



Mayor – Sandy Sanders

City Administrator – Ray Gosack

City Clerk – Sherri Gard

**Board of Directors**

Ward 1 – Keith D. Lau

Ward 2 – Andre' Good

Ward 3 – Mike Lorenz

Ward 4 – George Catsavis

At Large Position 5 – Pam Weber

At Large Position 6 – Kevin Settle

At Large Position 7 – Philip H. Merry Jr.

# **AGENDA**

**Fort Smith Board of Directors  
Brainstorming Meeting  
August 25, 2014 ~ 6:00 p.m.  
Fort Smith Sanitation Department  
Administration Building  
5900 Commerce Road  
~ Dinner served at 5:30 p.m. ~**

**CALL TO ORDER**

1. Brainstorm

**ADJOURN**

RESOLUTION NO. R-171-13

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING GROUND RULES  
FOR BRAIN STORMING MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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WHEREAS, the Board of Directors will conduct quarterly brain storming meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors desires to have ground rules for the conduct of said brain storming meetings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas that:

The ground rules for brain storming meetings of the Board of Directors attached hereto as Exhibit A are hereby adopted.

This Resolution passed this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of December, 2013.

  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
No Publication Required

## **GROUND RULES FOR BOARD BRAIN STORMING MEETINGS**

1. Overall objectives of brain storming meetings are to:
  - Allow the mayor and board members to engage in free-flowing discussion on matters of importance to the elected officials.
  - Identify new, creative, innovative, breakthrough ways to view and solve problems, issues and concerns.
2. Discussion should be focused on long-term issues and policy matters; and be forward thinking. The discussion should be about the “what” and “why” questions.
3. Discussion should avoid micro management. The discussion should avoid the “how” questions.
4. Everyone is treated as an equal and has equal opportunity during discussion. A round-robin technique for input may be used. Listen respectfully to each person’s input.
5. When input is offered, it should not be questioned initially. Suspend judgment. Research and analysis (e.g., testing the idea) can be provided later.
6. All ideas should be recorded.
7. Discussions should be honest and candid.
8. Keep an open mind; shut down personal bias. Encourage new and creative ideas. Build on other people’s ideas. Pursue seemingly conflicting thoughts and ideas.
9. Ask anything. Question things you don’t understand. But, questions should clarify ideas, not evaluate, criticize or compliment the ideas.
10. No side conversations.
11. Have an agreed-upon method for reaching consensus, but there is no formal action or voting.
12. Treat these as guidelines, not as hard and fast rules.

# Memo



**To:** Ray Gosack, City Administrator  
**From:** Jeff Dingman, Deputy City Administrator  
**Date:** 8/20/2014  
**Re:** **Update** - Notes from Board of Directors Brainstorming Meeting, 5/27/2014

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1. Board Governance Policy. Advanced "condensed" version for consideration on 6/3/14, including provision to revisit the plan at least annually. **Update: Item is slated for further Board discussion at August 26 study session.**
2. We have such a high percentage of working-age people in FSM that are not participating in the workforce, as reported by UAFS' Kermit Kuehn. Is a strong housing authority a reverse incentive, keeping working-age people out of the work force and keeping annual incomes down? Asked to invite Dr. Kuehn to an upcoming study session to discuss the data and his interpretation (*tentatively planned for August, pending Dr. Kuehn's availability*). **Update: Dr. Kuehn and the Board addressed this topic at the August 12 study session. The update to the city's comprehensive plan may recommend policies for improving the community's economy.**
3. NHL Hockey idea. How would we even get started? Investigate the league's policy for expanding or relocating teams, and what it takes to get it done. *Consider appointing an exploratory committee to investigate league issues and Green Bay, WI's model for community ownership of a team. Learn from GB how it was initiated, sold, built, and continues to operate as a community-owned franchise.* **Update: A cross-section of individuals from the community attended a presentation and discussion on this topic on July 9.**
4. Concrete railroad crossings. Increasing rail traffic will make this more critical. Many street/railroad crossings in town need to be upgraded from asphalt fill to concrete panels. RG reported that formerly on city projects, the city would purchase the panels (est. \$30K per crossing depending on size) and the RR would install them, but that hasn't happened in quite some time. New streets & street crossing rehabs have installed the panels. Many (not all) of the problem crossings still existing are on state highway routes, specifically the truck routes on Wheeler Avenue, North A/North B and near the north end of Riverfront Drive. *Direct the Engineering staff to follow-up with the railroads as necessary, and consider allocating funds in the 2015 CIP specifically for upgrading railroad crossings on city streets.* **Update: Engineering staff is working on a plan to inventory and grade all railroad crossings of city streets, and will use the inventory to address a number of crossings each year as part of the annual CIP program. More information will be provided with the CIP program discussion at the September 23 study session.**
5. Transit & CNG. Discussion of the one CNG bus we currently have, and the fact that two more have been ordered and will be converted to CNG for the demand response routes. Investigate possibly transitioning more vehicles to CNG, including the possibility of buying the larger metro-style buses with factory-installed CNG for the fixed routes, which presumably have larger fuel tanks that can accommodate a full shift on a fixed route. *Transit staff will investigate whether those types of vehicles are as of yet included on the state purchasing contracts, as well as other operational considerations.* **Update: Transit has ordered two additional CNG buses. Both are grant**

