

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2011**

Members Present: Chair. Carrignan, Ald. Stellato, Monken, Penny, McGuirk, Turner, Krieger, Martin, Bessner, and Lewis

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mark Koenen, Chris Aiston, Chief Lamkin, Chris Minick, Peggy Forster, Chief Mullen, Rita Tungare and Brian Townsend

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Chair. Carrignan at 7:52 p.m.

2. Omnibus Vote

Budget Revisions – February 2011.

Motioned by Ald. Martin, second by Krieger to approve the omnibus vote as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

3. Recommend waiving the bid procedure for year three (3) of our Parkway Tree Planting Program and award contract to Pedersen Company.

Ross Wiegert: They have held their prices again for another year and actually some of their prices from last year on the 50/50 program were less than the year before and have done a fine job for us.

Motion by Ald. Stellato, second by Monken to approve waiving the bid procedure for year three (3) of our Parkway Tree Planting Program and award contract to Pedersen Company.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

4. Recommend waiving the bid procedure and accept unit quote submitted by Fox Valley Lawn Care for lawn mowing services for 2011 at \$29.30/acre.

Motion by Ald. Stellato, second by Monken to approve waiving the bid procedure and accept unit quote submitted by Fox Valley Lawn Care for lawn mowing services for 2011 at \$29.30/acre.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

5. **Recommend waiving the bid procedure for 2011/12 switchgear and accept Federal Pacific's pricing for three (3) types of switchgear.**

Ross Wiegert: Electric accepts two manufacturers, Federal and S&C and Federal was substantially lower on the quote.

Motion by Ald. Penny, second by Stellato to approve waiving the bid procedure for 2011/12 switchgear and accept Federal Pacific's pricing for three (3) types of switchgear.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

6. **Recommend waiving the bid procedure and accept the low quotation from HD Supply for three (3) types of aluminum and four (4) types of copper cable to be ordered on an as needed basis throughout FY11/12.**

Motion by Ald. Penny, second by Stellato to approve waiving the bid procedure and accept the low quotation from HD Supply for three (3) types of aluminum and four (4) types of copper cable to be ordered on an as needed basis throughout FY11/12.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

7. **Recommend awarding Hauling/Excavation to Horton Farms/Campton Excavation and Stone/Gravel/Sand delivery to Heritage Logistics.**

Motion by Ald. Penny, second by Stellato to approve awarding Hauling/Excavation to Horton Farms/Campton Excavation and Stone/Gravel/Sand delivery to Heritage Logistics.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

8. **Recommend waiving the bid procedure for 2011/12 stone and gravel (picked up) and award three (3) grades to LaFarge (South Elgin and North Aurora plants) and six (6) grades to Heritage Logistics/Vulcan Construction Materials.**

Motion by Ald. Stellato, second by Penny to approve waiving the bid procedure for 2011/12 stone and gravel (picked up) and award three (3) grades to LaFarge (South Elgin and North Aurora plants) and six (6) grades to Heritage Logistics/Vulcan Construction Materials.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrignan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

9. Recommend waiving the bid procedure and awarding 2011/12 Tree Services to Skyline Tree Services and 2011/12 Tree Line Clearing to DeMar Tree & Landscape.

Motion by Ald. Penny, second by McGuirk to approve waiving the bid procedure and awarding 2011/12 Tree Services to Skyline Tree Services and 2011/12 Tree Line Clearing to DeMar Tree & Landscape.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrigan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

10. Recommend approval for the Downtown St. Charles Partnership funding allocation for FY11/12.

Chris Minick: The City's budget funds from Special Service Area 1B proceeds to promote the activities from the Downtown St. Charles Partnership. SSA 1B is a tax applicable to the downtown area of the City of St. Charles and is applicable mainly to business entities located in that geographical area. It was established in the early 1990s to promote economic viability of the downtown area and the activities of the Downtown Partnership promotes the City's goals for the SSA tax levy. The amount of funding requesting for fiscal year 2011/12 is \$240,000. This amount is consistent with the level of funding that is currently being provided to the Downtown Partnership. Based on prior Council direction and discussion with members of the partnership from prior years, staff did budget a level of \$212,000 within the FY11/12 budget based on preliminary estimates on the anticipated SSA revenues. However, the actual revenues came in higher than anticipated and we did use a little bit too conservative of an estimate of the revenues for SSA 1B. There are sufficient funds available within the proceeds of SSA 1B to fund the entire \$240,000 amount if the Committee so recommends. Staff is recommending approval of funding the DSCP but needs direction from the Committee as to the level of funding it will support. Jennifer Faivre, Executive Director of Downtown St. Charles Partnership is here to make a presentation of the activities of 2010 and its goals and objectives for 2011.

