



**SPECIAL MEETING SESSION AGENDA
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
109 E. OLIVE STREET, BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2017; 5:15 P.M.**

7. Presentation and discussion regarding the Establishment of Downtown Development division within the Community Development Department. (*Presentation by Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager 5 minutes, Council discussion 15 minutes.*) *Correction to the amount listed in the Fiscal Impact.*



ADDENDUM
SPECIAL SESSION MEETING
AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

FOR COUNCIL: August 28, 2017

SUBJECT: Presentation and discussion on the Establishment of Downtown Development as a division within the Community Development Department.

RECOMMENDATION/MOTION: Discussion only

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK: Goal 6 Prosperous Downtown Bloomington

STRATEGIC PLAN SIGNIFICANCE: 6b. Downtown Vision and Plan used to guide development, redevelopment and investments

BACKGROUND:

The objective of this move would be to better enact recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan, to solidify working partnerships with the City, to establish work plans to facilitate completion of priorities, and to further the City Council's Downtown objectives.

The current DBA Board would continue to serve in an advising role, but the new City division might more appropriately be named Downtown Development Division, but with many of the same functions as the current DBA. The new Downtown Division would become a Division of the Community Development Department.

History: The DBA has had numerous incarnations across the decades, changing and adapting as the City's needs and leadership changed. As Bloomington Unlimited, and then Uniquely Bloomington, this organization received \$200,000 annually from the City of Bloomington. After Uniquely Bloomington was dissolved and reformed as the Uniquely Bloomington Downtown Association (UBDA), City support was adjusted. It has been at \$90,000 annually since 2011. Downtown Bloomington was accepted into the Main Street Program in 2005. The Main Street Program structure, following the Four Points to revitalization established by the National Trust, set the framework for the organizations' current efforts which include beautification, special event programming and communications. See attached Main Street Brochure.

Currently, the DBA is solely responsible for the following Special Events: The Award Winning Farmers' Market, Monthly First Fridays, Art Walks and Loft Tours and Downtown Cruise In. The DBA also assists with the following Special Events: Criterium Bike Race, WGLT Summer Concert, Sunrise Rotary Brats and Bags, and the annual Lincoln's Festival.

As the DBA goes forward in 2017, the focus has returned to Downtown Development and in celebrating the Downtown's prominence as our City Center. There are several prime parcels for

either restoration and repurposing, or brand new development, which could be for a new hotel and conference center, a live/work art space, additional cultural amenities such as a science and industry museum (City Museum in St. Louis was cited as an exciting model), or in more heritage tourism experiences, like an Automobile/Route 66 Museum and eatery. These and many other initiatives would become the focus for this new City Division, such as assisting in the development of the Creativity Center, branding the Downtown as a Cultural District and driving tourism to that district.

Advantages: The new Division, with its working knowledge of and relationships with Downtown stakeholders would provide resources and support within the City organizational structure. In addition, its current staff, with its already established public art and special events programming, could continue to enhance the downtown experience, while enhancing the Downtown environment through department efforts to implement recommendations from both the Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan in 2013, the DBA has actively pursued completion of what is frequently referred to as “low hanging fruit” on the implementation grid. It established a non-endowment fund through Illinois Prairie Community Foundation to provide resources to enhance the quality of life downtown. The “Friends of Downtown Bloomington Fund” has made it possible for the DBA to add, to date, 7 public art installations, and expand the adopt-a-pot flower program to include tree well gardens, which help create a sense of place in our City Center. In addition, the DBA Executive Director, as a member of the Downtown Traffic Committee meets monthly with City staff to discuss parking concerns, and brainstorm ideas for parking enhancements. The Executive Director also currently co-chairs the Downtown Wayfinding Signage Committee.

The current DBA, in full cooperation with the City’s Public Works Department, has improved downtown trash pick-up, added public recycling centers, and continues to employ Marcfirst to assist with litter management in the downtown. The current DBA, however, struggles with a lack of proper funding. Currently, a significant portion of DBA funding is used to cover fixed operational costs such as rent, utilities and salaries. Given an annual budget of \$90,000, this does not go very far to cover the variety of events funded by the DBA. Relocating to a city owned facility and become a member of City staff would allow for those funds to be used instead for programming, thus allowing for the development of bigger, bolder and better regional activities.

