Top of State Staff Team

July 10, 2018 Draft Meeting Minutes

Introductions

Rebecca Cnare, Natalie Erdman, Jim O'Keefe, Sarah Lim, Linette Rhodes, Anne Monks, Dan Kennelly, Meghan Blake-Horst, Eric Knepp, Chad Hughes, Lisa Laschinger, Claire Oleksiak, Marci Paulsen, Capt. Jason Freedman, Lt. Brian Austin, Lt. Brian Chaney-Austin, Chris Petykowski, John Rider

Cnare side notes on Previous Programing/Changes (not an exhaustive list):

2014: Chalkboard placemaking experiment**,** Philosophers Stones removed in Fall

2015: BID programming begins; twinkle lights on Philosophers' Grove Trees installed

2016: BID programming expands, lighting levels increased, power washing of downtown sidewalk program begins

2017: Police install behavior signs, BID programming expands with Summer Café, TOSVOD Vending Ordinance adopted, State Street Market Report Completed, 2 B-cycle stations installed, Shine on Holiday Lights and Winter Market, food cart locations added, Beacon Day Resource Center opens, City funds Operation Welcome Home

2018: BID programming continues and new information kiosk installed, Buckys on Parade, Flamingo Wings, power washing program expands to 3x per week at Top of State Street

Why do people gather at the Top of State Street?

Cnare led a quick discussion regarding why people gather at the Top of State Street to make sure that staff keeps those issues in mind as the City moves forward with potential design and programming changes.

- Panhandling at busy intersection, visibility, access to bus lines, access to services, shade, places to sit, overhang, access to public restrooms
- Beacon is open, and the overnight shelter is nearby
- A lot of the people gathering are not homeless, and some disruptive behaviors come along with these activities
- Municipal tickets no longer go to warrant, so there is no incentive to give tickets/pay tickets etc.

Staff Team ACTION ITEMS IN BOLD BELOW

Discussion on Physical Space issues

1. Gate for Alley Discussion

   Police described the issues in the alley. Cnare said that Sue Springman is heading up the private effort to install a gate(s) across the alley, and said there are several approvals needed i.e. zoning/fire code etc. **General consensus of group to support these efforts.**

2. Stage Wall
   Police would prefer the wall to be removed as soon as possible. Knepp noted that it would likely have to be a public works contract and would likely not be completed until Fall '18 or Spring of '19. A temporary solution was desired. *Capt. Freedman also noted that the walls of the planter/sculpture area could also use a railing or device to discourage sitting.*
   Action Item: Staff decided on 2-pronged approach
   - **Engineering (Petykowski) would lead an effort to examine what is needed for a more permanent removal of wall and reconfiguration of the space.**
   - **Planning (Cnare) would lead an effort to find a temporary (or permanent if it proves to be successful) art installation/railing at the top of the wall. Funding source needed ASAP for a quick turnaround.**

3. Planters along Veterans Museum Wall
   Laschinger presented her findings for a proposal to place planters along the Veteran's Museum Wall. Staff discussed and all agreed that due to loading zone and other access issues, this proposal would not be successful.

4. Café Tables and Chairs – Storage Issue
   Cnare noted that The BID is losing its storage for the Café Tables and Chairs and asked staff to keep this in mind as discussion move forward.

5. Visitors Center: It was noted that the Visitor center has had some sanitary issues and will be added to the sidewalk cleaning program.

6. Other physical design changes discussion
   Overhangs: the two overhangs, one on each museum are used for shelter. Attorney's Office was unable to find the past approvals of the overhangs.
   Reconfiguring the street: it was noted that the reconfiguration of the two cul-de-sacs into a through street like the other corners of the square would be a larger discussion, including consideration of future redevelopment and weighing the loss of public space.

<u>Discussion on Programming / Behavioral Issues</u>

1. Operation Welcome Home Update
   OWH staff continues to have regular contacts at the top of State and elsewhere downtown.

2. Power Washing: Mall Maintenance Staff has instituted a 3x per week power washing program.

3. TOSVOD Vending
   Blake horst said that the food carts are complaining about safety. Kennelly mentioned that adding more food carts, perhaps a t a discounted rate could help bring more activity to the area. Kennelly also said that having more permanent looking roll-down kiosk vending sites could have more of a presence than the occasional tent used by TOSVOD vendors. Public Market market ready vendors could potentially be interested.
   Action item: ED staff will look into discounting food carts sites for the area and consider looking into other vending solutions as a part of a larger programing conversation.

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4. Police music update: The police noted the issues they have faced when trying to work on a music amplification for the area regarding limitations of Ian's ability to broadcast their Spotify account in a public location. It was noted that other cities have areas where they broadcast music.
   Action Item: Paulsen will work with Austin/Chaney-Austin on the law regarding public broadcast of music through a subscription service.

5. Other programming/ Behavioral issues discussion
   Knepp suggested that the only way to improve the behaviors in the area may be a substantial investment into a larger programming efforts, as behavior moves back into the space once programming is over.
   Action Item: Oleksiak will lead a smaller staff team and put together a proposal for a more robust programming/vending activation of the space – especially for the hours of 2-8pm.

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