



RETAIL TASK FORCE MINUTES May 1, 2008

Members Present: Chair Jerry Horton, Vice Chair Lance Eads, Becky Czapansky, Jake Keen, Eric Edelstein, Kent Eikenberry, Viki Fredericksen, and Bill Rogers.

Horton explained to the group a plan to develop a presentation for regional commercial realtors about the benefits of developing commercial and retail projects in Springdale. Horton explained that while considerable work is being done outside the Task Force to prepare the Ballpark District for retail, commercial realtors often represent national retailers and are a first point of contact when pitching a site for retail location. He explained the most likely time for such a presentation would be in October during the commercial realtors' fall meeting.

Rogers explained to the group that the work being undertaken between now and the end of the year would result in a master plan and infrastructure cost analysis for the region commonly referred to as the Ballpark District (south of U.S. 412 and west of S. 48th Street) but it was not known when that work would be completed.

Eads explained that any presentation developed could likely utilize video being developed for an ongoing regional tourism project. Horton suggested that video could be edited to suit the specific needs of a 5-7 minute presentation to commercial realtors promoting Springdale. Edelstein said Arvest Ballpark could host the event and the video could be shown on the stadium's videoboard.

Horton agreed that a presentation shouldn't be made until Springdale has more specific information to share with commercial realtors. He also pointed out the Task Force's efforts should focus upon "selling Springdale" rather than attempting to market a specific property or properties.

Rogers suggested he schedule a meeting with Perry Webb and Task Force chairs Horton, Eads and Matt Brown in the next two weeks to evaluate the plan and to determine if there would be adequate information available for an October event.

The group spent time compiling a list of under-served retail sectors and retailers in Northwest Arkansas that could be added to a list of possible recruitable retailers. The point was made that the ideal retail target would be those retailers who have yet to locate in the region and who might be convinced to choose Springdale as their first location.

Among the ideas mentioned were: men's clothing store, shoe stores, Marshall's, DSW Shoes, Academy Sports, Steinmart, Jason's Deli, Men's Warehouse, World Market, Dave & Buster's, Jillian's, organic grocery stores, Pei Wei, soccer retailer, Sports Authority, Dick's Sporting Goods, full service athletic club like Fayetteville Athletic Club, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Warren Movie Theater (based in Wichita, provides high level service to moviegoers), Cheesecake Factory, and other nightlife type establishments that cater to a more mature adult demographic than a college demographic.

Eikenberry pointed out that any efforts should be seen through a regional perspective and that Northwest Arkansas is still seen as a "C-sized" and not a "B-sized" market nationally. He explained he constantly struggles with potential advertisers who don't understand the unique features of a metro area the size of Northwest Arkansas.

Keen offered to research examples of retailers available in a 500,000 population market that are not currently in the Northwest Arkansas market.

Next Steps:

A meeting between Perry Webb and Task Force chairs to evaluate the commercial realtor presentation plan and to determine if there would be adequate information available for an October event.

Next Meeting:

The group will meet next at 10 a.m. on June 5, pending results from the planned meeting of Task Force chairs with Webb.

CityFuture II Retail Prioritized Initiatives

#2 Major Destination Retailer

- Work to develop a strategy for attracting a major destination retailer like Bass Pro Shop or Cabela’s

#17 Attract City-Wide Retailers

- Permanent position of retail development director
- Cutting edge retail web page
- Incentive for existing retailers
- Increase A&P Tax

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