Ald. Turner: What is the total tax receipts on SSA 1B this year?

Chris: It will be approximately \$290,000.

Chrmn. Carrigan: There has been a reduction going forward relative to residential Brownstones. Could you enlighten us a little about this?

Chris: I mentioned that the SSA taxes are mainly applicable to businesses. There was a parcel of land that was anticipated to be developed commercially when the SSA was established back in the 1990; that has subsequently developed as residential development. If the Committee will recall when the enabling ordinance was passed back in the 1990's, the residential properties that were then in existence and contained in the geographic boundaries of the SSA were exempted from the tax. Several property owners within that residential

district that develop subsequently to the passage of the SSA ordinance have petitioned the county to disconnect from the SSA and have been successful in those efforts. The \$290,000 that we anticipate receiving from SSA 1B does reflect the disconnect of those properties.

Jennifer Faivre, Executive Director of Downtown St. Charles Partnership, 213 Walnut Street, St. Charles. Good evening, on behalf of the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, I'm pleased to outline our 2010 accomplishments and our goals for 2011 as part of our request for funding.

As you know, the Downtown St. Charles Partnership is an economic development organization with a single focus of downtown St. Charles. We follow the highly successful, National Trust's Main Street approach to revitalization. This approach recently celebrated its 30th anniversary and the fact that it is the single most cost-effective economic development program in the country. The mission of the Partnership aligns with that of the City of St. Charles and it's also reflected in our agreement for services with the City.

One of our deliverables per the agreement is Business Retention and Recruitment. To support retention of the 197 businesses in downtown St. Charles, the Partnership developed and distributed a comprehensive new downtown business directory and map last year. This fundamental marketing tool not only provides the contact information for each and every business (we walked every street and looked at every single business) but also text about the unique offerings of our downtown businesses.

We made four awning **grants to downtown** businesses in 2010. And due to the growing need for this kind of support, we would like to increase the number of grants we make this year.

A major and very important undertaking late last year (December/January) was conducting an in-depth, in-person survey with our downtown merchants to better understand their needs and challenges. Each merchant survey lasted an average of 1.5 hours which means we have amassed a lot of valuable information and data. Through this survey, we uncovered some key needs and challenges that we will address in our deliverables this year and next.

We also provided advocacy and communication to downtown businesses on a variety of issues related to downtown including things such as road closures, snow removal, safety concerns, and parking. As a result of an updated database, we were able to more efficiently communicate with all of our downtown businesses on these matters.

To offer a consolidated, organized approach to the vast number of key resources and opportunities for downtown businesses, we are creating a Business Owners "toolkit" that will be available to in hard copy and electronically. This will help close some information gaps, that we uncovered in this survey we conducted that will streamline communication and allow our businesses to be proactive so that they know what is

happening with Scarecrow Fest well in advance and what types of opportunities they can leverage with that event and our events.

Last year we reached out to property owners with a dedicated newsletter to keep them abreast of downtown initiatives, improvements, and support provided to their tenants, and other relevant information. We received positive feedback and we will continue the newsletter this year. In fact one of the property owners that does not live here in St. Charles called and met with me and talked about his property (Szechewan building) and said he needed to be a member of the partnership and so he joined.

On the recruitment front, downtown St. Charles had a banner year last year with the opening of 26 new businesses. To support business recruitment we worked collaboratively with commercial realtors by meeting with prospective tenants to positively impact recruitment of these new downtown businesses. As several commercial realtors will attest, this effort has been, and continues to be, very successful in influencing the decision to locate a business in St. Charles rather than other nearby communities. Last year we conducted 4 business recruitment trips and generated 87 new business contacts for ongoing follow up. This year we have six recruitment trips planned with a target of generating 125 new business contacts and we have four follow up mailings planned.

In 2010 we created a new Business Recruitment brochure that highlights the reasons to open a business in downtown St. Charles. We have distributed this new brochure thus far on recruitment trips and to local commercial realtors. This year we made this into an e-brochure for online recruitment efforts.

