

**First Avenue Uptown College District Meeting**  
**November 15, 2007**  
**Coe College**  
**8 a.m.**

**Present:** Sgt. Tim Camp, Scott Crosby, Jeff Frese, Brent Heinz, Erin Lenninger, Richard Marsceau, Scott Olson, Troy Pins, Rod Pritchard, Lisa Reid, Deb Schnyder, Matt Teply, Phil Wasta, John Wasta, Drew Westberg

**Agenda Items**

**1. Guest speaker – Scott Olson, AIA, CFM, SIOR broker associate with Skogman Commercial Group:**

Scott is active in the Cedar Rapids Downtown District, sells commercial real estate and owns some commercial property as well. He spoke to the group about national and local trends in retail and commercial development, positive and negative features of this particular area, ways to find financial means of improvement, and ways for small businesses to succeed in today's market. Scott was impressed with the First Avenue Uptown College District (FAUCD) and its goals and accomplishments to date. He mentioned a number of buildings that are improving physically and the benefit of forming such a group to promote the district as a whole. He noted that other successful districts across the nation are quite similar to ours and are doing remarkably well. One trend he noticed is older neighborhoods that are embracing their unique architecture and history, by remodeling existing buildings and housing new businesses in renovated structures. This character and charm is desirable to locals and tourists alike.

He mentioned the difficulty in raising money for such positive changes in neighborhoods and suggested that the government agencies have fewer and fewer dollars to make available to organizations like this. In his opinion, a SSMID (Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District) is a very good option because the constituents have control over the money. He noted that there is a trend across the nation of retail stalling out; however, Cedar Rapids residential market is looking better than ever and that should revive the retail market as well. He said sending the signal of improvement is just as important as making the actual improvements. Letting the community know FAUCD exists and has plans will foster continued revitalization.

Scott mentioned that the city of Cedar Rapids has/will be changing how money is distributed for aesthetic improvements. The city will pay for public improvements, but anything done for aesthetic appeal needs to be matched by the property owners or assessed against them in some way. It will be important to have a continuing dialogue with city officials to ensure understanding of current and new policies. Scott offered that many small businesses, when struggling, cut marketing and advertising first. He feels this is not the right solution. He also stated that combining assets and marketing together is a very effective way for small businesses to have continued success.

- 2. Legal Process Update:** FAUCD is now fully incorporated with the State of Iowa and Bylaws have been drafted by the attorney. These Bylaws will be posted to the Web site [www.uptowncollegedistrict.com](http://www.uptowncollegedistrict.com) next week (week of Nov. 29) and Erin can provide hard copies to those who so request. The Bylaws will then be voted on at the December membership meeting. Erin will send an e-mail to all members when the Bylaws have been posted to the Web site.
- 3. Safety & Security Update:** Sgt. Camp reported on the following 1) Landlords are under pressure from the police to remedy any problem tenant/house issues. There should be a noticeable difference in the area soon. 2) When the weather permits, increased bike and foot patrol will be used along First Avenue in this district and beyond. Sgt. Camp stated that foot patrol is an effective and visible action

considering the nature of this area. 3) The Cedar Rapids Police Department has purchased 25 tasers and will start training officers soon.

4. **Dues:** Erin passed around a form that has been created to gather membership information and allow for the collection of dues. This will be posted online and can be e-mailed if requested. A bank account has been opened and dues will help pay costs for the day to day operating costs, logo design, legal filing fees as well as marketing, promotional and special event costs. Checks can be made payable to: First Avenue Uptown College District.
5. **Nominations for 2008 Board of Directors:** Nominations are now being taken for the 2008 BOD. The BOD will consist of seven members, four of which will hold positions as president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The newly elected BOD will determine who fills these positions. Nominations will be accepted until Dec. 1, at which time, a ballot will be created and posted to the Web site. Members can vote for at the December meeting or via e-mail to Erin Lenninger, [elenning@coe.edu](mailto:elenning@coe.edu). BOD members meet monthly to oversee the activities and promote forward movement of the group.

The following people were nominated at the meeting: Scott Crosby, Cindy Davis, Brent Heinz, Erin Lenninger, Richard Marsceau, Kevin Platz, Rod Pritchard and Phil Wasta. Cindy Davis and Kevin Platz were not present to accept their nominations and have been contacted to accept or decline. Currently, Crosby, Davis, Heinz, Lenninger, Pritchard and Marsceau are serving on the BOD.

6. **2008 Objectives:** The current BOD has identified a few objectives for the upcoming year, including: membership growth, retail promotion, and a market study of the area. These are but a few ideas and the new BOD will solidify goals for 2008 once they convene.
7. **Upcoming Meetings:** The December meeting has been moved up to the second Thursday of the month, Dec. 13, due to the holidays. It will also be a modified meeting with a quick business meeting at 5 p.m. followed by a social hour at 5:30 p.m. This social hour is open to all members and visitors interested in the group's formation, progress and ideas. Members will vote on the Bylaws and elect the 2008 BOD at 5 p.m. This meeting/social will be held in the EnCompass building at 1420 First Ave. NE in the upper suites.

Happy Holidays everyone! Please send me an e-mail or give me a call if you would like to nominate someone or yourself for our 2008 BOD.