

Advanced Pest Control System
573-334-4215
Find more on semoMarketplace



SOUTHEAST MISSOURIAN



Fair ~ 78°F
River stage: 37.61 ft. Rising

Friday, June 25, 2010

- HOME NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS FEATURES ENTERTAINMENT RECORDS OPINION BLOGS YOUR STORIES PHOTOS & VIDEO
- LOCAL STATE NATION CRIME JACKSON SCHOOLS HEADLINES ONLINE READER RSS

Print Email link Respond to editor Post comment

Share: Facebook Twitter LinkedIn StumbleUpon RSS Dribbble G+ Email

Sikeston takes next step in its DREAM initiative

Thursday, June 3, 2010

By Michelle Felter ~ Standard Democrat

SIKESTON, Mo. -- Since Sikeston was named a Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri -- or DREAM -- community in August 2007, a lot of work has been completed behind the scenes.

But all that research and the reports written will turn into something tangible in the next 10 years, as committee members work to implement plans and visions brought about in the past few years. And those goals were recently highlighted during a kickoff for the strategic plan, the Sikeston Standard Democrat reported.

"This kind of culminates all the reports we've done in the past two and a half years," said Brandon Kuehn, executive director of the Historic Midtown Development Group. "It pulls in all the goals from those reports to the top 10 major goals for our organization to work toward over the next 10 years."

Russ Volmert of PGAV Urban Consulting, the firm hired by the state to facilitate the DREAM project in its selected communities, gave a presentation, which included those 10 goals.

He also opened up discussion, saying comments would be included in the final report, which will be given to Sikeston in late June. "That's when your real work begins," he said.

The goals are: establish a community improvement district; redefine the Historic Midtown Development Group; develop a wayfinding and signage plan; improve the sense of place; develop the retail market; renovate Legion Square; redevelop vacant parcels; develop an identity of Downtown Sikeston; promote single-family home ownership; and enforce existing building codes.

Volmert went into further detail on some of the goals.

A CID, he noted, creates a sustainable funding source dedicated to downtown improvements. He said it can be a property tax, sales tax or both.

"Based on some of the discussions we've had, we're recommending a sales tax at this time," he said. A review of monies spent downtown shows that a half-cent tax would generate about \$40,000 annually. "But I think you might need a little more than that," said Volmert.

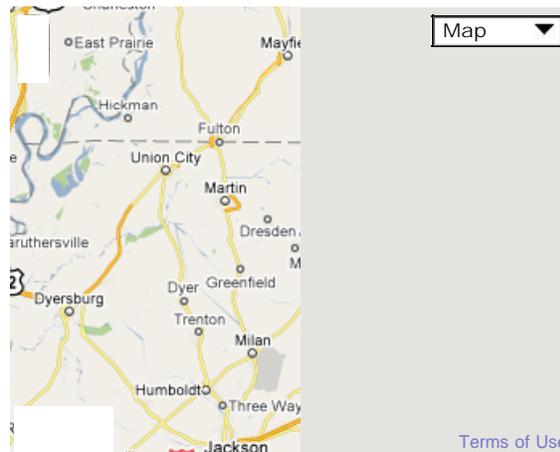
Some opposition to the idea was raised. "That may make the area not so competitive," said Mike Bohannon.

David Friedman, co-owner of Falkoffs, said that while he doesn't think an added tax will hurt his business, "for some other merchants it might."

Volmert noted there are other options, but said CID funding is more flexible.

The goal in redefining the group is to give it a highly visible presence in the civic and business community. Also a more sustainable funding source, like a CID, should be implemented to serve as the basis of the organization funding, along with donations, fundraising and grants, said Volmert.

MAP OF PERTINENT ADDRESSES



RELATED LINKS

- [Standard Democrat](#)

RELATED SUBJECTS

- [Business News](#)

MORE STORIES

- [Area home sales up this spring over last \(04/28/10\)](#)
- [Talking Shop with Jeff Martin of The Martin Group of Realty Executives of Cape County \(03/01/10\)](#)
- [Sikeston area businesses credit tax break for real estate sales boost \(11/10/09\)](#)
- [Home sales up in Cape Girardeau, Midwest \(12/28/09\)](#)
- [Tax credit for first-time buyers boosting home sales in Cape area \(09/24/09\)](#)

He recalled when he first came to town, he was confused as to where "midtown" Sikeston is, and said the name may not be accurate. Volmert urged members to use HMDG as the organization, but refer to the area as Downtown Sikeston.

