

## **Downtown Rock Island Steering Committee Recap**

Aug. 17, 2021, at Quad City Botanical Center

**In-person attendees:** Steve Ollenburg, Nicole Watson-Lam, Brandy VandeWalle, Kyle Carter, Kevin Maynard, Pat Stolley, Matt Pappas, Mayor Mike Thoms, Jamie DeRudder, Eric Rowell, Nathan Parch and Miles Brainard

**Virtual attendees:** Kyle Peters, Ald. Dylan Parker, Charlotte Morrison and Shelly Dingeldein

**Background:** While services such as regular cleanup, maintenance and public safety were previously provided for downtown Rock Island, the City of Rock Island does not have the resources or the capacity to serve the needs and wants of existing and future business & property owners.

This reality led to the City of Rock Island's decision to contract with the Quad Cities Chamber to set up a service-providing organization for the downtown business district supported by a sustainable funding model. As a voting member of Rock Island City Council that approved this contract, Ald. Dylan Parker, Ward 5, believed this investment would add more value to the downtown in the long run versus repaving an alleyway, for example.

**Meeting summary:** At its monthly meeting on Aug. 17, the Downtown Rock Island Steering Committee led by business and property owners identified the following services they want to be provided:

- Regular beautification and maintenance, including but not limited to litter cleanup, landscaping and enhanced snow removal
- Targeted outreach to property owners and advocacy for better stewardship of buildings/land
- Public safety and assistance
- Business attraction & retention

The Steering Committee recognizes the need for downtown property owners, in addition to other public and private partners, to help fund these services through an annual contribution to the service-providing organization. This payment can be collected by the City through the establishment of a Special Service Area (SSA) and administered to the downtown organization for management and implementation of services.

If an SSA is created, the Steering Committee would continue to have oversight over the downtown organization and how the dollars are invested throughout the duration of the SSA, usually 3-5 years to start. If successful, the SSA can be renewed for an additional period of time.

### **Next steps:**

Based on the call for these services, the Chamber team will develop a draft budget(s) for the Steering Committee's review at its next meeting Monday, Sept. 27.