

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes—January 7, 2014
City Council Work Room, 2nd. Floor, City Hall, October 1, 2013, 7:00 pm.

Members present: Marsha Chamberlin, Ray Detter

Guests: Susan Pollay, Cy Hufano, Christine Crockett, Steve Kaplan

Absent: John Chamberlin, Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Herb Kaufer, Hugh Sonk, Joan French, Kathleen Nolan

The Citizens Advisory Council wishes to congratulate the DDA and particularly Susan Pollay on the opening of the City Apartments on South First and West Washington—including units of affordable housing. This residential development has taken many years to complete and without the persistence of the DDA and Susan it would not have happened. I also want to congratulate Peter Allen for his persistence on the Kingsley Lane site and Tom Fitzsimmons on the Greek Church site for moving ahead with projects that will contribute to the downtown and are being built with less density than the zoning allows. Neither will have a negative impact upon their downtown neighbors.

A public hearing on Planning Commission Recommendations for changes in downtown zoning will take place at a City Council meeting on January 21. Last night's meeting of the CAC was largely devoted to a discussion of those recommendations.

The CAC, along with the Downtown and Near Downtown Neighborhood Group, has based our support for downtown zoning changes on the 2009 Downtown Plan goal of encouraging zoning and design approaches that minimize the extent to which downtown developments create negative impacts on neighbors in terms of height, scale, shading, and harm to natural and historic resources and views. We believe the Erin Perdu group has done a generally good job summarizing the views of this community. While we agree with most of the Planning Commission recommendations on changes, we believe there are others that need to be changed to more accurately reflect the community input on many issues. I only have time to discuss two of the eight recommendations made by the Planning Commission:

*** Rezone the parcel located at 336 E. Ann from D1 (downtown core) to D2 (downtown interface).**

We are pleased that the Planning Commission is following the recommendations of the Perdu group and will support the rezoning of the parcel located at 336 East Ann from D1 (Downtown Core-180 feet) to D2 (Downtown Interface-60 feet). This is clearly an interface area across the street from residential and historic properties in the Old Fourth Ward that need to be protected. However, we believe that support of D2 on the south side of East Ann should logically be extended to North Fourth Avenue which also has historic and residential units located to the north. That parcel is directly across the street from a 2-story historic residential neighborhood. The height of a 180-foot high structure in this location would overpower the area's residential Character and offer no transition between the most intense downtown zoning and residential.

*** Reduce the maximum height in the East Huron 1 Character District (on the north side of Huron, between Division and North State) to 120 feet. Include a tower diagonal maximum and consider a set-back requirement to reduce the shading of residential properties to the north.**

We support the Planning recommendation to reduce the maximum height in the East Huron 1 Character District (on the north side of East Huron between Division and North State, shown as B on the map), particularly the site between Sloan Plaza and the Campus Inn, from 150 feet to 120 feet with a diagonal maximum and possible setbacks and step backs to limit shading on adjacent residential properties in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District to the north. We believe, however, that whatever measurements are finally agreed upon for what we now call D-1.5 zoning, should not permit the construction of any building that is closer than 25 feet from the residential Sloan Plaza condominiums to the west. Any structure should also require a 10-foot setback from the front sidewalk.