In 2011 we will create an empty storefront window treatment program to improve the aesthetics of empty commercial spaces and simultaneously market downtown St. Charles and the vacant space.

Turning to Marketing

Last year, we created and aggregated low or no cost advertising and marketing opportunities such as:

The Neighbors of St. Charles Magazine that reaches every home and business in St. Charles. This magazine offers a free section for downtown businesses to promote various things from grand openings, special offers, trunk show type events etc. The Partnership staff sends out reminders to downtown business about due dates for these kinds of submissions. Even prospective businesses planning to come here and are in process of signing their lease, I will send them these opportunities in advance so they do not miss an upcoming opportunity.

Another example of a free advertising opportunity is through the Partnership's subscription to Sudden Values which reaches 50,000 opt-in e-mail subscribers in the

TriCities. Downtown businesses participating in our various promotions have access to this advertising channel through the partnership.

Our weekly e-newsletter, What's Up Downtown, offers free display advertising and hotlinks for downtown businesses to reach 2700+ people each week. This year, efforts will be made to increase the number of subscribers and What's Up will also receive a facelift to incorporate the new branding.

A 7-week Fox Hunt retail promotion was launched last year. 47 downtown businesses received outstanding visibility through numerous advertising, marketing and PR tactics. This year the Fox Hunt will be modified based on merchant feedback in order to drive more consumer participation and more impact for merchants.

You may have noticed the new branding for the advertising and marketing collateral that the Partnership generated last year to market downtown St. Charles. We believe that this branding is a better match for the downtown business community. This branding initiative will continue this year.

We organized the 12th Annual St. Charles Fine Art Show which attracted approximately 10,000 attendees last year. From our merchant survey this event is well received and provides excellent exposure and helps drive sales for the businesses. Additionally we created a merchant cross promotion called Art Around the Corner which features professional art in downtown merchant locations. We developed and distributed a brochure showing the participating locations. This year, the Partnership invested in a new online method to attract more artists to the Fine Art Show. As a result, we have 106 artists this year compared to 75 last year. That is significant due to the fee we charge for this event and this is a huge bump-up in our revenue for that art show. We will organize Art Around the Corner again this year and we'll also have an instant savings card good at participating downtown businesses that will be valid for Memorial Day Weekend.

Last year we organized the 2-day Holiday Homecoming event. This event also attracted about 10,000 attendees. Based on survey results, we are researching new ways to help our downtown businesses better leverage this event audience. They don't feel they are getting enough sales and impact from that particular event.

The Partnership also provided support for seven other downtown events in an effort to promote downtown foot traffic and visibility for downtown businesses. To enhance marketing support for downtown businesses, a new downtown St. Charles website is under construction. It will provide outstanding visibility for downtown businesses and also be a great resource for our other stakeholders. (Showed a preview of the homepage.)

- The Downtown Directory will be searchable in a variety of ways.
- Another key area will be Available Commercial Space – with photos and contact info.

Using the new downtown St. Charles website, we will proactively and efficiently seek feedback from our stakeholder groups using short Online Polls and Surveys.

In Terms of “How To” Workshops:

- The Partnership offered 10 educational seminars on topics ranging from how to use social media to leasing trends.
- Based on survey feedback, this year the Business Development Program will be replaced with a new program called Downtown STC Business Exchange.
- The new program will not only help merchants gain knowledge about relevant topics it will facilitate and foster a stronger downtown merchant community – one where merchants know one another, share best practices and cross promote one another. This kind of culture is critical if we want to have a downtown that is competitive in the marketplace. The program will take place in different merchant locations and will start this month at Brix Wine and Cheese.

Turning to Capital Projects

The Partnership’s Design and River Committee collaborates with the City and other community organizations on many capital projects but last year, due to budget constraints the focus was mostly on a variety of maintenance and some landscaping and soil erosion control projects. In 2011, the most active project is the extension of the Bob Leonard walk. Also the planning for the Fire Station parking lot should begin this year.

With regard to improving the aesthetics of the Downtown Experience, the Partnership’s Design and River Committee’s ongoing Walk About program addresses the importance of the fit and finish of the downtown. Last year, in a west side Walk About, 24 repairs and improvements were sited and most have been remediated by working with the City’s Public Works and Code Departments. In terms of signage, we worked collaboratively with City to create new signage for the historic district.