Wayfinding stations and signage systems will help customers and visitors easily navigate the area, said Volmert. "Wayfinding signs from I-55, Highways 60, 61 and 114 are needed to direct travelers to downtown Sikeston," he noted. "The challenge is getting consumers here and west of Main Street."

One person asked if there is any way to get signs on the interstate that designate Sikeston as a DREAM community and pointing travelers in the right direction. "With all of the hotels in Miner, most people don't come west," she said.

The sense of place has already been improved in the past couple of years, with the installation of benches, streetscapes and more, said Volmert.

"You need to keep things trimmed, maintained and the sidewalks clear," he said. "These are things that are easy to fix."

In developing the retail market, Volmert urged to have a variety of shops, but to keep the merchandise unique. "Talk to other merchants in the area and urge them that, if they expand or relocate, to consider downtown Sikeston," he said.

Renovating Legion Square has been a big topic of discussion and there have even been architects renderings. But with a \$475,000 price tag, it's one that may take awhile to obtain.

Volmert said funding opportunities are available. He also encouraged the design committee to start small, and to generate excitement and funding.

With this being Sikeston's sesquicentennial year, Volmert suggested that may be a good fundraising angle. "What a nice legacy that would be, to bring renovation out of the sesquicentennial," he said.

Melissa Leible noted the group is aiming to raise \$20,000 for a pedestrian clock to be located near Legion Square. However, only about a quarter of that has been raised.

"I think the clock is a good starting point," she said. "We're getting our feet wet and getting people thinking more about downtown."

The city is already working to redevelop its vacant parcels, especially those on prominent corners, said Volmert. Some locations were pinpointed for redevelopment.

Several surveys highlighted a need to develop an identity for the area. That can be done with signage and events, but Volmert suggested committee members bring about even more activities to make the area a destination and cultural hub.

Leible noted a lot of things in Sikeston -- such as the caboose -- allow people to look and are not user-friendly. Volmert agreed, and suggested implementing large outdoor chess mats, for example, to give visitors a unique experience.

Promoting single-family home ownership will stabilize the neighborhood, noted Volmert. Also, enforcing zoning and building codes will also give a better impression to the area.

Kuehn noted that while he took over as executive director once the DREAM process had already been started, he's been able to catch up and is pleased with the progress.

"Even as a newcomer to the area, it's still very satisfying to see some of the things that are being proposed and how they will turn things around," he said.

Once the plan is received and reviewed "the ball is in our court," said Kuehn. "It's up to the city, our organization and our citizens to make sure these things get done."

© Copyright 2010 Southeast Missourian. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Respond to this story

Posting a comment requires [free registration](#). If you already have an account on [seMissourian.com](#), [semoball.com](#), or [shethemagazine.com](#), enter your username and password below. Otherwise, [click here](#) to register.

 Enter your email address to subscribe to our mailing lists:

 Subscribe to our text alerts to receive news, sports and weather updates

semo Marketplace



[St. Charles County Homes](#)

New & Existing Home sales Search MLS For Homes, Condo's

[www.BobScottSells.com](#)

[\\$139 Branson Resort Sale](#)

3 Days in the 5-Star Lakefront Branson Resort for Only \$139!

[Branson5Star.com](#)

[Dentists in Missouri](#)

Search by Name or Zipcode for an MDA Dentist Near You in Missouri.

[YourMouthIsTalking.org/FindADentist](#)

[Branson Vacation Package](#)

Come to Branson for as little as \$129 includes 3 Nights and Tickets!

[www.SpinnakerVacations.com](#)



Ads by Google

Username:

Password: [\(Forgot your password?\)](#)

Your comments:

Please be respectful of others and try to stay on topic.

Sections [News](#) · [Sports](#) · [Business](#) · [Entertainment](#) · [Features](#) · [Opinion](#) · [Records/Obituaries](#) · [Blogs](#) · [Your Stories](#)
Shopping [Classifieds](#) · [Jobs](#) · [Homes](#) · [Coupons](#) · [Marketplace](#)
seMissourian.com [Search](#) · [News archives](#) · [Contact Us](#) · [Terms of Service](#) · [Media Partners](#)
Services [Subscribe](#) · [Photo Store](#) · [Text Alerts](#) · [Mailing lists](#) · [Facebook](#) · [Twitter](#) · [Calendar](#)
Submit [Wedding](#) · [Engagement](#) · [Anniversary](#) · [Letter to the Editor](#) · [Paid Election Letter](#) · [Speak Out](#) · [Event](#) · [Story](#) · [Photo](#) · [Classified ad](#)
© 2010 Southeast Missourian