

**Downtown Business Improvement District
Board of Trustees
Tuesday, December 18, 2012 from 5-6 pm**

Attending: Dan Cederberg, Charlie Beaton, Tim France, Ellen Buchanan, Alan Newell

Staff: Rod Austin, Julie Walsh

Absent: Carma Gilligan, Rich Huffman

Guests: Bob Jaffee

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm.

Introduction of Guests and Public Comment

Bob Jaffe of Cedar Mountain Software attended the meeting for discussion on the Downtown Inventory.

Downtown Inventory Funding (Austin/Newell)

Austin announced the business development committee wanted to meet about to discuss timing issues with the Downtown Inventory. There is a lot of work to be done on the database, especially if a web data base is most desired. Improvements on the database can be done by Cedar Mountain Software while the intern, Alex Pichacz, is gone for winter break. Austin said in the future it makes a lot of sense to use a tablet for collecting data. Some issues revolve around the follow up survey and how to keep track of who has responded. A tablet will prevent the need to rebuild the survey for each update. Newell added it reduces the use of paper, and it allows businesses to see what is already entered and what information needs to be changed.

Austin said he talked to Martin Knight, who is a former intern and is interested in helping for a few hours each week. Alex could work 20 hours per week, Martin 10, and a third intern could fill in the gaps. Greg Oliver had introduced Rod to a possible grad student. Martin will bring the experience of having already gone through the process. Newell said perhaps the third intern should come on only after Rod returns from Florida in February. This will help determine if a third intern is necessary.

Austin continued, saying that another question is how to get a tablet and how to work it out with Cedar Mountain. This being the first time, unforeseen issues have arisen. Jaffee said Cedar Mountain uses a web platform for a lot of its projects. Getting the survey to work with that is simple, yet trying to get it to support the whole picture is much more complicated. That would require a lot more work. Jaffee said it might be best to just build a web application instead, yet that costs several thousand dollars. Working within our framework gives more opportunities to add data, but he is not sure that is too far above the budget. Newell said he thought it was possible to get the application to work on a tablet in January, which will prepare the interns to go out and do the update electronically. Jaffee said the database has

been built with Microsoft Access, so it would be necessary to get a device that supports Access. Newell said maybe a Netbook would work. It is a small laptop that can easily be carried around. It may take up most of the budget though. Buchanan cautioned if something is going to cost \$20,000 there would have to be a procurement process. Newell remarked the lowest cost purchase would be a small laptop. Jaffe said there is a device that will support Access. This device would be lowest cost way to collect real time data while walking around.

Newell asked what Cedar Mountain would need to do. Jaffe said the company would need to touch up the data entry screens. He advised budgeting \$500 to pay for the time. Newell said if the board budgets \$2,500, it might be enough to get the device and pay Cedar Mountain for the work. Jaffe said it would work fine to run the database on a regular desktop and hit it with a remote connection on the tablet. It might be a better short-term fix. All that would be needed is a functional computer and internet connection. Buchanan said the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) may have a spare small computer that could be used until the BID got a tablet. Newell said he may be able to get one partially donated. He said he prefers a tablet. Jaffe remarked only one person can work on the tablet at once.

Cederberg motioned to not exceed \$2,500 spent on the technology and programming to allow interns to be able to update the inventory electronically, with the money coming from the business development budget. Newell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Newell continued, asking whether Alex will have money to work with when he returns. He said this can be discussed at the next board meeting. Beaton said Bob can be utilized for the next phase. Jaffe said the platform Cedar Mountain has created is already a web development platform. The interaction with the database is the interaction with the website.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.