**funded 80%. Once the vehicles are delivered, they will be converted to CNG. The plan is to have them in service In January, 2015. On the larger buses, the “12-year” buses similar to those used in larger metro areas cost in the range of \$400,000 each, plus up to \$50,000 for CNG versions. The buses we currently use are typically “5-year” or “7-year” buses cost around \$80,000 each (we pay 20% of the purchase price), plus up to \$20,000 for conversion to CNG. Also, it takes about 18 months for delivery of a 12-year bus. In the past, the Transit service did run some larger buses, but heard complaints from neighborhoods on having the larger buses. More generally, the Board did approve purchase of another CNG vehicle (along with three hybrid vehicles) in this year’s fleet purchase, and staff will continue to evaluate CNG and other alternate fuel vehicles as part of the FY2015 budget recommendation.**

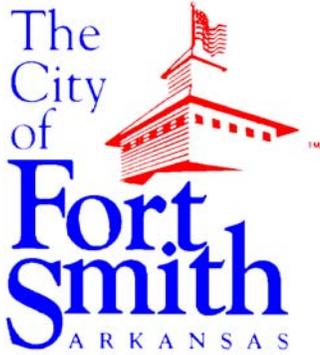
6. Transit & expansion of the rail trolley, and other uses for “shared space” treatment of the streets, whereby trolleys, autos, and bicycles share lane space appropriately. Some discussion about where the downtown trolley might eventually go, and how putting tracks in the driving lanes would allow autos & trolleys to share the same space in the street. *Extension of the trolley rail from its current terminus near Wheeler Avenue up South 7<sup>th</sup> Street to Rogers Avenue is currently being designed and should be built this year using funding (about \$200,000) allocated to the project from the city’s share of the county-wide 1-cent sales tax. Design will be similar to the “shared space” concept discussed, but the rail will be near enough to the west side of South 7<sup>th</sup> St. so as to only require one line of poles to support the electric infrastructure. **Update: This project design is nearly complete. The downtown trolley association is to provide an inventory of materials that they have on hand so the Engineering Dept. knows how much additional material will be needed to put in the project bid specifications. This project is being done in coordination with the scheduled overlay of South 7<sup>th</sup> St.***
7. What do we think about downtown in general? Looks very nice in most places. Encouraged that private development is picking up, even if it isn’t moving very quickly. Discussion about how we need to invest in ourselves for our own sake, get into some true public-private partnerships, and then private development will follow. Downtown businesses are missing out by not being open in the evening. Lots of food/drink establishments bring people downtown in the evening, but the local downtown shops close at 5pm and don’t take advantage of the evening foot traffic. How do we go about encouraging them to do more evening hours, aside from the First Thursday efforts? How do we build interest in a Downtown Merchants Association? *Staff is working on the merchants association concept, but having mixed results. **Update: The downtown programs are currently being re-evaluated in terms of service delivery, promotions, events, and the overall aesthetics. The revitalization of the Downtown Merchants Association is in this mix. The streetscape up Towson Avenue to South A street is complete except for the portion in front of the Otasco building. Recent topics such as the Mobile Food Trucks/Court discussion are ongoing and continue to be fleshed out as a means of improving the amenities offered downtown. Private investment in downtown redevelopment is occurring with some current projects underway. The CBID is mindful of projects to enhance amenities to attract people downtown.***
8. The Farmers Market is taking off and is very popular and crowded. There was brief discussion of the improvement plans from 2010 to augment the facility with canopy structures (cost estimates for that design were \$1.2 million). Something like that would improve the atmosphere, attractiveness, and overall viability of the market. The 2010 costs were substantial, but improvement along those lines at a lesser scale might be more affordable, and *staff needs to determine if other grant funding opportunities are available. **Update: A letter of interest seeking inclusion in the “Local Foods, Local Places” program supported by the EPA, the USDA, the USDoT and some other agencies to create more livable places by promoting local foods was submitted in hopes of***

