

Marketing Committee Report

RE: Regional Marketing Initiative – Meet w Mondo Mediaworks

Date: March 23, 2017

Chair: Christopher Etori

Other committee members present: Alderman Cook

Other Aldermen present: President Davis, Aldermen Donahue, Ryan

Others present:

Luke Stafford, Mondo Mediaworks

Katherine Partington, Mondo Mediaworks

Mary Cohen, RRCC

Lyle Jepson, REDC

Brennan Duffy, RRA

Steve Costello, REDC/RRCC Marketing  
Committee

Alan Keyes, VTDigger

The meeting convened at 5:00 to discuss the selection of Mondo Mediaworks as the marketing firm for the regional marketing initiative and to have a discussion with Mondo about their vision and strategy and how that meets the needs of the city. Mary Cohen shared that about 50 organizations sought information about the regional marketing initiative. The steering committee received 18 proposals, interviewed four of them and had two finalists. Mondo Mediaworks was selected unanimously following this process due their creative abilities and strategic approach.

The Regional Marketing Initiative seeks to primarily reverse downward population trends by both keeping people in the region who grew up here or attend college here and attracting new people to visit and move here. There are three legs to the approach, and the steering committee has developed corresponding sub-committees to represent regional input to Mondo. The three legs are Quality of Life – marketing what we have and why people would want to move here for it, Workforce Development – matching potential residents with available positions, and marketing what types of skills our region is looking for and the education programs we have to address those needs, and Tourism – marketing our region for tourist visits that could lead to potential relocation.

Mondo discussed that their intent is amplify what's happening in the city and region. They are looking to identify areas of potential and areas with significant momentum that can be built upon. They are conducting a quantitative and qualitative approach by reviewing raw data and reports, and by immersing themselves in the region – partaking of local activities and meeting with different organizations, committees, and individuals. They are looking to get a full picture of the city and region so they can market appropriately. Specifically, in regards to some of our

local concerns such as a higher than desirable tax rate and low wage employment options, Mondo responded that it is important to accurately depict our city and region, recognizing all the pieces of the puzzle by selling the high-points and acknowledging the ongoing work on the low-points. Mondo was very specific that they are not here to sugarcoat anything but rather acknowledge and amplify the great things that we do have.

One such issue discussed was the large number of properties that the city owns through tax sales. As part of the marketing campaign, Mondo has identified affordable housing (particularly in comparison to housing around large urban areas where much of the marketing will be targeted) is a strong asset of our city and region. Luke recognized that such city owned property, while currently a liability for the city, could be a very strong asset for a specific marketing campaign to attract potential new residents. As some of this board will recall, a similar idea was supported and passed last year by this board.

In response to a question from the chair regarding how they are planning on marketing the city and the region when we might have different needs and expectations, Mondo responded that the city is the hub of the region and so while some of the target audience will be looking for two acres and a barn, others will be looking to have easy access to downtown, full services and local neighborhoods. They plan on marketing the various aspects to targeted constituents based on the needs and desires of those constituents. It was made clear to Mondo that the city has a lot of skin in the game and is looking forward to seeing corresponding results.

The meeting concluded at 6:10.

This report was for information only.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher Etori, Chair