

Minutes of Neenah Central City Business Improvement District Board
April 16, 2024 – 8:00 am
Neenah Police Station – Community Room

PRESENT: Board Members: George Brownell, Alex Wenzel, Bob Gillespie, Alex Noskowiak, Tori Dorn, Michelle Bauer, and Christine Rondeau. Also present: Assistant Executive Director Sara Hanneman (FNI), Mayor Jane Lang, Community Development Specialist Samantha Jefferson (City of Neenah Community Development), Ald. Mark Ellis and Officer Joe Benoit (City of Neenah Police Department).

Approve minutes of February 20, 2024 meeting: MSC Bauer/Dorn, the BID Board to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024 BID Board meeting. Motion passed.

Public Appearances: Ald. Mark Ellis (District 1) introduced himself and gave a background on his previous time on City Council and the work that was being put into the downtown rejuvenation at that time. He commented how happy he is to be the BID Board Council Representative and complimented all of the hard work that the BID Board members and others are doing for the downtown.

Officer Joe Benoit attended the meeting to answer any questions that the BID Board may have.

Member Gillespie asked if the homelessness issue is on the rise in Neenah. He talked about a business moving out of downtown Appleton because of issues related to this. Officer Joe said that this is a minor issue in Neenah and that for most people facing homelessness, they are not out in the open and causing issues. Recently, Council passed an ordinance banning encampments. If there is evidence that someone is camping, police can give them a notice to vacate within an hour. Beyond that, they can receive a citation. The police have been working with organizations like Pillars to offer help to those who need it. The main issue is when people refuse help.

Member Brownell asked Officer Joe to give a brief update on the biggest crime issues facing the Fox Valley. Officer Joe explained that number of incidents of specific crimes wax and wane over time. Currently, the major drug issue in the Fox Valley is with meth while a few years ago it was heroin. They have seen cases of meth laced with fentanyl. These drug issues perpetuate property crimes as addicts tend to look for things to steal in cars or stores to sell for money. Graffiti incidents have also been on the rise.

Member Rondeau asked what she or her employees could do to help the police and the community. Officer Joe said that natural surveillance is one of the best ways to prevent a crime from happening. Essentially, if someone feels like they are being watched, it may take away their feeling of opportunity to commit a crime. He said that no complaint is too small and if someone sees something, they should say something. And always if someone feels that they or their property is threatened, that they should call 911.

Member Brownell asked if the cameras in the downtown area are of high enough quality to be helpful to police. Officer Joe said that the cameras have helped many times but are really for traffic situations. There have been cases when they were able to see a suspicious person or license plates that gave them information about a crime. He also mentioned the flock cameras that are at entrances to the city. This allows officers to see if a vehicle that may have been used in a crime or part of an amber alert, silver alert, etc. is in the city.

Member Wenzel asked Officer Joe about the police department and what services it offers to the community that people may not know. Officer Joe explained that the entire department is housed in the

building. There are no holding cells but they do use the area to process OWI tests (it is more cost effective to have offenders held at the county). Interviewing can be done in the building. New improvements include a firing range, large mat room, weapons cleaning facility, and a larger training room. A large storage shed was also approved for additional equipment to be kept at the facility. There is a drug drop box and the parking lot is designated as a safe online exchange site.

Financials:

Bills for Approval: MSC Rondeau/Noskowiak the BID Board to approve the bill packet for \$62,301.31. Motion passed.

Member Gillespie asked if the administrative fee to Future Neenah was increased. Assistant Executive Director Hanneman confirmed that it was increased by \$2,500.

Budget Status Report: There is no budget status report as there was not a formal meeting in March.

Appleton Sign Expenditure to Update Kiosk Sign Maps: These signs have not been updated in five years and several things in the downtown have changed.

MSC Gillespie/Bauer, the BID Board to approve the updates to the downtown kiosk sign maps in the amount of \$2,000. Motion passed.

Executive Committee:

'23 Year In Review Video: Future Neenah created a video highlighting everything in the downtown in 2023. It played throughout the meeting.

Thank you of the Month: Thank yous will be sent to Layla's Place (six month anniversary in the downtown), Lily and Sparrow (1 year anniversary) and 7 Thymes (expansion).

New Committee Members are always welcome to be on subcommittees.

Placer AI Software: Assistant Executive Director Hanneman discussed a demo that was recently shown to Future Neenah and the city about Placer AI Software. With this software, data can be derived from cell phones to determine how many people are in Neenah in a location, where they came from, etc. This would be \$15,000 for a one year subscription and the intention would be for Future Neenah and the BID to share this cost. She may have the company rep give a presentation to the BID Board at a future meeting. Ald. Ellis asked if the city could split the cost as potentially Community Development may be interested. Assistant Executive Director Hanneman explained that the city could not share and it would be an additional \$20,000 subscription.

Retention & Recruitment Committee:

Placemaking Grant for Approval – 206 S. Commercial Street: Relish and Roots is asking for a \$500 placemaking grant to help with aesthetic upgrades to their property at 206 S. Commercial Street. They are planning to add a pergola, seating and painting.

MSC Brownell/Gillespie, the BID Board to approve the placemaking grant for 206 S. Commercial Street (\$500). Motion passed.

Maintenance Committee:

Report from March 13 meeting: Snow removal was discussed. The Maintenance Committee recommends that the BID fund contracted snow removal at 1 inch accumulation and above. This would not include any salting. For last year's light snow season, this would have cost \$3,000. Member Gillespie suggested to have more in this budget just in case. There is more snow money in savings from the sale of the John Deere tractor.

MSC Rondeau/ Noskowiak, the BID Board to approve the Snow Removal and Parameters and Budgeting for the 2024-20254 snow season. Motion passed.

A separate working committee is being created for trees/lighting in the downtown. Volunteers are needed.

Annual District Walkthrough – June 18

Public Relations and Marketing Committee:

Shop & Stroll Spring Edition – April 18; Spring Fling – May 11 through June 9; Farmer's Market Opening and gift certificate sale – June 8; Beach Crawl – July 20.

Report from April 11 Meeting: For Luck of the Irish Bingo, 13 people turned in black out cards and 18 people turned in Bingos. The committee discussed changes for next year. Member Dorn suggested asking business owners their opinions about how events went for them.

Future Neenah Updates:

The Future Neenah Board is restructuring to a more committee-based board. Great Harvest is celebrating 27 years in the downtown and Red Door is celebrating 8 years in the downtown. Picnic tables were recently purchased from Fox Crossing Parks and Recreation. These tables will be cleaned up and placed in Gateway Park.

City of Neenah Updates: The Council organizational meeting will be held on April 16. Two new alderman will be joining the Council. Both of which have already served terms on the Council – Mark Ellisa and Bill Pollnow. A new \$24 million development was announced with Checker Logistics. The Mayor was able to discuss this, downtown events, and other city business on WHBY.

Future Neenah and the city will be working with East Central Planning to make improvements to the alley on the 200 block of W. Doty Avenue.

Announcements and future agenda items:

Next meeting: May 21 at City Hall.

The Board adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



April 16, 2024
BID Meeting Minutes

Samantha Jefferson
Community Development Specialist, Community Development