

City of Sandstone
EDA Work Session
June 24, 2024

ROLL CALL: Randy Riley, Cassie Gaede, Tim Schmutzer, Val Palmer
Members absent: Matt Anderson, Julena Rahier (provided written input), Pete Spartz (provided written input)
Staff present: Executive Director Kathy George
Others present: None

President Palmer began the work session at 3:00 p.m. to review and discuss the recently completed Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The plan was prepared by students from the UofM Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The goal of the work session was to prioritize items and discuss next steps.

Discussion began with prioritizing the five overall categories:

A. Market & Promote Sandstone (First Priority – 2)

- Social Media – create a Sandstone App
 - Spotlight local businesses and events
 - Set up alerts/reminders, etc.
- Task Force – establishing a Downtown Retail Committee is critical to keep the downtown business owners engaged
- Marketing Plan – the Humphrey School will be asked for another Capstone project to help with this process
- Visitor Info – it would be helpful to combine the History Center (or another business) with a Visitor’s Center; perhaps at one of the newly acquired Bonander properties – the corner of 3rd Street and Main seems a more visible fit for a Visitor’s Center
- Highway Signage – once the Marketing Plan is done, a billboard should definitely be pursued, perhaps the NPAHD billboard could be used; wayfinding signage is also a priority
- Main Street Organization – maybe not the full blown program; but perhaps there are some benefits we could tap into

B. Expand Lodging & Housing Options

- Camping Proximity – the Park Commission is planning to apply for funding to create camper cabins in Upper Robinson Quarry Park (near the water tower)
- Downtown Housing – perhaps options are available above the History Center and the Colonial building
- Housing Task Force is focusing on new housing options

C. Support Local Business Growth & Development (Second Priority – 2)

- Short-term Rental – Members were not opposed to amending the City Zoning Ordinance to allow this use in town (encouraging more tourism)
 - It was later found that *Vacation Rentals* is an allowed use in the Traditional Residential District with an Interim Use Permit (perhaps promoting this to property owners would be helpful)
- Façade Grant Program – the City ended this program and replaced it with the \$1,500 signage grant; do we want to fund a Façade Grant Program?

- Historic District – Not much interest in establishing a Historic District at this time because it could place additional requirements on business owners
- Pop-Up Business Pilot & Growth – perhaps some green space (between buildings) could be used to allow pop-up businesses
 - Potential businesses include outdoor gear, crafts, book nook, ice cream/candy, coffee shop, hot dog shop, food trucks

D. Enhance the Downtown Experience (First Priority – 2; Second Priority – 2)

- Add trees, bushes, shade, benches, bike racks in the downtown area
- Create a welcoming atmosphere
- Streetscape grants may be available
- String festive lights over the street

E. Improve Trail & Transport Access to Downtown (First Priority – 1; Second Priority – 1)

- Better signage/access to town for bike trails
- Snowmobile/ATV access to downtown – if done safely, could be a benefit
 - Perhaps a route could be established to the City parking lot
- Diagonal parking
 - Cut 8’ into Train park and 8’ into the City parking lot
 - Allow Grindstone Ford to use the City parking lot for inventory
- The sandstone sidewalk by the History Center needs to be addressed
- Event shuttle – good idea

Votes were cast for 1st and 2nd priorities (noted above); discussion proceeded with categories (A) and (D) as the First and Second priorities (**in bold**). All categories were eventually discussed as well. Comments are noted above under each category.

Valerie Palmer, President

Kathy George, Executive Director