



Downtown Cheyenne

Staff Report

December 20, 2018

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BIG INITIATIVES

- Exploring Tax Increment Financing for West Edge & other underdeveloped areas. Have gotten quotes from two TIF feasibility study specialists and have met with, and given a driving tour, to one of the teams. Timing on moving forward with this study is critical as one project has already been completed in the West Edge with two new development projects underway. The goal would be to get the district put into place (if feasibility suggests moving forward) as soon as possible.
- Exploring issues with residential counts for downtown. New Planning Director Charles Bloom, was able to go online and confirm that the Eidelman, Pioneer and other downtown 'hotels' that are used as SRO (single room occupancy) housing were NOT counted as such in the last census. Dugger brought up the issue that downtown Cheyenne does NOT qualify for New Markets Tax Credits (a 39% tax credit) and had suspected the residential count for downtown was not accounted for correctly. DDA will be working on this issue with the City and other housing organizations to explore a solution.

BUSINESSES OPENING/EXPANDING/CLOSING OVER THE LAST MONTH

- Opened: No new business openings in November
- Closed: None
- Still Coming: Chronicles Distillery (Asher Bldg), Esther's (new sister restaurant to Bella Fuoco; across the street)
- Net business openings (since July 1st): 1

BUSINESS & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Downtown Business Development Initiatives:

- DDA met with, or contacted, the following regarding business development in downtown: Tim Barnes, CEO of Black Tooth Brewing (out of Sheridan); Ron Ibsen (new owner of Firestone Bldg); Laurie Hutchinson of Cash Wa Distributors (who will be turning their distribution space in the Asher Building into a grocery); Dorothy Roth (owner of Flair who is looking to rent it); The Bent & Rusty in Laramie (DDA will meet with them in January); Albany Alchemy is in the process of opening in the former Dad's Cafe, more details to come. Napoli, the Italian restaurant from Laramie is opening their 2nd location in Frontier Hotel, projected date is beginning of February 2019.

Downtown Projects in the Works:

- Public announcement was made that the match funding goal for the downtown splash pad has been met. There is not a definite timeline set for the start of the project; with the original hopes the project would begin in January 2019 and open by the summer.
- Mendicino Brothers Building has a new local buyer and should close in mid-January.
- Bell Building is under contract. Buyer moved here from Seattle recently.
- Grier Building is under contract. This deal is under tight wraps and we won't know more until it closes.
- Construction on the new Municipal Court Building should begin in February.
- Dineen's 10-unit attached housing project (between Downtown and the West Edge) has broken ground; with hopes to have first two units completed by summer.

- West Edge Collective announced plans to move into their new building by mid-December (located at 315 W. Lincolnway)
- Warehouse Twenty-One has broken ground on their new facility in the West Edge District.
- Good progress continues on Civic Center Commons Park; with streets open again adjacent to city hall and the library.

Meetings with Downtown Development Partners:

- Manufacturing Extension Partnership, LEADS, Dennis Ellis from Microsoft (with an update on their support of the downtown wi-fi project, software developers from Array School of Coding for a Cheyenne-specific restaurant app, Amy Gorbey of the Cheyenne Civic Center to discuss how to “incent” patrons to visit downtown restaurants (talks are ongoing).

Events:

- Fill in the Gaps Tour - January 31st, 5:00-6:30pm featuring Lincolnway properties.

REBRAND PROJECT

- On Friday, December 14th, Flood marketing had a video meeting with DDA staff to present, and discuss, the new website. The new website (draft) is beautiful, much more visually engaging and much easier to use - - with much more important information included. Timeline for getting the final version is after the New Year. Flood Marketing will also be creating new letterhead, envelopes and business cards as part of this process.

DDA WORK SESSIONS

- DDA Board & Staff met last week (for a 4th session) to refine the 2019-20 Draft Strategic Plan and align it with a proposed budget that will be presented to the City in late February. Dugger created a draft “adjusted” budget for the existing fiscal year as well as a proposed budget for 2019-20. The board will take action on these budget proposals in January.

SHOP SMALL SATURDAY FEEDBACK

- A 7-question survey was sent out to all businesses that participated in Shop Small Saturday. So far, we have received 13 responses. Overall, the results are overwhelmingly positive with 61.5% saying sales were more than a typical day, 61% said advertising was the same or better than previous years and on average, traffic in their businesses on Shop Small Saturday was more than previous years. The survey ended with a space for comments in which people left only positive comments. This year’s event was a great success!

MARKETING & PR INITIATIVES

- The #DowntownBusinessSpotlight social media campaign has continued to be very successful with each posts reaching over 1200 people and multiple people sharing.
- The quarterly e-newsletter went out the end of November. Although the newsletter was previously being sent out quarterly, beginning in December, we will be sending out a shorter, monthly newsletter (mid-month) so content does not get lost in multiple pages.
- We are focusing efforts on increasing followers and likes on the DDA Facebook page for more exposure in the community. This is being done by keeping track of those that like and share our posts and inviting them to like our page. We will also be doing a share campaign and entering people to win a prize if they like and share the Downtown Development Authority Facebook page. So far, our page has gone from a little over 3,000 likes/followers to over 4,000 since October.

OTHER INITIATIVES

- New Downtown Graffiti Abatement Ordinance has gone through a draft revision and will be moving forward through the adoption process.

- Holidays on the Plaza is in full swing with 398 skaters and 498 total in the party (as of 12-17-18). DDA has also hired “Santa at the Depot” on Saturdays and Sundays. Special Character Skate was December 8, Ugly Sweater Skate Night is December 15 and Disco Night Skate is December 22.

MAIN STREET COMMITTEE UPDATES

DESIGN

- DDA asked for a legal opinion on whether religious and political organizations are eligible to receive DDA FIP Grants. They are not. Information on who is eligible and who is not will now be included in the application information (it was not included in previous application packet materials).

EXISTING FIP/CIG PROGRAMS

- Existing FIP projects are moving forward: St. Paul’s is almost complete; Sam Galeotos’ project is moving forward; and the Stanfield Building has not begun work yet.
- CIG Update: The Diocese of Cheyenne applied for a CIG grant. The Diocese purchase the former police station and are in the process of replacing, sidewalk, curb, gutter, ADA Accessible ramp and will also purchase city approved bench, trash can. This property is party of the Mill Levy pool. The application was approved with the condition of adding bench and trash can.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- This committee will be merging into a new Development Committee. It is on hiatus until the change takes place.

PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

CORE TEAM TEAM (made up of DDA, LEADS, Chamber, and Visit Cheyenne)

- The CORE Team will be meeting representatives from Transit and Planning regarding the start of a discussion regarding short- and long-term solutions for a Transit Center in downtown.
- The CORE Team is also interested in exploring the design and construction of a permanent stage for the plaza as a potential project. This will need to be carefully coordinated with the City.

FORWARD GREATER CHEYENNE

- JJ Chan’s Downtown Revitalization Committee (initiated out of the Forward Greater Cheyenne process) is meeting on a regular basis. JJ is “connecting the dots” between DDA and this new committee to help build synergy and support for getting more done.

WYOMING MAIN STREET/NATIONAL MAIN STREET

- Announcements have been made for the 2019 National Main Street Conference set for Seattle in March. More information will be forthcoming regarding DDA Board and Staff participation.
- Cheyenne DDA will be submitting a t-shirt design for the statewide competition for the Wyoming Main Street t-shirt for the national conference.