**securing funding in support of the Farmers Market. WAPDD is pursuing an EDA grant in support of the Farmers Market, which will require a 50% local match. The CBID has plans to update its priorities this fall, and the enhancement of the Farmers Market area continues to be near the top of their list. Wi-fi connectivity was added to the Farmers Market area earlier this year to allow vendors the ability to accommodate patrons with SNAP cards.**

9. Business Improvement District along the Midland Ave corridor? Brief discussion on how it would need to be driven by the property owners and/or merchants of the area, or else wouldn't have much chance in being formed. *Without the support of the affected property owners, a BID couldn't get created. Update: This initiative has not been investigated, though it has received some discussion in the context of the update to the city's comprehensive plan.*
10. Status of the homeless campus. The FSM Housing Authority is still trying to raise funds for construction. If the funds aren't raised and committed by August/September, the city's CDBG allocation will have to be withdrawn and perhaps reallocated to other projects. Question was asked about what types of mental health services, if any, are to be included at the campus. RG responded that he believed a mental health component was being included, but didn't know to what extent any services would be available. *City Administrator has asked the Housing Authority for an update on funding and for a description of any contemplated mental health services. Update: The Housing Authority was not successful in seeking particular grant funding for this project, so the CDBG allocation for the project may have to be diverted to other projects or risk being forfeited. The city will remain supportive of this initiative, and could make further allocations of CDBG funds at a later time. This topic is currently schedule for update and discussion at the Board's September 9 study session.*
11. Walk-ability of the city, particularly Rogers Avenue. Referenced the current I-540 project that rebuilt the overpass over Rogers Ave but did not include a sidewalk to connect east-west, even though there is room for one. All agreed that with the beautification project slated for that interchange, a sidewalk would fit in nicely. *Street Department staff will be asked to investigate with AHTD the possibility of the city installing that specific piece of sidewalk. Update: Upon completion of the interstate project and the commencement of the beautification efforts at the I-540/Rogers Ave interchange, staff has had informal discussions with AHTD about the possibility of the city adding a sidewalk along Rogers Ave under the overpass, to which AHTD has been generally receptive. The Streets Dept. is currently putting together a formal request for permission to add a sidewalk on the north side of the road, which would cost about \$25,000 to install sidewalks, ADA ramps and crosswalks.*
12. Further, on the issue of trails and bikeways, KL inquired as to whether we have contacted the state (AHTD) about participating in the funding of bike lanes, as there is indication that they might do that. KS again mentioned the concept of "shared space" for travel lanes. *Engineering staff will follow up with AHTD to determine what programs might be available. This was a priority of the Board established at its 2013 retreat. Update: Engineering staff has solicited proposals for incorporating bike lanes into transportation planning, including a public input component to gain a better understanding of whether the public desires to have the bike lanes integral with the street or as a separate bike path adjacent to the street.*
13. Discussion of possibly asking voters to include sidewalks and trails as allowable uses for the renewal of the streets/bridges/associated drainage 1-cent sales tax in 2015. There may be a way to separate the questions to the voters: 1-Renew existing tax? 2-Allow sidewalks? 3-Allow trails? If funding is allowed we could then really focus on linking the sidewalk gaps along major thoroughfares (like Rogers Ave) and creating trails for the purpose of transportation around town instead of simply for recreation. Discussion also included the issue of timing...how quickly we

expect these improvements will impact how we approach the issue of funding them. The sidewalk program in the Street Department has focused on sidewalk repair and improvement around schools, libraries, or other areas with high pedestrian traffic. That hasn't yet specifically included a focus on linking gaps along the thoroughfares. *Further discussion about the possibility of reallocating portions of the 1-cent street/bridges/associated drainage sales tax for other uses needs to happen so that there is a unified approach when it comes time to present the renewal of the sales tax to the voters in 2015. Update: The City Administrator has asked the city attorney for clarity on the application of the legislation and the process for conducting an election in this fashion. The topic of reallocation of this 1-cent sales tax in preparation for an election in 2015 is slated for the October 28 study session.*

