



Downtown Cheyenne Staff Report

March 21, 2019

Report By: Vicki Dugger, Esther Gonzales, Jennifer Adu & Rin Kasckow

BIG INITIATIVES

- First TIF meeting was held on Friday, March 8th. TIF consultant, Jerry Johnson, provided an overview of how Tax Increment Financing works and gave the group some ballpark numbers of TIF-based funding that could be captured using a “basic” boundary scenario. At the next meeting on March 11th, the ad hoc committee proposed updates to the initial “basic” boundary that was proposed, along with a laundry list of potential projects. This information will be given back to Johnson who will run calculations on what kind of increment might be gotten with the new, expanded boundary proposal. Rough cost estimates will also be needed for the proposed projects to see how the expected income compares to the potential project costs. Finally, there is a hope to have a Work Session with City Council in mid- to late-April to help make sure they understand the TIF concept and how it works, along with garnering their input on potential boundaries and projects.
- Individual meetings with Council members have begun on DDA Strategic Plan & 2020 Budget. To date, Vicki & Alane have met with the following: Council President Rocky Case and Councilmen Bryan Cook and Dicky Shanor; with the goal of familiarizing them with DDA’s recently adopted Strategic Plan and Budget for the coming FY. To date, we have not heard back from Luna, Esquibel or Rinne on their availability to meet, but will follow up with them.
- DDA Reserves Policy Drafted: After an initial meeting with the ad-hoc Reserves Committee, Vicki drafted a Reserves Policy for DDA that is currently under review. Once the committee feels the document reflects what it needs to, we will give it for our legal counsel for her review. Following that, the policy will be brought to the full DDA Board for approval. Related: Our legal counsel will also be providing an opinion on whether the City can claw-back any of DDA’s reserves.
- Exploring if/how a Property Tax Reimbursement Agreement might work in Wyoming: DDA is working with our legal counsel, who will also be reaching out to the City of Cheyenne’s legal counsel, on whether a development tool that is use in Colorado that is less expensive to implement that issuing a municipal bond (through TIF) for downtown improvements could be used here.
- Downtown Housing Incentives ad hoc committee continues to meet and gather information from other communities on how their downtown residential incentive programs work.
- “Insider’s Guide to Downtown Cheyenne”: planning and design is underway for this visitor’s guide that is specific to downtown. DDA will be publishing this downtown-centric guide; moving away from the fold-up map to a more detailed overview of what downtown has to offer.
- H2 Project: DDA is still working with a potential developer out of Colorado – as well as a developer who fell into our laps from Honolulu (whose daughter, a missileer, just got posted to FE Warren). Both are running internal proformas and will be getting back to DDA as they work through their numbers.

- Parking: Vicki has taken over as DDA's official liaison to CPD's Downtown Parking Committee. In the meantime, Vicki & Alane have begun informal focus groups with downtown employers & employees on how/where they are currently parking – and gathering other useful input on why they park where they do – and what it would take to encourage them to use the parking garage.

BUSINESSES OPENING/EXPANDING/CLOSING OVER THE LAST MONTH

- Opened: Tumbleweeds Consignment, Alexis Drake, Bombshell Beauty & Spa and Kids Consignment & Spa
- Closed: none
- Coming: Chronicles Distillery has their final approval and is now distilling their first batches of spirits (Asher Bldg), Napoli Restaurant, expanded from Laramie (will be in the Frontier Hotel), Red Bison home furnishings and Mary's Mountain Cookies are both updating downtown spaces with planned openings in April, The Metropolitan (looking for late spring/early summer opening),
- Expanded: David A. Pope (DAPCPA) has purchased RPO & Associates and doubled the size in Cheyenne. Wyoming Home will be expanding their product line to include tack – which will help fill a business niche in downtown.
- Net business openings (since July 1st): 4

BUSINESS & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Downtown Business Development Initiatives:

- Two new downtown grocery options coming online: The Albany Liquor Store is transitioning to include groceries and will have this transition complete soon. Cash-Wa Distribution (in the Asher Building) is also transitioning to include a full line of groceries (as well as still run the distribution portion of the business) - - very exciting to now have two more options for groceries and convenience items in downtown. Other two options are La Paz and La Rosa Mexican Grocery stores which also offer prepared Mexican food on location to go.
- Met with the buyer of the Bell Building to discuss his plans for the redevelopment of this blighted building. Should know more once the deal has closed next month.
- Presidential Barbershop has moved to the former Flair location and applied for a CIG Grant. The Design Committee approved the grant for \$3262 for decals and signage.
- The Cheyenne Symphony applied for CIG Grant and the Design committee approved \$275 in matching grant.
- The Metropolitan also applied for CIG Grants. The Design Committee approved \$21,926.14 in matching grants. It will need to be approved by the DDA board as the amount is more than \$5K.

