

SAVAGE Pacer



City to choose between Kaffee or Coffee

By Nancy Huddleston, Editor, Savage Pacer, Friday, June 23, 2006

Which will it be DP Kaffee Depot or The Depot Coffee House?

That's the question a special task force will be tackling when it goes through two business proposals that have been submitted for the historic Savage Depot, which will be situated in the Town Square parking lot in downtown.

Annette Grant is proposing to operate DP Kaffee Depot and James and Karen Lewis are proposing The Depot Coffee House. Both plan on serving coffee, espresso, a light food menu and providing meeting places and free Internet access to their customers.

The Savage Economic Development Commission (EDC) decided Wednesday morning (June 21) that the business proposals should be reviewed on the basis of previous business experience, completeness of the business proposal, financial abilities, project vision and hours of operation. Three members of the EDC, two members of the Depot Task Force and two city staff members will go over the proposals and conduct interviews.

Another important factor in the process is to take an objective look at the two coffee house plans. We have two local residents who want to open a business in the depot, so the objectivity of this task force is just as important as all of these other things, noted City Administrator Barry Stock.

EDC Commissioner Ray Leathers also pointed out that the original Request for Proposal (RFP) should also be taken into account during the review. When the RFP was written, we didn't care if we got a coffee house, arts group or dog training business in here, he said, But now that we have two interested folks with proposals for a coffee shop, we need to refine that RFP to that occupancy to give us a better understanding of how they are going to use the depot.

What's more, Leathers said, the city needs to go past the wish and hope phase and on to the pro forma phase of finding a tenant for the depot.

EDC Commissioner Tom Hansen noted the city knows how the exterior of the depot will look because it is being restored to its historic state. However, the interior plans are just as important, so business proposals should also include sketches, layouts or pictures of the space.

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