To support improved downtown way-finding we created a new downtown St. Charles bike map. This year the bike map will be updated to match the other branded materials we have created. It will also provide more reasons for bicyclists to stop downtown instead of biking through. And the new map that was created for the Downtown Business Directory last year will be repurposed in order to update the 9 downtown kiosks later this month.

The Public Art Sub Committee designed and funded a new bronze plaque for the 1st Street Plaza History of Transportation Wall and they also funded and oversaw the maintenance updates to the mural on Francesca’s; and they identified possible locations to relocate the auto murals currently located on 3rd Street.

Last year we funded the Main Street Flower program in cooperation with the Park District. This program will continue this year. We have also applied for a \$10K grant to obtain historical markers for six significant sites downtown.

With regard to the Partnership office, last year was transition year for the partnership office, but we provided excellent stewardship of the SSA 1B tax revenues. This is something we take very seriously. Last year we were able to leverage \$241,600 in SSA tax revenues to the equivalent of \$515,400. That was really made up of in-kind donations and sponsorship revenues and the value of our volunteer work hours.

Additionally, we are very conscious of the cost of doing business and strive at every single opportunity to save money by aggressively negotiating lower prices for services and supplies, as well as and taking full advantage of 501c3 non-profit rates where they exist. Lastly, the partnership has made tremendous gains in office efficiency by implementing new procedures and systems as well as creating and maintaining a new database.

As I've outlined in this presentation, the Partnership is able to substantially leverage SSA 1B tax dollars into a wide range of benefits that translate into a strong competitive advantage for downtown St. Charles stakeholders. The Partnership provides an organized way to engage our talented residents, business and property owners to help produce high quality decisions and outcomes for the heart of our community. In turn, a strong, engaged community helps retain and attract more businesses and more talented people.

And upon reflection, we can clearly see the progress that has been made over the last 19 years since the Partnership was founded. And by looking to other communities that we visited, such as Naperville or Oak Park, we can see that much more is possible and that this important work never ends.

To maintain our current level of services and continually improve downtown St. Charles we respectfully request that our funding be maintained at its current level of \$240,000.

Ald. Turner: I have been a critic of this organization for the past years, but you stated your goals last year and you fulfilled them admirable and way above what I thought you would do. Congratulations! The other thing I asked for is what are you going to do next year? You had a plan for this year, but I also noticed you have a plan for the year after this and I think that pleases me to know that you are not just thinking about this year and are looking forward. I will vote for this request of \$240,000.

Chrmn. Carrignan: Same thing here Jennifer, I was like Bill – one of your stronger critics of the organization. You've done a good job. You've really taken this, grabbed it, and ran with it. Although I don't get to vote on this, I would recommend that we come in with the \$240,000 SSA grant for this year. I will challenge you though in the future, when we start looking at what we want to accomplish downtown, those SSA funds have a wide variety of uses. I will challenge you on how do we get better? How do we do more with less resources so that we can take those resources and use them for other things; more public art, more hardscape in the City, we need a parking lot on the northwest side of town? That is something we need to be looking at in the future. Those are some of the

challenges you are going to be facing and you took the challenge and moved forward with it and we look forward to next year for much of the same – Good Job!

Ald. Penny: Having gone through the report with the matrix, it was very transparent what you did and how you did it. I would like to comment that this year I had the pleasure of working on the Christmas parade and watched, what I consider, a very fiscally responsible direction that was given to all us and you followed through with that. If we couldn't afford it, we couldn't do it. Jennifer made that very clear with the committee and I commend you for that.

Motion by Ald. McGuirk, second by Turner that we fund the Downtown St. Charles Partnership from the Special Service Area 1B proceeds in the amount of \$240,000.

Roll Call: Ayes: Stellato, Monken, Penny, McGuirk, Turner, Martin, Krieger, Bessner, Lewis; Nays: None. Chair. Carrigan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

Ald. Martin: Would like to make a comment to call the attention to the Council members of the number of participants, property owners, volunteers who are in the audience – that shows that there is some real support for the organization.

5. Additional Items

None.

6. Adjournment

Motion by Ald. McGuirk second by Stellato to adjourn meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays: None. Chair. Carrigan did not vote as Chair. **Motion carried.**

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