Downtown Projects in the Works:

- The Mendicino Brothers Building has been purchased by Mark Thayer and should close this month.
- The Bell Building is under contract; DDA has met with the buyer.
- Grier Building is under contract by Amy & Dan Surdam; with plans for a new restaurant called "Dillinger's" to go into the ground floor space.
- 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.
- The owners of Fly Dragon Studio will be rehabbing an adjacent building to include a ground floor open-space office and two upper floor lofts.
- Warehouse Twenty-One has broken ground on their new facility in the West Edge District.

Downtown Business Contacts:

- The owner of Red Bison has been working with DDA to try and find a good retail space for that business that is currently located in the mall – and really wants to be downtown.
- DDA has been in contact with Bent and Rusty from Laramie, WY for a pop-up business during Frontier Days. They will be located at 316 W. 15th Street (Bill Briggs). DDA is working to write up a lease between the both.
- Esther has been in contact with Napoli, a new Italian Restaurant that will be opening, no official date has been announced. This restaurant will feature Italian food. It is a very popular restaurant in Laramie, WY. Alchemy Catering is also in the process of opening in April. They will offer grab and go food.

Business Development Event:

- “Fill in the Gaps” Thirsty Thursday Property Tour - January 31st, 5:00-6:30pm featuring Lincolnway properties. The Goodyear Property had a total of 45 sign up attendees. Attendees later went to other 3 locations.

REBRAND PROJECT

- We are in final stages of rebrand project; will be submitting final comments to contractor for new website. New business cards & stationery designs will be completed within next ten days.

MARKETING & PR INITIATIVES

- The #DowntownBusinessSpotlight social media campaign has continued to be very successful with posts averaging a reach of over 3,400 people and multiple shares.
- The February newsletter was sent out Tuesday, February 26 and included information about the February photo contest, March property tour, new businesses that have opened in the district and information about the newly launched Cheyenne Crafted program.
- DDA’s new Cheyenne Crafted program officially launched March 1. This new program highlights Cheyenne’s artisans and local craftsman. It will highlight and support businesses and people who provide “authentically Cheyenne” products.

OTHER INITIATIVES

- “Living It Up in Downtown” Housing Tour is set for May 19th. Planning is well underway.
- “Rock the Block” is set for June 22 – with the Flobots headlining – which should bring in a big crowd as this band has never played Cheyenne. Pinnacle Bank has signed on as the Premier Sponsor at \$4,000; other sponsors for lesser amounts will be approached.
- Rin sent out a mailing to all downtown business owners asking them to update their information and included an update on what DDA activities for the last quarter.
- Rin is working on getting another mailing put together for the graffiti ordinance. This mailing will go out under registered mail and will include a copy of the new graffiti ordinance, a form for property owners to ‘opt out’ and a SASE to return forms.

MAIN STREET COMMITTEE UPDATES

FIP/CIG PROGRAMS

- Applications for the FIP and CIG grant programs have been updated for 2019; as have the Policies and Procedures of the Design Committee.
- Preapplications for the Façade Improvement Program grant are due March 20th.

PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

FORWARD GREATER CHEYENNE

- DDA reps (Alane & Vicki) met with JJ Chan and Mike Williams to discuss what a budget for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative that is part of the Forward Greater Cheyenne Plan would look like. It was decided that since infrastructure projects under “Connect the Dots” planning initiatives will be the costliest of downtown improvements that FGC will wait to move forward with this level of budgeting until better cost estimates and project prioritization are in place. When this information is finalized, the capital expense amount can be incorporated into a larger funding proposal for other Forward Greater Cheyenne initiatives. It was also decided that FGC will be especially helpful as advocates for downtown initiatives put forward by DDA.

WYOMING MAIN STREET/NATIONAL MAIN STREET

- Vicki Dugger, Esther Gonzales, Jenn Adu and Bruce Heimbeck (State Main Street Board Member) are in Washington state for the Wyoming Best Practices Tour and the National Main Street Conference. Alane & Chuck West will be attending only the National Main Street Conference.