

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Comments to the DDA—November 2, 2011
11-1-11 Meeting

In addition to discussing the issue of downtown parking and rates last night, the CAC asked me to speak to you today in relation to two important downtown issues.

There has been a lot of discussion lately regarding the City's program of a 1% contribution to public art. On Monday November 14, it will be discussed in a work session of City Council. We wish to express our continued support for that program at its current rate. We know that there have been many factors that have slowed down the process of putting art in public spaces. We also know that there will always be controversy regarding anything we do in the area of public art. But the recent dedication of the Dreiseitl water sculpture at the new Municipal last month proves, I believe, the value of the program. That public space is now a wonderful addition to the downtown pedestrian experience and will remain a focus of local pride and community identity.

Yesterday, along with other members of the Municipal Center Public Art Task Force, I met with the three artists who have been selected as finalists to develop a hanging ceiling work of art in the entry to the new Justice Center. We selected those three out of 100 applicants, only 15 of them from the Michigan area. The three are not from Michigan but they are top-notch professionals. By next summer, with City Council approval, one of them will have installed a new work of art in the Justice Center—something that will be seen day and night by pedestrians and drivers on Huron and Fifth. This public art installation will add to our identity as a community as well as advance our goal of public art throughout the community.

The percentage of art program is working—let's keep it at 1%.

After the election, on Thursday, November 10, the Village Green "City Apartments" PUD project on First and Washington--in partnership with the City of Ann Arbor and the DDA--will be up before City Council for approval of the land sale.

This is a high density housing development in the Downtown—the area that we want density. City Apartments is not only adding over 150 residential rental units of various sizes, 10 % of those units will be rented to households below 60 % of Ann Arbor's AMI.

As downtown residents, members of the CAC are always appreciative of developers who are fully committed to working within the policy framework of our community. Although it has not been easy for the developers, we have been impressed with the way in which the developers have made the necessary design and parking adjustments required by the DDA and City Departments--as well as financial necessity. Village Green has sought out neighboring property owners and community groups to present their ideas and gain valuable input. We are pleased to have been included among those groups and we will continue to support this project through the difficult process.

We expect that City Council will give Village Green "City Apartments" the approvals they deserve.