

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – October 2, 2012 and
Comments to the DDA—October 3, 2012

Members of the DDA are invited to the dedication of three new historical wall exhibits in the State and Liberty area. We will gather under the marquee of the Michigan Theater at 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 9 for the dedication followed immediately afterward at 6:00 by hors d'oeuvres and drinks in the grand lobby of the Michigan Theater. Please join us.

There are so many things going on right now in and near downtown. I only have time to mention four that we covered last night.

Members and guests of the CAC took a close look at the two proposals for downtown development that will go before the Design Review Board on Wednesday, October 17. 624 Church at 1:30 P.M. and 413 E. Huron at 3:00. We were pleased that the project proposed for the Pizza House area seemed to take care to follow the Design Guidelines adopted by the City of Ann Arbor over a year ago. Our members were very disappointed that the 15 story building to be erected west of Sloan Plaza failed to do so. Representatives of the eight neighborhood associations in and near Downtown Ann Arbor will meet tomorrow evening to take a closer look at both these projects and decide our course of action. At this moment most people I have spoken to think that the design of 624 is impressive compared with 413 East Huron.

As a part of last night's discussion the CAC also dealt briefly with the request to the DDA to supply off-site parking for the 624 Church Street project under the City-adopted program of a development "contribution in lieu of" parking. We support that request. At the same time, we recognize that the Connecting William Street efforts are also dealing with the amount and location of parking that will/or will not be required as we move ahead with approval of other future developments in the downtown—including what goes on the four city sites that may eventually be sold by the City. We hope that the many parking considerations involved in the DDA Parking/Transportation Demand program will lead to a the possibility of a clear concept of the amount of parking and parking alternatives that we will need and support for the dense future development of downtown.

Members of the CAC have always supported affordable housing, and we strongly support the request for a DDA's emergency grant of \$260,000 for needed repairs at Baker Commons. At the same time, we look forward to the development of a carefully constructed program in the future that will involve open discussions among the DDA, the City, the County and all Affordable housing suppliers and Support organizations so that affordable housing needs and support for those in need are met—but not only in Ann Arbor's Downtown area.

It was more than a decade ago that the CAC, led by the efforts of Dick Shackson, succeeded in getting the first "Walk Your Bike" signs put up in the area of South State and East Liberty. Since then the amount of walkers—diners--and bikers—in downtown has increased enormously. Last night the CAC asked me to give full support for the expansion of a "Walk Your Bike" program on the most congested sidewalks of downtown Ann Arbor at the same time that we make our streets even safer for bikers.