Fall 2018 CID Property Owners’ Meeting Minutes

The Fall 2018 CID Property Owners’ Meeting of the Downtown St. Louis Community Improvement District (CID) met at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 13, 2018 in the Second Floor Locust Street Meeting Room of Central Library, 1301 Olive Street, St. Louis, MO 63103. Approximately 53 members of the community attended the meeting.

At 5:30 p.m. Ms. Kelley, President & CEO of Downtown STL, Inc. (the organization that manages the CID) welcomed attendees. Ms. Kelley shared that there are two mandatory property owners’ meetings each year and that this evening’s meeting would focus on CID services and key initiatives currently underway in Downtown St. Louis.

Ms. Kelley explained that the CID Management Plan is the framework for providing services within the District. The CID budget is divided into 3 major buckets: 65% Security, Maintenance & Beautification; 30% Marketing & Economic Development; and 5% Opportunity Fund (which must be used for one of the two previously mentioned allocations). Downtown STL, Inc. recently achieved greater operational efficiencies through the relocation of all three of its offices. The Administrative Office moved to One Metropolitan Square, the Clean Team moved to the Versailles Building at 1108 Olive Street, and the Downtown Bike Patrol unit has moved to 1306 Lucas Avenue (near 13th Street and Washington Avenue). The office relocations will result in approximately $100,000 annual savings. Additionally, Marketing, Accounting, and Beautification/Landscaping are all now being outsourced. The outsourcing of these services allows for greater access to a variety of resources, increased transparency, and added efficiencies.

Mr. Mobin Khan, COO & VP, Economic Development, and Mr. Christian Hunter, Economic Development Associate, shared an update of the eCab Pilot that ran in early summer. Over 12,000 rides were provided in this free point-to-point transportation service and 80% of the riders rated it five stars. The information from the pilot has been shared with Bi-State and is being incorporated into its Metro Re-Imagined Study to be released in 2019.

They also provided an overview and current status of the Garment District project. Two open houses (one at Central Library and another outside the Fashion Fund) were held over the summer to gain community input. The project aims to revitalize the Historic Garment District and a feedback survey is still open on the Downtown STL, Inc. website; attendees were encouraged to give their input. A small short-term pilot project is also forthcoming to help shape the long-term project.

Mr. Baker, Marketing Manager, shared that services provided by Elasticity have increased views to the #mySTL site by 340%; this storytelling initiative aims to shift the perception of Downtown St. Louis and focuses on people who live, work, and play Downtown. The content is hosted on mystlcity.com and is distributed through social media. Interaction with Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have all increased as well.

In addition to social media, the Lunchtime Live! events which normally run from May to September were extended into October. Two Intern Events were hosted to engage the young professionals and share with them a Downtown Community connection as well as help them take advantage of the assets and attractions in our community.

A new project, ‘Missy’s Monthly Meet-Ups’ offer an opportunity for the working and residential community to share thoughts, ideas, and ask questions in a casual setting; the meet-ups are being held monthly at various locations throughout the Downtown and will resume after the holidays.

All events were well attended and have received positive feedback.

The #LightMySTL street light project was discussed by Ms. Kelley. She shared that the pilot project started on Market Street from 4th to Jefferson, retrofitting cobra-head street lights with LED lights that shine on both the sidewalk and the street, and a decorative colored light strip that can change colors. This project was the first Smart City initiative in the City. Retrofitting each pole with the lights and technology has a cost of about $2,000 per light. The pilot was funded through private contributions, most of which came from outside of Downtown. The future goal is to
transition 500 lights at a time in a quadrant like design to help illuminate large sections of Downtown until the entire Downtown is completed. #LightMySTL offers a lasting impact to the Downtown environment and constitutes a substantial investment in the infrastructure. In addition to the added safety of the enhanced lighting, the white light allows for cameras to clearly capture images via the camera technology previously installed. Ms. Kelley segued into discussion about the Downtown Camera initiative, into which the CID has invested approximately $500,000 over the past seven years, at the request of law enforcement. The CID does not own any of the cameras; they have been gifted to the City for purposes of liability and accountability. Cameras are LPR (License Plate Recognition) and PTZ (Pan, Tilt, Zoom), and are monitored at the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC); efforts are also underway to connect property owners and the Police Department to form a network of camera availability.

Ms. McCrary, Director of Security and Urban Space, shared information about the ongoing beautification and security efforts. Ms. McCrary informed the attendees that Kelly Yeager, a long-time employee of Downtown STL, Inc. recently retired, and the decision was made to outsource the Landscape program. Additionally, Clean Team members have assumed tree pruning and weed management duties as part of their daily beautification and maintenance efforts throughout the CID.

The CID continues to pay for police offers to walk a foot beat throughout the CID as a matter of enhanced security during peak times. After a recent RFP (Request for Proposal) process, the vendor for these services will change from Asymmetric Solutions to TCF (The City’s Finest). TCF will provide a variety of patrol options; foot, bike, and police vehicles, all authorized to patrol in the Downtown, and even offer GPS data to ensure greater accountability in managing the patrols. Ms. McCrary also holds regular Security Meetings with the various downtown stakeholders to maintain information and strategy sharing among the Downtown security network. Guests at the meeting requested notice of when the Security Meetings take place so that they might attend. The meetings will be posted on the Downtown STL, Inc. website https://www.downtownstl.org/ going forward. A recent Park Smart initiative has been shared with parking personnel to encourage safe & smart parking practices. (Clarification: As it was incorrectly stated at the CID Property Owners’ Meeting, the Security Meetings are not public meetings. The meetings are specifically for safety and security personnel. The date and times of these meetings will not be posted on the website: https://www.downtownstl.org/)

Captain Kriesmann, Commander of the 4th District, shared that car break-ins are up in the Downtown, but have gone down in Downtown West. There has been a recent breakthrough with a four-person team of detectives solving a ring of car break-ins leading to a number of federal level convictions.

Attendees asked or commented about the following:

- Registering Downtown building cameras with the police department (Encouraged to do so)
- Is CID Secondary Security used to patrol private parking lots? (No)
- What can the Police Department do to enforce the parking lot guidelines set forth by the City of St. Louis? (PD can make recommendations, but cannot force lot owners to comply)
- The CID should work with startups such as Covo and T-REX? (Already working with these entities)
- Status of the Downtown residential market
- Is family housing being planned for the Downtown Community? Yes, some larger two- and three-bedroom units should be in the development future
- The #LightMySTL is a worthwhile investment

In closing, Ms. Kelley shared that a ‘Downtown 2030’ planning project would begin in 2019 and projected to be completed in 6-9 months. Community engagement will play a vital role and attendees were encouraged to watch for forthcoming information.