BDC.
 - Recent new businesses in various situations and types of business to contact:
 1. Owl & the Arrow Salon
 2. Maypop
 3. Half & Half
 4. Skystone Conservatory
 5. Naked Boot & Shoe
 6. Digital Strike
 7. Civil Alchemy
- **Vacancy Rates** – Next report will be available in August; it will update in the two retail-orientated business districts will be provided to the BDC.
- **Stubborn Vacancies** – Staff is working on identifying stubborn vacancies, for example, they are going back in the records to find the last occupancy permit on current vacant properties.
- **Revenue Collection** – Staff can provide business district revenue twice a year, in July after the fiscal year end and then again in January after the calendar year end.

OBJECTIVE B, #2

- **Comprehensive Plan** – Due to the lack of time remaining in the meeting, explaining the scope, history of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and all that entails will have to be moved forward to another meeting. Amending the Comprehensive Plan is a city-wide full public-planning process, can take up to two years, and many times a consultant is hired to facilitate the process; as a result, amending the Comprehensive Plan will not take place thru this BDC strategic plan process.
- **Foundation Development Plan (FDP)** – In order to answer which pieces of the Foundation Development Plan the BDC wants to incorporate into the BDC plan, they will read Chapters 4 and 5 of the FDP; a list of goals and objectives are in chapter 4 and development recommendations are in chapter 5. What items from the FDP will be the “aims” incorporated into the BDC plan; to be discussed at a future meeting. The FDP can be found on the City’s website; the URL will be sent out to Commission Members.
- **BDC Role** – What is the role of the BDC to support activity as relates to coordinating the Comprehensive and Development Foundation Plans? What is the City Council looking for from the BDC? The City Council will be meeting soon to reset their goals and the role of the BDC will be part of the discussion. The Council looks for issues to be peculated up from the BDC as well as all the other City commissions. They want to know what the commissions think is important;

this will shape the goals they set.

OBJECTIVE B, #3

Voices of the Business Community – This item is covered by all the activity taking place in the other objectives.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- **July** – Revisit the Comprehensive and Development Foundation Plans
- **July** – Vacancy Data and Business District Revenue
- **August** – Jennifer Volk, Creative Entourage – Social Media Activity

NEXT MEETING

July 31st at 8:00 AM at City Hall.

APPENDIX A

(Text from PowerPoint presentation)

Webster Groves Business Development Commission June 28, 2018

BDC Strategic Plan

Clarifying Scope of Work

Objective A: Market the City of Webster Groves

Initiatives and Actions:

1. Create a year-round City marketing and communications plan and a calendar of community/business events

Objective B: Sustain a Thriving Business Community and Attract New Businesses

Initiatives and Actions:

1. Maintain healthy vacancy rates, identify and solve stubborn commercial vacancies
2. Integrate current and future development planning
3. Seek and Listen to the Voice of Businesses and the Community

Objective A: Market the City of Webster Groves

Initiatives and Actions: #1

1. Create a year-round City marketing and communications plan and a calendar of community/business events

When: October 2018 for first plan with new plans annually according to budget cycle.

Metrics/Success Measures: Approved Plan, publication of calendar

DECISIONS AT BDC MEETING:

- *Look into option of how to submit events through facebook – Social Media consultants are looking into options as there is not a way to do a fillable form on facebook*
- *Present to all the business districts information on calendar and how to submit – Plan is to present to districts once facebook option is worked out*
- *E-mail to all city business mailing list how to submit and access calendar – Plan is to e-mail once facebook option is worked out*

How: Leverage existing Business District, Chamber of Commerce, and new or other activities to create a plan and event calendar. Define communication/promotion plan, social media and marketing plan, gain budget approval/agreement from City and Business Districts, and inform BDC and Business Districts.

DECISIONS AT BDC MEETING:

- *For next meeting – have additional information on how we communicate to discuss what has worked or not worked in the past*
- *Further discussion on the “plans” to clarify scope of work to undertake*
Monthly Planning & Development newsletter
Event/flyer in Recreation Center Catalog
Event/flyer sent directly to homes
Newsletter from the Mayor

Community Connection in Webster-Kirkwood Times
Invited events with speakers

Constant Contact Mailings to Public:
Monthly e-mails with five important items/events

Constant Contact Mailings to BDC:
Monthly bullet points of key items & Business District updates
Monthly bullet points of key items on BDC agenda

Objective B: Sustain a Thriving Business Community and Attract New Businesses

Initiatives and Actions: #1

1. Maintain healthy vacancy rates, identify and solve stubborn commercial vacancies

How: Simple and transparent processes for starting a business, connect landlords and business prospects, coordinate planning/zoning with business development.

DECISIONS AT BDC MEETING:

- *Contact recent businesses to get feedback on the process – List of recent businesses:*
- *Owl & the Arrow Salon*
- *Maypop*
- *Half & Half*
- *Skystone Conservatory*
- *Naked Boot & Shoe*
- *Digital Strike*

Need a list of questions to simplify feedback reporting

- *Create a regular means of getting feedback after new businesses open*

Metrics/Success Measures: Vacancy rate, Revenue collection, resolving stubborn vacancies

DECISIONS AT BDC MEETING:

- *Continue to data gather to match past efforts in the two retail-oriented business districts.*
- *Option to expand to other areas in the future*
- *Reporting done every six months (January and August)*

Next report will come out in August matching previous data

How: Simple and transparent processes for starting a business, connect landlords and business prospects, coordinate planning/zoning with business development.

