

Old Orchard Special Business District Advisory Commission
MEETING MINUTES
APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 14, 2023
 LOCATION: City Hall & Zoom
 CALLED TO ORDER: 8:13 AM
 MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:01 AM
 NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 11, 2023

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
Bob Weber, Chair	X	
Holland Saltsman, Vice Chair	X	
Angel Venegoni	X	
John Barr		X
Steve Zielinski	X	
Abby Culleton	X	
Rick Gerger	X	
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
Sarah Richardson, Council Liaison	X	
Eric Peterson, City Liaison	X	

Also in attendance:

Charles Thien – Division Manager, St. Louis County Department of Transportation
 Ray Gawlik – South Area Engineer, St. Louis County Department of Transportation
 Officer Ahmar Rasool – Webster Groves Police Department
 Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

Approval of Minutes – A motion to approve the February 2023 minutes was made by Holland Saltsman, seconded by Angel Venegoni, and unanimously approved.

Big Bend “Road Diet” Project – Charles Thien (Division Manager, St. Louis County Department of Transportation) and Ray Gawlik (South Area Engineer, St. Louis County Department of Transportation) reviewed the project for Big Bend Boulevard from Laclede Station Road to East Lockwood Avenue. Construction is proposed to start in April of 2024 and end in February 2025. Traffic flow will remain open during construction.

The project, referred to as a road diet, eliminates the directional rush-hour lanes and goes to one permanent parallel parking lane and a lane of travel east and a lane west. The project will include resurfacing, better ADA compliant ramps, bumpouts, striping, and signage. The ADA ramps will use standard St. Louis County limestone concrete and will not match the decorative concrete in the District. Having the ramps not match and therefore stand out may be preferable however. Further discussion between St. Louis County and Webster Groves Public Works will determine if matching the concrete needs to occur.

Discussion of safety concerns of the pedestrian and vehicle flow thru intersections, lights, and crossings included:

1. South Old Orchard/Weber's Front Row Parking Lot stoplight intersection – South Old Orchard traffic turning east onto Big Bend and Weber's Front Row Parking Lot traffic exiting the parking lot and going straight onto S. Old Orchard both receive a green light at the same time with no additional signage or arrows. Changing the signaling and signage may address the turning confusion and increase safety. St. Louis County Signaling will take a look at it.
2. Log Cabin Lane/North Old Orchard pedestrian crosswalk – It is very difficult for pedestrians to cross at this location. In addition to ongoing east/west Big Bend traffic, cars are making turns at both streets. Also, the crosswalk is not in the correct location. Pedestrians are coming from the south public parking lot behind Frisco Barroom and crossing Big Bend to get to Balkan Treat Box on the north side; as such, they are positioned on the west side of Log Cabin/N. Old Orchard while the crosswalk is on the east side. Many pedestrians do not use the crosswalk itself and just jaywalk instead.
3. Murdoch three-way stop intersection – The north “blow-by” lane for the westbound traffic will be eliminated with this project. Perhaps additional signage and/or other options could be added to increase pedestrian safety at this intersection which is of utmost concern. St. Louis County Traffic will take a look at it.
4. Overall Pedestrian Safety –Perhaps some pedestrian traffic calming features such as flashing signs, etc. could be used in the District. City Council has set aside some ARP funds that could potentially be used. Discussion whether to make a recommendation to the Webster Groves Traffic Advisory Commission or City Council will take place next month.

Rooftop Lighting – All rooftop lighting quotes from three companies are expected by the end of this week. Response from these electrical services companies has been very slow. The project, especially maintenance pieces, is not large enough for their attention.

2023 Gazebo Series – The dates this year for six Friday evenings are August 18 and 25, September 1, 8, 15, and 22. Bands are being secured and hopefully will have information to send out and start securing sponsorships. Last year's sponsorship dollars were down, so Commission Members were asked to reach out to their fellow business neighbors and ask for their support this year

FY2024 Budget – Changes discussed at the last meeting have been made. If changes come up during the year, for example additional funds for the Gazebo Series or rooftop lighting, the budget can be amended to add funds from the fund balance if needed.

MOTION: Angel Venegoni motioned to approve the amended proposed budget. The motion was seconded by Holland Saltsman and unanimously approved.

Joint Events – Bob Weber and John Barr representing Old Orchard will be meeting with Tim Delanty representing the Old Webster Trade Association on April 10th at 2PM (location to be determined) to discuss possible joint events. Commission Members are welcome to attend.

Business Development Commission (BDC) Update

- **BDC Commission Members** – All three business districts now have a representative from each of the Business Districts on the Commission.
- **Job Board** – “Work in Webster Groves” job board continues; engagement has jumped. It can be found on the City website <https://www.webstergrovesmo.gov/673/Work-in-Webster-Grove> The job board is free to use by both those looking for work and for those licensed Webster Groves businesses and non-profits looking to hire staff; full-time, part-time, interns, volunteers. The next wave of advertising to job seekers is about to start. Work is underway to allow job posters to control their postings.
- **BDC Business Coffee** – A follow-up to the previous Business Roundtable is in the works. The BDC would like to reach out to businesses post-COVID and get their needs.
- **QR Code Project** – A City-wide walkable resource to find businesses in Webster Groves is being sussed out.

City/Council Update

- The master design process is well underway for the redo of the municipal pool. Several designs have been put forth based on public input. There will be additional rounds of public input regarding design features.
- City budgeting continues. The Balancing Act tool will be used again this year to gather public input on the budget.
- There is an upcoming election on April 4 for Webster Groves School Board and Prop M, a 3% sales tax on recreational marijuana sales.

Next Schedule – April 11, 2023

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 9:01 AM.