14. Evaluate/analyze the possibility of any cost savings in hiring a city attorney on staff instead of contracting for legal services. It will require an analysis of payroll & operating expenses compared to the legal fees we are currently paying for services. *A study to this point was conducted in 1999-2000, which will be forwarded to the Board to look at and determine whether a similar evaluation approach is suitable, or if it should be approached a different way. Update: The Board deferred consideration of this topic. It will be re-visited at a later date.*
15. "Building our Brand" with basic set of design standards for city buildings & projects. Could serve dual purpose of creating an overall "look" to city facilities and perhaps achieving a measure of cost controls by specifying types of features, exterior finishes, and design components associated with city buildings. This would prevent the possibility of facilities being overdesigned for their intended purpose, thereby costing more than they should for little to no functional benefit. *The approach would be hiring an architect to come up with such design guidelines, which will be a budget consideration for the FY2015 budget. Will be discussed more during budget deliberations. Update: The discussion continues as to how this mentality could extend to all capital purchases, including design of city facilities and purchase of the city's fleet.*



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***AGENDA ~ Summary***  
**Fort Smith Board of Directors**  
**BRAINSTORMING MEETING**  
**August 25, 2014 ~ 6:00 p.m.**  
**Fort Smith Sanitation Department**  
**Administration Building**  
**5900 Commerce Road**  
*~ Dinner served at 5:30 p.m. ~*

**CALL TO ORDER**

- All present
- Mayor Sandy Sanders presiding

1. Brainstorm  
See attached summary.

**ADJOURN**

7:13 p.m.

# Memo



**To:** Ray Gosack, City Administrator  
**From:** Jeff Dingman, Deputy City Administrator  
**Date:** 9/4/2014  
**Re:** Notes from Board of Directors Brainstorming Meeting, Aug. 25, 2014

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1. Rate of return on idle funds. As the interest rate of return on idle funds is very low, consider a quick-pay policy for capital purchases, and perhaps for service or construction contracts as well. Explore altering the bid process for capital items with a proposal to realize a 2% - 3% discount for paying invoices upon award of bid, instead of paying on receipt of the item as is current practice. Could perhaps ask bidders to bid a price for regular delivery/pay schedule, and an alternate price for quick pay so that all have the same opportunity to submit. Book any savings realized from this process as an investment income. Explore how such a program might work with service or construction contracts, where we typically pay after the service is rendered or as progress is made.
2. Explore public investment in infrastructure projects in the vicinity of the industries along Hwy 45. Specifically, now that Gerda is reconfiguring traffic patterns around its facility with the new entrance, explore the possibility of extending Planters Road to the east to intersect with Massard Road. Gerda has not been in favor of extending Planters Road in the past, does its reconfiguration change that? The Frontier MPO has already included improvement of Hwy 45 from Zero Street south to US71 in the Transportation Improvement Plan, which is a prerequisite for spending state/federal money on such an improvement.
3. Truck traffic downtown. Will extending Kelley Highway to Riverfront help to eliminate truck traffic downtown? Not necessarily, as specific industries will still access the bridge at Garrison Avenue as their shortest route to I-40 westbound. The industries that use Riverfront Drive are amenable to working around downtown events as best they can, they already do to some extent. Very hard to eliminate truck traffic downtown entirely.
4. Compass Park/North A Street project. The water feature for Compass Park is nearly ready for a contract approval and construction to begin this fall. The North A Street component, where North A Street would be closed and turned into green space while traffic is re-routed to make North B Street two-way, is on hold while we evaluate a comprehensive accessibility study for the Riverpark Area, Riverfront Drive, and the area immediately north of downtown and east of Riverfront Drive. Connectivity for pedestrians, recreational & road bicycles, vehicles, and heavy trucks all needs to be improved and maintained in a way that coordinates with all improvement and re-development of the area.
5. Bike Lanes and the Street Sales Tax question. The presumption is that bike lanes are not currently an allowable use for the sales tax that is intended for "streets, bridges and associated drainage". We will conduct public input meetings to evaluate if and how bike lanes or trails need to be incorporated into future transportation planning. As the street sales tax gets re-evaluated (Oct. 28 study session), we will have some of that feedback. The study session discussion will focus on how the Board wishes to approach the election for renewal of the street sales tax next spring, and if bike lanes/paths, trails and greenways get presented as potential allowable uses for the sales tax.