Metrics/Success Measures: Vacancy rate, Revenue collection, resolving stubborn vacancies

DECISIONS AT BDC MEETING:

- *Get additional data on how long our stubborn vacancies are to help track them*

Working on how to obtain data on stubborn vacancies that is accurate to length of time vacated

Metrics/Success Measures: Vacancy rate, Revenue collection, resolving stubborn vacancies

DECISIONS AT BDC MEETING:

- *Provide data yearly from the business districts*
- *Continue to look at other data sources for tracking metrics*

Examining options for data. Typically, can provide in July after budget year end and January after the calendar year end.



Objective B: Sustain a Thriving Business Community and Attract New Businesses

Initiatives and Actions: #2

2. Integrate current and future development planning

Responsible: City Planner

How: Review and update the appropriate plans. Coordinate planning and zoning plans with DFP and incorporate the aims of the DFP into business development activities. Identify options to address major business barriers or issues such as parking and other infrastructure through creating a long-range plan.

Why: Ensure consistency of business planning and development with overall community development planning to maintain Webster community character. Increase attractiveness to development and new business by creating an infrastructure plan (sidewalks, parking, lighting, etc.)

When: 2019

Metrics/Success Measures: Refreshed DFP, long range investment/infrastructure plan

City Plan Commission

Chapter 89 Missouri State Statute

“Any municipality in this state may make, adopt, amend, and carry out a city plan and appoint a planning commission with the powers and duties set forth.”

“The Planning Commission shall make and adopt a City Plan for the physical development of the municipality”

City of Webster Groves Charter

ARTICLE 11 PLANNING AND ZONING

“There shall be a City Plan Commission established and operated in a manner consistent with the controlling statutory or common law of the State of Missouri.”

City of Webster Groves City Code

Citizens qualified by knowledge or experience to act on questions pertaining to the **development of a**

What is the Role of the City Plan Commission?

The City Plan Commission shall have full authority to advise the City Council regarding all **planning and zoning matters** as permitted by the controlling statutory or common law of the State of Missouri, including but not limited to **zoning power over the property of persons, corporations, institutions, churches, and all other entities** to the fullest extent permitted by the constitutions of Missouri and the United States. – *City Charter*

Further, and without limiting the powers described above, the Plan Commission shall have authority to prepare and submit to the Council, for Council approval, such **recommendations for modification of the City’s master plan for the physical development of the City**, as it may, from time to time, deem to be in the City's interest. – *City Charter*

Planning is the act of setting goals and the consideration of various courses of actions for achieving those goals.

Planners are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of different strategies goals and plans. They are responsible for knowing the latest in state and federal legislation, case law, and how those relate to a particular plan, project, or process.

One of the most vital roles of the City Plan Commission is the responsibility for the Comprehensive Plan for the City

This serves as the guide for development and growth and the vision of the City.

Is a document created by the City Plan Commission and Public Engagement; is not a legislative act.

Provides the citizens with a reasonable expectation of future land use development and community growth.

The Comprehensive Plan

Is a series of goals and policies that are used to guide future land use regulations and decisions?

- Is a “road map”
 - Is broad/general in scope
 - Includes policies not specific regulations
 - Is developed with significant public participation
 - Is updated/revisited every 7-10 years
-

- Drawing done in 1955
 - Plan in 1958
 - Proposed as a “guide to future physical improvements in the community for a period of twenty to thirty years.”
 - Took the City Plan Commission 3 years to develop
-

- Focus on Residential
 - Open Space
 - Schools and Parks
-

- Drawing done in 1966
 - As a supplement to the 1958 Comprehensive Plan
 - Proposed as “guides for the continuing development of the community for the next 25 years.”
 - Adopted by the City Plan Commission
-

- Drawing done in 1975
 - Plan in 1978
 - Does not depart materially from the plan of 1966
 - Objectives and Policies for the Future Comprehensive Plan
 - Current Full Comprehensive Plan
-

Planning Considerations for the revised Comprehensive Plan

- Residential Viability
 - Commercial Viability
 - Institutional Properties
 - Population Characteristics
 - Cost of Public Services
 - Park and Recreation Areas
-

Development Foundation Plan

- Mixed Development (taxable)
 - Economic Feasibility
 - Controlled Proactive Change
 - Income Generation
 - People vs. Automobile
 - Nature
 - Development Area Plans
-

- Development Goal
 - Development Principles
 - District Framework
 - District Improvements
-

Responsible: City Planner

How: **Review and update the appropriate plans.** Coordinate planning and zoning plans with DFP and incorporate the aims of the DFP into business development activities. Identify options to address major business barriers or issues such as parking and other infrastructure through creating a long-range plan.

- *The Comprehensive Plan should be amended through a full public planning process. A process like this can take up to two years and many times is done with a consultant.*

How: Review and update the appropriate plans. **Coordinate planning and zoning plans with DFP** and incorporate the aims of the DFP into business development activities. Identify options to address major business barriers or issues such as parking and other infrastructure through creating a long-range plan.

- *All rezonings and CUPs are reviewed by Staff against the Comprehensive Plan and the Development Foundation Plan.*

How: Review and update the appropriate plans. Coordinate planning and zoning plans with DFP and **incorporate the aim of the DFP into business development activities.** Identify options to address major business barriers or issues such as parking and other infrastructure through creating a long-range plan.

- *Need clarification of “aims”.*
- *Goals and objectives?*
- *Development Recommendations?*



Objective B: Sustain a Thriving Business Community and Attract New Businesses

Initiatives and Actions: #3

3. Seek and Listen to the Voice of Businesses and the Community

Responsible: BDC, City Staff, City Council

How: Effective communication and collaboration among Businesses, the Business Districts, BDC, and City Council. BDC activities and oversight aligned with City Council Goals and Strategic objectives. BDC is well connected to and represents the Business Districts and the community at-large.

Why: Maintain the unique character of each business district while collaborating and communicating to elevate all efforts.

When: Ongoing

Metrics/Success Measures: BDC report minimum three times per year to City Council on key measures, successes, opportunities, and barriers.

