

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for July 1, 2014

City Council Work Room, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Floor, City Hall, October 1, 2013, 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Ray Detter, Hugh Sonk, John Chamberlin

Members Absent: Marsha Chamberlin, Kathleen Nolan, Joan French, Jim Kern, Sue Kern

Visitors: Felicia Flores, John Giessler

At last night's CAC meeting we welcomed two potential new members to the CAC, Felicia Flores and John Giessler, both of whom live and work in the downtown area. I want to say again, if anyone knows of someone who lives in the DDA area and has an interest in being involved in helping to shape developments in the Downtown, please let them know that we would welcome them as new members. We have three more memberships open. We meet the first Tuesday of every month (except August) 7:00 pm in the City Council Work room in City Hall--unless otherwise posted.

Last night, we took time to fill out the Feedback Questionnaire for the DDA and City of Ann Arbor Downtown Street Plan. Afterward, those present reviewed the Ann Arbor News reports of all the new developments in process or approved in the Downtown, the City and Washtenaw County. It's impressive. By next fall there will be hundreds of new residential housing in downtown Ann Arbor—all coming to market at the same time.. Amazingly, our group is in full support of most of them—those are building projects that avoid having a negative impact upon their residential, historic and commercial neighbors. Not so surprisingly, most of that development is being undertaken by local rather than out of town developers. Where possible, we intend to give our full support to all those projects committed to meeting our community expectations.

Most of last night's CAC meeting was devoted to a discussion of the future of what we continue to call the Library Lot—the surface parking lot above the Library Lane underground parking structure. With the Y lot now sold, the City Council has provided direction to the city administrator to hire a broker to list the Library Lot across Fifth Avenue while reserving a portion of the property for a future downtown park.

Members of the CAC continue to strongly support the development of a public plaza of significant size on the Fifth Avenue side of the Library Lot site, as well as use of Library Lane all the way to the parking structure entries for scheduled community activities. We also continue to support pedestrian walkways to Liberty Plaza Park and believe that all future development decisions on the site must take into consideration the needs of the District Library, possible connections to the Blake Transit Center and nearby historic properties, districts and businesses.

We encourage the possibility of a new, tax producing, private or public development on the major part of the property—a development that will work cooperatively to integrate itself with, complement, and provide eyes on the adjoining public plaza and spaces.

We are pleased that the issue of moving ahead and spending money on improving the Liberty Plaza site has apparently been moved to the Parks Advisory Committee. Most of us believe that changes in the Liberty Plaza should be done as a part of our larger plans for development of the entire block.

(Some of us remember that we spent \$250,000 a decade ago on improvements in that park, changes that helped reduce the pan-handling on Liberty, made the park more accessible and beautiful, but did not eliminate the problems in the park that we face today. We need a larger, more integrated plan for the entire block.)