6. West River Trail and connectivity to the National Historic Site trail. The West River Trail begins near the parking area for the Riverfront Park and goes north. From that beginning point south, the sidewalk will be improved/expanded/modified for pedestrians to move around the west end of the River Park Events Building to the plaza area near the Women's restroom. From there, pedestrians can traverse the park to access the National Historic Site trail, directed by signage (the signage is not part of the trail project). Bicyclists will be directed through the parking lot by pavement markings leading them to the wide sidewalk on the east end of the River Park Events building, where they would then be led through the small parking lot alongside the amphitheater to the NPS trail.
7. Live streaming of Board meetings on the internet. Information Services has an idea of how to accomplish this in the next few weeks. They will do some testing at the upcoming Board meetings to see how smoothly it might work. Working with the school district's IT staff and the vendor that provides the television feed for the government access channel and trying to get that same feed into the live stream.
8. Support for expansion and improvements at the Farmers Market. Letter of interest in grant program has been sent, and WAPDD is checking on availability of EDA grant funding. Wifi access is provided at the Farmers Market in order to accommodate payment features & use of the SNAP program. Enhancement of the location with pavilions, power, misters, etc. would be a great improvement. Does the Farmers Market need more space? More parking?
9. Parking facility bonds are authorized for early redemption, which will be finished October 1. Parking Enforcement downtown? There are lots of things to consider, but there is no windfall of revenue, as revenues from space rentals and fines does not cover the current cost of enforcement and administration. The Parking Authority will meet again after the bonds are paid off to start having some of those discussions, including the evaluation of different parking enforcement programs/philosophies.
10. Street signs & school zones. Place reminder signs that state law prohibits the use of cell phones in school zones while the zones are active. The Street Department is investigating the appropriate signage for this application.
11. Food vendor permit. Why do we require the seasonal food vendor to change locations every few weeks? Historically, this has been in consideration of competitive interest from brick/mortar businesses nearby. This will be part of the re-evaluation of city codes & zoning restrictions regarding outside food vending, in the downtown and all parts of the city.
12. Where are we with the sewer rate modelling? The Consent Decree with the Department of Justice/EPA needs to be finalized before the components can be fed into the rate model, and settlement terms of the Consent Decree should be known by the end of September. The Board will then be briefed on the negotiated terms, as the Board will ultimately have to approve any settlement. This Board briefing will be held in the early part of October. The rate model itself is nearly complete and ready, but needs the correct input of information before it can be finalized and presented. The basic parameters of all of these components should be known in advance of the Board's review of the FY2015 budget. There is interest from the Board to have representatives from EPA and DOJ present at the Board's briefing on the matter.
13. Fluoridation inquiries. Board members reported that they've had very few contacts regarding fluoridation since the approval of the grant agreement with Dental Dental on August 19.
14. Whirlpool Cleanup? Supplemental testing is needed to the east of the site, near the Boys & Girls Club and in city right-of-way. Whirlpool and ADEQ are amending the remediation documents to incorporate the testing of additional areas.

15. Did Spartan purchase or lease part of the Whirlpool facility? They purchased the warehouse portion of the property, and there will be more publicity on this soon and a ribbon cutting announced. It should happen in September.
16. Railroad crossings. Staff is inventorying and rating all crossings in the city. In addition to condition, they will note traffic volume in order to help prioritize needed repairs. The repair program will be built into the 5-year CIP, which will be presented to the Board in September. There will be the persistent question of how involved the city wants to be in maintaining the crossings on state routes.
17. Speed Tables? Speed tables are being evaluated per the request of a particular neighborhood. The subject will be presented to the Board for discussion at an October study session.
18. LOPFI projections indicate the program will be in the red in 2019 (the projection of 2019 has remained consistent over the last several years). The program is currently spending \$1.6M more than its annual revenues. We have to be mindful of our local situation, and supportive of the AML's attempt to have the state legislature address the issue with a comprehensive state-wide solution. This state-wide solution is likely to be in the form of a constitutional amendment of some kind to fix it. A Board study session on the topic is scheduled for October, and the executive director of the LOPFI program is expected to attend. Fort Smith's local legislators have also been invited to attend.