The Downtown Bloomington Association was designated an Illinois Main Street Community since 2005. Since that time, the DBA has been monitoring the progress of the district through the collection of reinvestment numbers. In 2016, property owners invested \$1.1 million in their buildings and nine new businesses opened within the district creating 12 new jobs.

As part of the City, the new Division could also assist the reinvestment numbers grow by assisting with the one-stop shop to streamline the building permit process. This will make it easier for property owners to make improvements to their properties. Additionally, by working with the City’s Economic Development Coordinator the new Division can market available properties more efficiently and assist them in locating in the district. The current DBA Staff already has a work plan full of activities that support and promote the downtown. The Staff of the DBA has unique skill sets that can assist other departments within the City of Bloomington. Once the DBA staff joins the City, some of its duties such as accounting and Human Resource actions will be done by other City Staff thus freeing up the new Division staff to do more things directly related to the

Downtown and the goals set for in the City’s Master Plan. Some of these goals and the hours weekly spent on them are listed below:

Task	Hours/week
Expedite information flow from all City departments to the Downtown business and property owners	3
Remove Downtown work from City staff	2
Become the one stop shop for information pertaining to downtown redevelopment projects	2
Create a town/gown outreach program to better engage campus community and alumni	2
Enhance the further development of the emerging Cultural District and creativity center	2
Improve and maintain accurate databases for residential, businesses and property owners	2
Streamline the Special Event application process and assist with event coordination	1
Assist in recruiting new desirable businesses to fill downtown vacancies	1
Total	15

Disadvantages: As a not for profit, membership based organization, the current DBA is able to provide services to member businesses, such as corporate advertising and marketing. This level of service could be lost. The current DBA is able to give voice for stakeholders who may have priorities that are not in synch with the City’s efforts. The advisory DBA Board would have to work to fill this gap. The Community Development Department budget would have to be increased to allow for two additional staff members and programming. Job descriptions for those two positions are attached here. The FY 2019 Budget would increase by \$177,456.78 to include two FTE salary and benefits packages, and funds for continued programming. On the positive side of this, however, the City would not have to fund the DBA as it now exist, which is being funded in the FY 2018 budget at \$90,000, of which \$30,000 has been paid for 4 months through August of 2017. Under this new proposal the Downtown Development Division would be funded at \$267,456.78 less the \$90,000 currently funded, leaving an increase of \$177,456.78

Conclusion: Given the advantages, however, staff recommends the creation of a Downtown Development Division as part of the Community Development Department and budget it at \$267,456.78 annually. And that the two individuals in the current DBA be transferred to the City with no further advertising of these positions.

COMMUNITY GROUPS/INTERESTED PERSONS CONTACTED: McLean County Facilities Management and the current DBA Board.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The budget amendment would include using fund balance to cover the additional cost of **\$144,304.85** that would be absorbed in the FY 2018 Budget. Please see the Exhibit 8B-7 for the details of the Proposed Budget Amendment.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IMPACT: As discussed above.

Link to Comprehensive Plan/Downtown Plan Goals: D-1. Continue to build a healthy Downtown that offers a range of employment, retail, housing, cultural and entertainment opportunities for all.

FUTURE OPERATIONAL COST ASSOCIATED WITH NEW FACILITY

CONSTRUCTION: The new Division would be housed in the three offices facing Washington St. on the Ground floor of the Government Center North end. This move requires the addition of two small partitions and one door.

Respectfully submitted for Council consideration.

Prepared by: Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager

Reviewed by: Nicole Albertson, Director of Human Resources

Financial & budgetary review by: Chris Tomerlin, Budget Analyst
Carla A. Murillo, Budget Manager

Legal review by: Jeffrey R. Jurgens, Corporation Counsel

Recommended by:



David A. Hales
City Manager

Attachments:

- Ordinance
- Exhibit
- Event and Outreach Coordinator Job Description
- City Staff Manager Job Description
- City Staff Downtown Brochure
- PowerPoint Presentation